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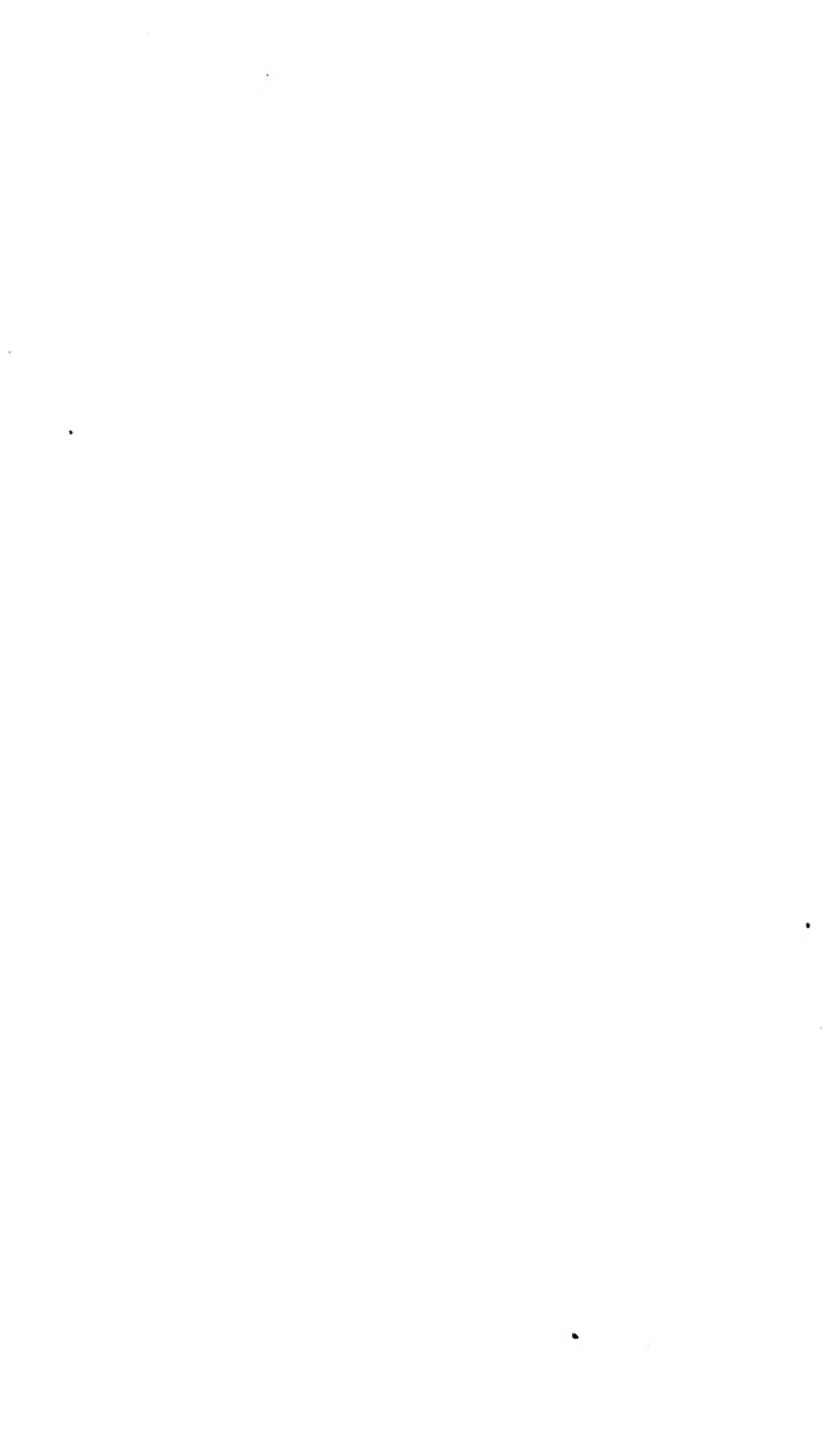












THE

BRITISH PULPIT:

A COLLECTION OF

SERMONS

BY

THE MOST EMINENT DIVINES

OF THE PRESENT DAY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Kingdom of Grace in the Heart; Matthew, vi. 10.—REV. H. BLUNT, A.M. . . . .	2
The First Principles of Religion; Hebrews, xi. 6.—REV. J. LEIFCHILD . . . . .	7
The Establishment of the Kingdom of Christ; Daniel, ii. 31—45.—REV. T. BINNEY . .	15
Sarah's Vision; Isaiah, vi. 1—4.—REV. J. STRATIEN . . . . .	21
Second Coming of Christ—Extract.—REV. DR. PAYSON . . . . .	30
Distinction between the Origin and Contents of the Scriptures; Acts, i. 3.—REV. H M'NEILE, A.M. . . . .	31
Demoniacal Possession; Acts, xix. 15.—REV. R. W. HAMILTON . . . . .	45
The Second Advent of Christ; Isaiah, xxv. 9.—BISHOP OF LONDON . . . . .	56
Heaven and Hell—Extract.—REV. DR. RAFFLES . . . . .	63
The Duty of holding fast the Truth; Revelation, iii. 3.—REV. T. J. JUDKIN, A.M. . .	65
The Final Advent of Christ; Revelation, xx. 11.—REV. H. F. BURDER, D.D. . . . .	69
The Sanctified Contemplation of the Second Coming of Christ; 2 Peter, iii. 11—14.— REV. W. DODSWORTH, A.M. . . . .	77
Hypocrisy in Prayer; Matthew, vi. 5—8.—REV. J. THORP, D.D. . . . .	85
The Christian's Debt to the World; Romans, i. 14.—HON. AND REV. G. T. NOEL, A.M. .	91
The Habitual Consideration of Death; Deut. xxxii. 29.—REV. A. REED . . . . .	96
The Christian Rule of Charity; Ephesians, iv. 28.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. . . . .	105
Following Christ afar off; Matthew, xxvi. 58.—REV. J. SHERMAN . . . . .	116
Advantages of Early Piety; Psalm, lxxxix. 15.—REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M. . . . .	125
Decision for God in Youth; 1 Kings, xviii. 21.—REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D. . . . .	135
Apostacy from God; John, vi. 66.—REV. T. J. HOLLOWAY, D.D. . . . .	145
God's Testimony to the Faith of Enoch; Hebrews, xi. 5.—REV. J. PARSONS . . . . .	154
Character of Saul of Tarsus, confirmatory of Christianity—Extract.—REV. R. W. HA- MILTON . . . . .	167
Authenticity of the Scriptures; John, xvii. 17.—REV. J. BURNET . . . . .	169
The Accession of the Heathen to Christ; Isaiah, lx. 8.—REV. J. HAMBLETON, A.M. . .	180
The "Cloud of Witnesses"—Extract.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. . . . .	187
The Preaching and Reception of the Gospel; 2 Corinthians, vi. 1.—REV. W. JAY . . .	189
The Blessings of the Gospel; Romans, xv. 29.—REV. J. PARSONS . . . . .	197
The Preaching of the Cross—Extract.—BISHOP OF LONDON . . . . .	211
The Connexion between believing the Gospel and making it known; Acts, iv. 10.— REV. W. LUCY . . . . .	213
The Resurrection of Christ; Romans, iv. 25.—REV. W. B. LEACH . . . . .	221
Instability in Religion; Genesis, xlix. 4.—REV. E. SCOBELL, A.M. . . . .	227
Religious Revivals; John, iii. 9.—REV. J. CLAYTON . . . . .	233
The Doctrine of Providence; 1 Timothy, iv. 10.—REV. S. ROBINS, A.M. . . . .	242
Eternal Life; Jude, 21.—REV. W. NEWMAN, D.D. . . . .	253
The Establishment of Zion; Psalm, lxxxvii. 5.—REV. J. BURNET . . . . .	264
Life a State of Discipline for Eternity; Colossians, i. 12.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. . .	277
The Exceeding Abundant Grace of God; 1 Timothy, i. 14.—REV. G. CLAYTON . . . . .	289
The Death of Statesmen; Isaiah, iii. 1, 3.—REV. J. BENNETT D.D. . . . .	297
The Divinity and Grace of Christ; 2 Cor. viii. 9.—REV. T. BINNEY . . . . .	303

	PAGE
The Minister's Parting Charge; Acts, xx. 32.—REV. A. REED .....	314
The Nature and Author of Salvation; Isaiah, xlv. 22.—REV. J. CUMMING, A.M. ....	321
The Blood of Christ speaking better Things than the Blood of Saul; 2 Samuel, i. 21.— REV. A. BRANDRAM, A.M. ....	335
The Manifestation of the Life of Christ; 2 Corinthians, iv. 10.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	341
The Sympathy of Christ; Sol. Song, v. 14.—REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M. ....	349
The Prosperity of the Righteous; Psalm, xcii. 12—15.—REV. W. JAY .....	357
The Correspondence between the Death of Christ and the Jewish Sacrifices; Leviticus, xvi. 30.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	365
The Ministration of Angels; Hebrews, i. 14.—REV. T. S. GUYER .....	375
The Unspeakable Gift of God; 1 John, v. 11.—REV. T. DALE, A.M. ....	385
The Christian Hope of a Time of Refreshing; Acts, iii. 19—21.—REV. D. WILSON, A.M. ....	392
Walking so as to Please God; Colossians, i. 10.—REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M. ....	397
The Nature of the Law; Gal. iii. 19.—REV. J. F. DENHAM, A.M. ....	405
The Resurrection and the Life—Extract.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	415
The Humility of Jesus a Pattern to his Disciples; Luke, xxii. 27.—REV. F. ELLABY, A.M. ....	416
The Necessity of a Standing Ministry—Extract.—BISHOP OF LONDON .....	423
The Religious Claims of the British Colonies; Ezekiel, xxviii. 14—16.—REV. W. B. COLLYER, D.D. LL.D. ....	425
The Deceitfulness and Wickedness of the Heart; Jeremiah, xvii. 9.—PROFESSOR VAUGHAN .....	436
The Duty of the State to Provide Religious Instruction for the People; Hebrews, x. 25.— BISHOP OF LONDON. ....	445
The Soul and its Capacities; Genesis, ii. 7.—BISHOP OF CHESTER .....	452
The Superiority of Christian Love; 1 Corinthians, xiii. 13.—BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY .....	458
Christ the Husband of his Church; Isaiah, liv. 5. REV. J. SHERMAN .....	465
The Expectation of the Christian; Proverbs, xxiii. 18.—REV. R. C. DILLON, A.M. ..	475
Christ the Builder of the Church; Zechariah, vi. 12, 13.—REV. J. SCHOLEFIELD, A.M. ....	485
Nature and Origin of Revivals; Habakkuk, iii. 2.—REV. E. BICKERSTETH, A.M. ..	497
The Influence of Memory Increasing the Misery of the Lost; Luke, xvi. 25.—REV. J. A. JAMES .....	505
The Sufferings, Success, and Joy of Messiah; Isaiah, liii. 11.—REV. W. MARSH, A.M. ....	514
Grace and Truth; John, i. 17.—REV. W. JAY .....	521
The Resurrection of the Body; 1 Corinthians, xv. 35.—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	537
Jesus the Resurrection and the Life; John, xi. 25, 26.—REV. R. W. HAMILTON ....	549
The Immortality of the Soul—Extract.—REV. R. W. HAMILTON .....	559
Reflections on Departure; John, xiv. 31.—REV. T. BINNEY .....	561
The Preaching of the Gospel; Acts, xiv. 7.—REV. J. A. JAMES .....	569
Alphabetical Arrangement of Preachers, with the Subjects .....	583
Biblical Arrangement of Texts, with the Preachers. ....	587

# THE PULPIT.

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## THE KINGDOM OF GRACE IN THE HEART.

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REV. HENRY BLUNT, A.M.

TRINITY CHURCH, CHELSEA, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 1st, 1833.

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“Thy kingdom come.”—Matthew vi. 10.

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THAT we may, when we utter these words, pray with the understanding, let us endeavour to ascertain the nature of the kingdom for which our Lord teaches his believing people so constantly to petition for.

First, then, we say, that the most obvious manner in which the Almighty manifests his kingdom and power on earth, is through the instrumentality of his Providence, by which he rules and over-rules all. There is nothing done, sin only excepted, of which God is not the doer—nothing established which he setteth not up—nothing destroyed which he throweth not down. As the Psalmist says, “He putteth down one and setteth up another;” and as he again asserts, “His kingdom ruleth over all.” Thus, then, his providential kingdom cannot be the object for which we are instructed to pray; for this has already come; and from the hour when the Almighty said, “Let there be light,” even to the present moment, neither evil men, nor evil spirits, have had power to interrupt the blessed harmony of all the countless millions of that wonderful piece of heavenly mechanism—the providential kingdom of our God.

Neither is the kingdom here prayed for that imaginary subjugation of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ, in person, which taking its origin from Jewish fables and from the misinterpretations of prophecy, has misled the minds of men from the earliest heresy to the Millenarians of the present day.

The kingdom, then, to which our Lord, and his great forerunner John the Baptist, continually alluded, under the phrases “the kingdom of God,” and “the kingdom of heaven,” is undoubtedly the kingdom for which our Lord requires us unceasingly to petition, and this kingdom is well known to every attentive

reader of Holy Writ, to mean the Gospel dispensation, in its largest and fullest acceptation: the spread of Gospel principles through every land—the triumph of Gospel grace in every heart. Observe this very distinctly stated in Luke xvii. 20, “When Jesus was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come,” (they expecting a temporal reign and a temporal kingdom) “he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you:” the Gospel kingdom is established in the midst of you; the kingdom of grace is erected in the heart of every one of my true followers. The kingdom of grace, then, is the first kingdom to which the heart of every sincere worshipper should turn when repeating the petition, “Thy kingdom come.”

But even the kingdom of grace, universal and extensive as its object is, is not all that is prayed for in these words; there is yet another kingdom, if it be another, equally desirable, equally important, equally the object of every believer's most fervent prayer, most glowing anticipations, and this is the kingdom of future and everlasting glory. I say, if it is another, for these two kingdoms are united by so small an isthmus, that he who stands upon the extremest boundary of the kingdom of grace on earth, has almost already set his foot within the kingdom of glory in heaven. The kingdom of grace is in fact glory in its weak and feeble seed-time; the kingdom of glory is grace in its blessed and abundant harvest. The kingdom of grace is the morn, the day-break of glory; the kingdom of glory is the bright shining of its meridian sun. The kingdom of grace is glory militant; the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. Blessed kingdom! so close, so indissoluble! None can ever pray for the one without praying for the other also; none shall ever enter the second who has not passed through the first: and, blessed be God, none shall ever effectually and really enter the first, and be ultimately excluded from the second. Who is there, then, that will not from his heart exclaim, “Thy kingdom come!” Who that does not desire it above all earthly things, to be the portion of himself, his family, and his friends, that we who are made partakers of his love may be, even while on earth, participators with them of the same grace, ripening with them for the same glory.

Very delightful would it be to dwell in this discourse, on this great completion of the Christian's prayer; very encouraging to pourtray, feebly and darkly, though it might be, those blessed scenes of which some glimpses have been vouchsafed in the word of God, of days when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; when one spirit shall pervade all hearts, and one worship, and one Lord, shall occupy all tongues. Still more delightful would it be to look beyond even that state of transient blessedness, to enter in imagination those courts from which the worshippers shall go no more out, and to see the Lord's kingdom established as an everlasting kingdom, his throne for ever set, the choruses of heaven opened, and to hear from their ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices the unceasing hallelujah—“This God is our God for ever and ever.”

But, brethren, the intention of our discourses is rather to edify than to delight, the great object of them being to reduce our daily prayer into our daily practice. To do this, we must descend from these high themes, and content ourselves with that view of the kingdom of grace, which while it excludes neither the aerial nor the heavenly kingdoms, has its first fulfilment in personal conversion, personal holiness, and personal meetness for the inheritance of the saints in



light. We proceed, then, with this view to examine what is implied by the existence of such a petition in the Christian's daily prayer—"Thy kingdom come."

If we ask for bread, it surely implies that we are without it. If we ask a kingdom, it surely implies that we feel our need, and the need of all the children of men, for the setting up of this blessed kingdom. It is no objection to this view to say, that it must be partially established in our own hearts before we can have grace or strength enough to pray for it. It may be so; but where lives that true and sincere follower of Christ, who would not, who does not from his very soul desire more grace, more light, more knowledge, more love? And when he looks upon the darkened state, the sin and ignorance of the men around him, where is the true believer who does not feel that his petition is as yet almost entirely unanswered; that another kingdom is prevailing; that another king is ruling, who is leading by far the larger portion of mankind captive at his will—that kingdom to which the apostle so obviously alludes, when he says, "Giving thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

The petition before us, then, implies, that until this kingdom comes universally, the whole world lieth in wickedness, and is in bondage to God's arch enemy, the ruler of the kingdom of darkness. That, again, until this kingdom comes individually, every person born into the world is the bond slave of Satan, a resident and citizen of his accursed kingdom. You, my brethren, who have probably prayed every day for a long series of years, "Thy kingdom come," in one sense must feel that your petition has never yet been granted: but I would ask you, have you ever felt that it has in any sense been fulfilled? Have you ever felt any real anxiety that it should be? Have you ever devoted one hour in your whole life earnestly to gain, as regards your own soul, a fulfilment of this ten thousand times reiterated petition? If not, do you imagine this is prayer? Did you ever seek any worldly good so coldly, so indifferently, so perfectly careless whether it was denied or granted? And yet no earthly good you ever sought approached this invaluable boon. Let us, then, if we have never yet been fully and entirely in earnest in the petition, endeavour this morning to find from the petition before us some subject of self-examination, to aid us in preparing for that blessed ordinance to which we have this day been invited.

We would commence, then, by urging each of you to make the inquiry—What reason have I for thinking that the kingdom of which we have been speaking has been established in my own heart? And be assured, you never set yourselves to answer a question on which the fate of your immortal soul more completely and more entirely depended. Perhaps you may reply, that you are assured upon this subject, not by any one particular, but by a combination of circumstances. You regularly attend the means of grace, and study God's word. It is well; but, brethren, you know that the means of grace are not the kingdom of grace: this would, indeed, in a remarkable manner be mistaking the means for the end. We can imagine many of the Jews attending our Lord's whole ministry, and at last being among the crowd who cried "Crucify him! Crucify him!" We know that Herod heard the preaching of John gladly, and yet was ultimately a murderer. So little are the means of grace and the kingdom of grace convertible terms.

But you, perhaps, have done something more than giving a mere attendance on the means of grace. You have felt something of compunction for sin, something of an awakening of conscience, something of self-condemnation for your words and works of evil. Will this, then, establish the point? No, brethren, this alone is no proof that the kingdom of God is come. Did not Pharaoh and Judas feel the same? Did not the first exclaim, "Now therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once," and did he not turn back again to folly and perish by his stubbornness and rebellion? Did not Judas repent himself, and yet die the death of a suicide and a reprobate? It is evident, then, that feelings such as these are insufficient to establish the fact.

Do you ask, why they are so? What are their defects? We reply, their defect is, if they stand alone, that they want a right foundation. No sinner ever yet felt himself lost—that is, had a real saving conviction of sin—without Christ. It is not until he has been presented to the soul by the Spirit of God as the great remedy for sin, that sin is ever truly, scripturally, savingly felt and deplored and renounced. There are many convictions of sin without Christ, but they are all transitory, all worthless. Your convictions of sin may in fact be natural; you may discern so much of iniquity in your past conduct, that you are unable to close your eyes to the reality of its guilt. This, then, will produce convictions; but you may be endeavouring to stifle these convictions, you may be endeavouring to drown them in company, or in occupations in resisting every impression. As we have read of the deer who runs till he shakes out the arrow that has pierced him, or the convicted felon who files off the fetters that confine him; the whole bent and purpose of your mind may be to get rid of these convictions, to shake off these impressions, and to escape. Therefore they cannot necessarily prove that the kingdom of grace has come into your heart. They may, indeed, be the blossoms; but then we are all aware that blossoms are often blown off before the fruit is set.

But, again, your convictions may have gone still further: they have not evaporated as soon as they were formed; they have led to action; they have been followed by some degree of reformation and a renunciation of those sins to which you were once devoted; and you ask, are not these unquestionably the coming of the kingdom of grace? Alas, we are compelled again to reply, not necessarily so; you may truly have forsaken your sins, but you may have done so from many an unworthy motive. The fear of God's punishment for sin, the love of the world's approbation, the desire to stand well in society, the injury of your health or your business, may have deterred you from your past transgressions. Or you may have outgrown one kind of sin, and while you are imagining you are in the kingdom of grace, you may be only exchanging one sin for another that is better fitted for your present taste, your present occupation. As the adder changes his skin every year of his life, but under every such change he keeps his poison; so the unconverted sinner, under every partial reformation, under every change of outward circumstances keeps his corrupt unaltered heart, and is the unconverted sinner still.

Shall we then say we must conclude that the petition of the text must be forever offered, and yet no light be given, no means by which to ascertain if it be ever granted? By no means, my brethren; only be honest in the inquiry, only be faithful to your own souls, and you shall never be left in doubt, whether, as regards yourself, the kingdom of grace be come. We would say, then, that you may take encouragement upon this subject if you feel a desire, not for a partial

reformation, but an entire one; not the giving up some, but every sin; not by the fulfilling some of the Lord's commandments, but all of them, however difficult, or however contrary to our natural inclinations; and, together with these, an increasing knowledge and love, and desire to please God in Christ Jesus; if the Saviour is increasingly precious, and sin increasingly hateful to your souls. We say *increasingly*, for we would lay much stress on these being progressive works. The kingdom of grace consists in no sudden impulse: it is manifest in the gradual change of the whole man; the gradual development of the whole Christian character; the gradual subjugation of every temper and lust, and passion, and thought to the obedience of Christ. Do we see the drunkard become sober; the licentious, chaste; the proud, humble; the worldly, spiritual; the irritable, meek? and do we behold these outward reformations going hand in hand with inward improvement, with secret prayer, with private searching of God's word, with a humble, child-like reliance upon the blood, and righteousness, and strength of a crucified Redeemer; and have we any doubt of the establishment of God's kingdom in those hearts? Can it admit of a question? No, blessed be God! Of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of the bramble do they gather grapes. We may say without fear of mistake here, the God of heaven is setting up a kingdom which shall never be removed, but standeth fast for ever: this is God's work, and marvellous in our eyes. Blessed is every mother's son who can find these things in his soul: he carries a kingdom within him, and that kingdom of grace shall be unquestionably succeeded by the kingdom of glory.

One word only in conclusion to trembling, doubting, and yet believing and obeying souls. You inquire, can you, without presumption, take to yourselves these exceeding great and precious promises—a life of holiness, a peaceful death, and a glorious eternity. You say that the kingdom of grace has never really found an entrance into your heart; but why do you imagine this? Because you cannot discern it? How many a poor doubting child of God had the kingdom of grace in his heart long before he ever thought or saw it there? The cup of gold was in Benjamin's sack, yet he knew it not. Jacob wept during many a year of his declining life for Joseph's death, whilst Joseph was at that very time riding in the second chariot of Egypt. You may be ignorant of the existence of grace in your heart, you may deplore its absence, and you may even weep for it, while it is there securely, there for ever.

But you doubt the existence of this kingdom, because the kingdom of sin is still so strong within you in hardness of heart and the remains of corruption. You may, even when the stony heart has been taken away, and the heart of flesh has been given you, you may have much remaining hardness of heart. But this is evidently different from having a hard heart. The best wheat field you ever saw in your life was not free from weeds; but you would have thought it strange to hear that field called a field of weeds. You may have many corruptious striving within your hearts; yet your knowledge of them, and grief for them, and striving against them, may be the impress and marks of the presence of the kingdom of which we speak within you, as the non-existence is of its absence. Only mark this: Is the continual frame and demeanour of your souls a holy frame? Do you ever allow yourselves contentedly in sin? Are you continually following hard after God, and seeking him in his own appointed way, through Jesus Christ. Are you often thinking of God? So often you can say with David, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count

them they are more in number than the sand : when I awake, I am still with thee" —or " my waking thoughts are still with thee." If you can but find these things in your souls, then take courage ; be assured that the kingdom of God is within you, that kingdom which he hath himself pronounced to be righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; that kingdom whose builder and maker is God. What more would you desire ? An assurance of an entrance into the heavenly kingdom ? Do not for a moment doubt it. God does not educate his children for hell ; such training, such teaching, such chastening as yours, can never be wasted. " As for God," as the Psalmist says, " his way is perfect." He has of his own sovereign will established the kingdom of grace in your heart on earth ; he shall not hold his hand until he has established you in his kingdom of glory in heaven.

Oh, then, brethren, when we say, " Thy kingdom come," let all that is within us praise his holy name. May it now be our delight, our joy, our strong consolation, to live as the citizens of that blessed kingdom of God ; and then shall it for ever and ever be our exceeding great reward to dwell within its precincts, to mingle with its inhabitants, to take part in its occupations, to stand around its throne, to behold the glory of the eternal Jehovah whom we love, throughout the ages of eternity.

## THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

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REV. J. LEIFCHILD,

CRAVEN CHAPEL, SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 24, 1833.

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“He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Hebrews xi. 6.

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It is well, sometimes, to look back to the first principles of religion. It is well to show to infidel and sceptical men, that we are not ashamed of having the various dogmas of our religion probed to their deepest recesses, and their foundations scrutinized and examined. It is well to show men, who are slow of heart and reluctant to believe, that there is no foundation whatever for that reluctance, and that it is perfectly unjustifiable. Finally, it is well to show believers themselves, that their principles are so firmly grounded in the nature and constitution of things, as to warrant their absolute confidence in them for time and for eternity.

Now, the first principles of religion are such as these:—That there is a God: that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a true revelation from him of his character and his designs; that this revelation was designed to have a supreme influence on human minds and characters: that momentous consequences are suspended upon its having its due influence, or our failing through apathy or neglect to attend to it. Some such principles as these are alluded to in the text:—“He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

**First. THERE IS A GOD** This lies at the foundation of all truth.

Now, to prove this to those who deny it, or attempt to deny it, it would not be sufficient to say that the Scriptures assert it, since they pretend to deny the truth of the Scriptures. It must, therefore, be proved to them on their own principles, on principles which no man can refuse to admit, without denying himself to be a man. This can be done; and it must be gratifying to believers to know that it can be done, and to be assured that, in doing it, the being and attributes of God are demonstrable by human methods.

The admission of any thing, followed out by a process of legitimate reasoning, necessarily conducts to the being of a God; for either that thing must have been produced by some other, or it must have produced itself. Now, nothing can produce itself, since this were to suppose that it existed as a producing cause before it had a being; it were to suppose that a thing might be and might not be at the same time—that it might be able to produce, and that it might not be produced—which is an absolute contradiction. Nothing can produce itself; it therefore must have been produced; and that which produced it, must either have been itself produced, or have been unproduced and existing from eternity. Thus we must go back from one to another, until we necessarily arrive at a first

cause producing all, itself unproduced—a cause uncaused; and that is God. We must do this, or else we must suppose an eternal series of second causes producing one another without any first cause for their coming into existence. The admission of any thing to exist, followed up by a process of legitimate reasoning, will conduct to the being of the First Great Cause—that is, God.

This argument applies to a thousand things as well as to the production of generation. It applies, for instance, to motion. All motion supposes a mover, something which moves, since nothing can produce itself. That which moves it, must either have been moved by some other power, or have been uncaused and eternal. We must go back, therefore, from motion to mover and to mover, till we come to the first moving cause existing from eternity in itself, which is none other than the God, the Cause uncaused, which we have ascertained by the other process advanced.

This argument proves the past eternity of God. Could you suppose a period when He did not exist, then you must suppose a passage, a transition, a motion, from one state to another; that is, from a state of not being to a state of being. But this motion must have had a mover, and that mover must have been prior to God, must have been God himself. So that this is but shifting the object, and still driving us up to the past eternity of God.

This argument proves the future eternity of God. Since no cause from without contributed to His being, so no cause from without, superior to Himself can make him cease to be: and as His being is equal to his essence, it is clear that He could not make himself cease to be. It is, therefore, an axiom of the soundest reason, as well as of the Sacred Oracles—that “From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.”

The argument proves the simplicity, the unity, the oneness of the Divine nature. These terms, you are all aware, are used in opposition to composition, to a compound being, a being compounded out of several principles and made into one being. But you cannot suppose that of the Divine nature; for then it would follow, that the principles of which that is compounded existed prior to itself: then, it could not be that First Cause, that uncaused cause, which we have ascertained.

These properties of the Deity admitted, all the other attributes of God necessarily follow. When we say this, we mean, of course, as to our mode of apprehension: for, indeed, we ought humbly to beg of God to grant us leave to speak of him according to our own powers of perception. And this we may do unblameably, if we do not exalt ourselves by supposing that we know him as he knows himself. The attributes of God, strictly speaking, do not follow one another, nor depend the one upon the other, but inhere in his Divine nature, compatibly with the simplicity and oneness of that nature—just as the various faculties of our own souls. But they follow according to our apprehension—that is, having admitted the one, we must necessarily admit the other.

From the properties of God that we have noticed will follow, for instance his immensity; for He that is the first cause of all things must be everywhere, must be present with all things that he has caused—in heaven, in earth, in hell, and everywhere—in all his perfections. From these will follow, also, the infinite knowledge of God. The first mover must from necessity be acquainted with all movement; the origin of all power must be the origin of all knowledge. From these will follow the inflexible justice of God: for He that knows all things must know what is right and best; and, his power being in harmony with his

knowledge, he must do that which is right and best: he can have no motive to do otherwise, and cannot do it without motive. From these will follow the free, spontaneous, and disinterested goodness of God. His stores are exhaustless; he can be under no temptation to withhold, from the fear of being impoverished; neither can he be under any temptation to bestow, from the desire of greatness; for he is sufficient in himself, he can receive no addition to his happiness or dignity; his goodness, therefore, must be free, spontaneous, and perpetual.

Thus it appears, that the being and attributes of God are demonstrable to reason. I would not be understood to say, that reason could of itself find out the being and attributes of God: I believe not. I believe that the idea of God came into the world originally by revelation. God revealed himself to Adam, and Adam communicated his knowledge to all his descendants to the time of Noah and the Flood. Noah communicated his knowledge to his descendants after the Flood; and when they were dispersed, they carried with them, wherever they went, the original idea of Divine revelation: and though the further they went from the source, the more that idea became weakened, corrupted, and debased; it never was entirely parted with. I believe there never was a nation in the world that came to the idea of God any other way than this at the first. But though the idea of God and his attributes was given to the world by revelation, when suggested, it is so consonant with our reason, and so consonant, I may say, with all the appointments of our nature, that the moment it is suggested, the mind lays hold of it, and receives it with a tenacity which nothing can equal; it seems to fall into the mind as into a place made for it naturally, and to fix itself there so that it cannot be parted with. Man must tear out the very sentiments of his nature, the very innate ideas of his soul, before he can part with the idea of a God. Therefore, the Scriptures do not set out with proving to us that there is a God, but with asserting the fact: yet having given us the idea, they afterwards show us how it is to be corroborated and affirmed by every thing around us. The great Apostle of the Gentiles (alluding to those men who had not the Scriptures in their possession, but only the idea of God from the primitive revelation,) shows that they might have corroborated this idea in their minds by every proper view of the nature and constitution of things: for, says he, "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 are inexcusable for having parted with that idea, and descended to the worship of beasts and stones.

It is not, then, mere poetry, but it is sound reason and argument which says—

"God is a name my soul adores,  
Th' Almighty Three, th' Eternal One:  
Nature and grace, with all their powers,  
Confess the Infinite Unknown.

"How shall polluted mortals dare  
To sing Thy glory and Thy grace?  
Beneath Thy feet we lie afar,  
And see but shadows of Thy face.

\*Who shall behold Thy blazing light?  
Who shall approach consuming flame?  
None but Thy wisdom knows Thy might,  
None but Thy Word can speak Thy Name."

“He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is,” what the Scriptures represent him to be, “the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

**THE SCRIPTURES, THEN, ARE A TRUE REVELATION FROM GOD OF HIM AND OF HIS PERSON.** This is another first principle of religion.

Now, to prove this to them who deny it, it would not be proper to say that the Scriptures themselves assert the fact, and that the Spirit of God witnesses to that fact in the breasts of believers. It is very true, that the Scriptures do frequently assert the fact that they came from God, and that the writers of them were inspired by the Spirit of God. Frequently they address us in the name of God, with a “Thus saith the Lord.” And it is very true, that the Spirit of God attests the fact in the breasts of all believers: they have the witness in themselves; they have a divine light within them; the eyes of their understanding have been opened that they may know the things that are freely given them of God. There is a close correspondence between the sentiments of Scripture and the inwrought sentiments of their own breasts: they perceive such an agreement of the Scriptures with their own cases, consciences, feelings, and capacities, as convinces them that the Author of both is one and the same. They can no more doubt the Divinity of the Scriptures than they can their own existence; and they could as soon part with the conviction of the one as with the other.

But though this is true, and very delightful to believers; and though it ought to have weight with unbelievers, as being the accredited testimony of veracious men; yet it is no infallible argument to them. The Scriptures must be proved to them from their own principles, apart from the Scriptures’ testimony and the testimony of believers. Not to be able to do this, would be to betray a weakness in our cause, and to leave unbelievers with an excuse for their infidelity. To say that they must believe the Scriptures to be of God, because the Scriptures themselves assert that fact, would be to argue in a circle. It would betray a weakness in our cause—it would leave them, too, without excuse for their infidelity, if we could not show that there was sufficient argument to convince them of the fact on their own principles. This can be done; and it must be gratifying to believers to know that it can be done, and that all men, to whom the Scriptures come, are without excuse if they do not, upon principles common to them, receive them for the Word of God.

We are not unwilling to confess, that the subject is of a nature which does not admit of demonstration, strictly speaking; for the writing of the Scripture, being the Word of God, it cannot be proved to be necessarily so, or impossible to be otherwise. All that can be required of us is this—to show that he who denies the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be of God, is involved thereby in such gross absurdities, as to be compelled upon his own principles to retract the denial, and admit the inspiration of the Sacred Books.

Favour me with your attention, then, to the following arguments:—

*First.*—We have the very same reasons to believe the Scriptures to be written by the men whose names they bear, and at the time they profess, as we have to believe the same with respect to any other books. There are many things which have been done in ancient times, of which we have no knowledge but through the books that were written about them at or near the time of their taking place. Now, all the reasons which move us to receive those books as true move us also to receive the Scriptures as true. We receive these as true, because they have been successively delivered; that is, because we have met



with references to them from age to age as we go back, almost to the very time of the things which they report. So it is with the Scriptures. Are they received because the writers of them were competently informed upon the things they wrote—were either eye or ear witnesses of them themselves, or of those who were so? So with the Scriptures. Are they received because the things they relate, though wonderful, are not impossible—do not contradict any essential principles of human nature? So with the Scriptures. Are they received because they allude to persons, to places, to customs, and institutions, that are referred to afterwards, by other writers in various places, as existing at that time, and agreeing with them? So it is with the Scriptures. Are they received because they might have been contradicted, if false, at the time by those who were in existence when they were written, but were never so contradicted? So with the Scriptures: for all classes of persons, even the adversaries of the Sacred Writers, admitted the existence of the facts recorded in the Sacred Books, while they reasoned in a contrary way. Then, what reason can there be given in the whole world for receiving the one and rejecting the other? Is it not plain, almost to demonstration, that they stand or fall together? For the very same reasons that you have for receiving other books of antiquity, you have for receiving the Sacred Writings.

*Secondly.*—We have more reason for believing the truth of the facts reported in Scripture than for the truth of any other book. This appears from the circumstances in which the writers of them were placed. He who shall deny the facts reported in Scripture to be true, charges the writers with imposture; and then it is incumbent on that man to do one of two things—either to prove that the writers of the Sacred Books were base and corrupt men, or else to point out certain ends capable of working on human nature to induce them to put forth impostures as facts, and to show that these ends operated in the case of the Sacred Writers.

Now, this we may defy all men and all devils to do. Who ever could prove the Sacred Writers to be base and corrupt men? And as for the ends that moved them to write and speak as they did, what other could they be than the force of truth? All the ends that can move human nature to utter impostures are such as these:—their safety, or their gain, or their reputation and renown. But is it not notorious, that all these had no influence in the case of the Sacred Writers? Their safety was to have been consulted by their silence; but their writing and speaking brought them into danger and suffering of every kind, exposed them to the persecution of heathen governors and princes, and to the malignity of a bigoted priesthood—the rulers of their own nation. The things which they had to record were so repugnant to the prejudices of men, and to all the false religions that prevailed in the world, that they were sure to have the whole world raised up against them; and they must have known that the publication of them would do so. Then what could move them to speak and to write these things but the force of truth and the authority of their Master, who charged them to utter these things, and not to keep silence on peril of his everlasting displeasure?

The highest motives which actuated other writers to speak the truth were such as these:—a certain manliness of mind, a desire to stand well with their compeers, and to gain the honour of posterity. These were the highest motives they had to speak the truth, and very inferior ones to those of the Sacred Writers. Do you believe, then, the relations of those who wrote from these

inferior motives, and do you not believe the records of those who wrote from motives so far superior and more influential?

I admit that this is not demonstration: I admit that it might be possible for all these men to have been deceivers; that there was a bare possibility that all the Sacred Writers might agree to assert things that were not true; to declare that they saw or heard what they never saw or heard; and that they were informed of what they were never informed of that might be possible. But for what end they should do this, and how they could do it, so as to preserve a proper agreement in all their impostures and frauds in every place, though writing at different times and in different parts of the world, is a thing so incredible, so unlike what has ever taken place in the history of mankind, that he who shall be willing to entertain the supposition is open to the wildest misconceptions on earth. And yet this he must entertain, or else he must admit the truth of the facts recorded in the Sacred Books.

*Thirdly.*—The truth of the facts being thus proved, prove the truth of the doctrines. The truth of the facts related by the Sacred Writers prove the truth of the doctrines declared in them; because the doctrines are interwoven with the narrative; with the account of the circumstances they have a close connexion; the facts corroborate the doctrines.

The Sacred Writers report, that Jesus of Nazareth gave himself out to be the Son of God; that he said he came down from heaven out of the bosom of his Father; came to deliver his Father's will to mankind; came to inspire his Apostles with the Holy Spirit, to complete that revelation when he was gone. Now, we might hesitate to believe it for his own sake; but the writers who report these assertions, report at the same time wondrous works performed by him in connexion with them, of unquestionably supernaturally divine power; such as the curing of diseases with a touch, with a word, with the hem of his garment; such as giving sight to men born blind, ears to men born deaf, and feet to men born lame; such as raising the dead, stilling the elements, walking on the waves, casting out devils. Now, you cannot believe the facts, and reject the doctrines that they were wrought to attest. You cannot receive the divine attestation of the doctrines, and refuse to believe the doctrines themselves. And yet these attestations, these facts of the Sacred Writers as to the truth of them, are, from the circumstances of the writers, placed beyond all doubt: so that the one guarantee the other. You must believe the facts; and believing the facts, you cannot doubt or deny the doctrines they were wrought to seal.

*Fourthly.*—The Old and the New Testaments confirm one another. There can be no doubt that the Sacred Writings, which the Jews have in their possession at the present day, are the very same that were in existence at the time of our Saviour. For, before the time of our Saviour, they had synagogues in various parts of Asia, of Greece, of Rome, of Egypt, of Arabia, and all the adjacent provinces of Judea. And in these synagogues there were copies of these Sacred Writings, which were multiplied for the sake of preventing the Law from ever wearing out; and the Jews took such remarkable care of them, as to number the very letters of every Book.

Now, upon comparing the ancient copies of their Sacred Writings that are extant in various languages, with the Sacred Writings of the Jews at present, we find a substantial agreement in every place. Those writings, therefore, cannot have been altered or mutilated. It is a thing perfectly inconceivable, that men of different ages and countries could have agreed to corrupt these

writings in the very same places and in the very same way, so as to preserve that agreement between them which is now existing. It follows, therefore, that the Sacred Writings of the Jews in the present day are the same with those that were in existence before the time of our Saviour. And they were the same with those which had been delivered from a remote antiquity.

Now, those writings declare that Moses was inspired of God ; that he was sent on a divine mission ; that he was to reveal the mind of God to mankind ; and that other prophets like unto him would be raised up in succession after him. You might hesitate to believe that for the sake of Moses ; but these writings, that declare him to have made these assertions, declare, at the same time, that supernatural wonders were performed by him in attestation of them : such as turning his rod into a serpent, and that serpent back to a rod again ; such as bringing into the land of Egypt swarms of frogs, insects, and locusts, and thick darkness that might be felt ; such as destroying all their first-born, at the dead of night, both of man and beast ; such as dividing the Red Sea, receiving the Law from God in thunder and lightning on a mountain, fetching water from a rock ; and his successor, dividing Jordan ; and the prophets after him, writing in the name of God. Now, though you might disbelieve Moses for his own sake, you are compelled to believe him for the works' sake. And if you believe the Old Testament, you must the New ; because the New Testament is founded upon that ; it fulfils its prophecy, it fills up its outline. There is a perfect consent and agreement between the two ; they answer to one another just like the two cherubim on each side of the ark, looking each other in the face, smiling upon and countenancing each other. So that to receive the Old Testament and reject the New, is manifestly inconsistent, and is ground on which no one can stand : both must be received, or both must be rejected.

It seems, then, very clear, upon principles of human reasoning, that every man to whom the Scriptures come is bound to receive them as the Word of God ; and no man on earth can justify himself for receiving the word of man and rejecting the Word of God. And as that Word of God, which he rejects, bears the highest impress of his nature, and is fraught with momentous consequences to his own peace and welfare, so his rejection of it bears the stamp of equal folly and guilt. And as he is bound to receive the Scriptures, so he is bound to receive them in their plain and consistent sense, however strange that sense may be, as the ground of their divine authority, and at once—as soon as he perceives the plain and consistent sense of Scripture. He is not to wait till he can comprehend the whole of the facts asserted, or perceive himself their propriety and fitness : that would be no honour to the Divine Author, but a compliment to his own understanding. But as the will of man must submit itself to the will of God in the affair of precept ; that is, as he must do all that God enjoins, whether it be agreeable to him or not ; so the understanding of man must submit itself to the understanding of God in the affair of doctrine. What God says, he must believe on its divine authority : even reason itself demonstrates to every man that the finite must subject itself to the Infinite.

But though it is clear on principles of human reasoning, that every man to whom the Scriptures may come, or who may hear of them, and could receive them, is bound so to do ; and that his reason will condemn him if he do not—that he is without excuse, upon his own principles, if he do not receive them, yet it must be conceded, such is the worldliness and sinfulness of human nature that he cannot believe so as to be influenced by them without the aid of the

Spirit of God who indited the Sacred Books. But the aid of that Spirit is promised to all that ask him; and no man shall be wanting of that evidence, who is not wanting to himself by neglecting to seek it at the hand of God. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

If I seem to have laid the foundations in some minds that needed not to have them laid again, it will surely be no harm to you to be well assured of their solidity, and no mean inducement to build more firmly on them. But the unsettled state of many persons' minds, their hesitancy to begin to be religious, or their tendency to begin in an improper way, without going to the foundation of things—and the bold and reckless sentiments put forth by other men—seem to render it a duty of the ministers of religion at the present day to advert to this topic. If what has been said shall serve to strengthen those that believe, and to further them in their attempts to awaken and to convince others, it will be no labour lost. It is my growing conviction, that the platform is about to be laid for the universal establishment of the Sacred Scriptures. Every attempt, therefore, to extend and to increase the conviction of their divine origin, by an appeal to first principles, is to fall in with the designs of God in his present movements on earth. Idolatry, superstition, and scepticism, together with all other refuges of lies, must be swept away; perhaps, by the storm and the hail of the divine judgments. The more necessary, then, it is to induce men, by arguments addressed to reason and conscience, to embrace the Sacred Scriptures, lest, at their universal establishment, they should demand the destruction of them as their opponents.

Look into your own souls for a confirmation of what has been said. Read the Scriptures, praying to the Great Founder of the universe that he would lead you into all the truth; saying, with John Ryland—"O God, if there be a God, let me know thee, and let me know thy Word." And let the people, who do know their God, be strong and do exploits. Daring insinuations against the Scriptures, confidently put forth and frequently repeated, do produce an impression. For you know the weakness of human nature. Scandal against any thing, however contrary it be to all your well-examined former convictions, will nevertheless make an impression, and produce a kind of coolness. So it is with scandal against the Bible. Innuendoes against the Scriptures, daringly put forth and frequently repeated; arguments, that have been refuted and answered a thousand times, put forth with effrontery as if for the first time, and frequently sounded in the ear, make an impression on the mind through the weakness of human nature.

Then let the friends of Divine revelation be equally industrious, and a thousand times more confident. Let the zeal of the emissaries of infidelity and superstition provoke the zeal of the friends of Divine Revelation. You have staked your eternal all upon the truth of the Sacred Scriptures: then show that, for the sake of that truth, you can bear all things, can endure all things, can rejoice in all things. The more the truth is known by her advocates, the more those advocates will rise up in her defence; and the more the advocates of truth defend her, the more shall she dignify and honour them here; and the more shall the God of love cover them with happiness and honour for ever.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

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REV. T. BINNEY,

POULTRY CHAPEL, MONDAY EVENING, DEC. 2, 1833.

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Daniel ii. 31 to 45.

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THE prophecy in this chapter, and the prophecy in the seventh are identical, or parallel; they relate to the same thing. The prophecy in the seventh chapter, in which four different beasts are successively presented, and then afterwards a man introduced as "the ancient of days," has been set up to answer to the four different metals in the image, and to the stone cut out of the mountain, smiting the image, and then filling the whole earth. It shall be my object this evening, to occupy your time by a few observations on the latter idea in the passage; that this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, after smiting the images in its increase, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth; the interpretation, that this applies to the kingdom that the God of heaven is to set up; and the assertion of the prophet, that the dream was certain and the interpretation sure.

The stone being cut out of the mountain without hands, is a phrase used in Scripture, to convey to us the idea of spirituality: as, for instance, our present body represented as "the earthly house of this tabernacle," it is material; but the house in the heavens is "a house not made with hands," that is spiritual. We have the phrase two or three times in the Scriptures, and it is used for the term spiritual. The cutting out of the stone without hands marks, I apprehend, the spirituality of the kingdom. The material is very unpromising, when compared with the reality. Though the stone is represented here as possessing mighty power, it does not possess that from any inherent property which it possesses, but from the vigour of the arm by which it is employed. The material, too, is utterly contemptible when compared with the others; it is indeed contemptible in the eyes of those who are dazzled with the gold, the silver, the brass, and iron. It is intended by the idea coming under the figure of a stone to be contemptible and despicable; yet to be possessed of such a power as to break the image in pieces, and scattering it all as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and, at length, becoming a mountain, and ultimately filling the whole earth.

You will look in the first place, at *the circumstances of the increase which is here predicted*. The stone came from the mountain—either impelled through the air by an invisible hand, or rolling along the plain—smiting the feet of the image, and destroying it; and then the stone gradually increased. Now, I think, the idea here is, gradual advancement. It did not suddenly start up and fill the whole earth, and as it were darken the heavens; but I apprehend there

is the idea of gradual increase. I do not know that in the dream that increase was represented as always advancing with the same rapidity. I do not know whether it was or was not, very likely it was not; and ere it filled the whole earth its increase might be sometimes gradual, and sometimes more rapid. But the idea presented to our attention is, the ultimate effect of the extent of that increase. We cannot lose sight of the thought that there is something very mysterious about the bare idea of a stone increasing and growing, we cannot tell how. There is something, I think, intended to be conveyed by that, of the mysteriousness of the power and of the agency by which this material, apparently so contemptible and unpromising, increases and continues to increase.

Then there is *its ultimate extent*. It increased and increased until it filled the whole earth. I do not know how that was represented in the dream, but certainly the impression was conveyed to the mind of the man, to whom God, by this figure, was setting forth what was to come to pass in the latter days. The ultimate extent of the kingdom was exhibited by the stone becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth, all other kingdoms and nations being destroyed and superseded, as it were, by it. Not, I apprehend, that nations and kingdoms are to cease, or that there shall be any thing like such a reign. I do not admit that there is to be such an alteration in the character and form of these kingdoms, (God's kingdom is in the heart alone) as that there shall be no such things as nations and particular forms of government, or secular societies and confederacies; but, I apprehend, they will be very different sorts of nations to those represented by these metals. Men confederate together generally for the purpose of conquest, or tyranny, or selfishness; for their patriotism is selfishness, and the very professions of liberty among the ancients was the liberty of the few over the many, the liberty of the masters over the slaves. I apprehend, therefore, that though nations will exist to the end of time, yet this spiritual kingdom of God will co-exist along with them; and it will be the unlimited spiritual reign of truth and piety conveyed to all hearts, operating upon all characters, regulating all movements, private domestic, social, and public; and thus, while the confederacies of human beings will remain, this will be the grand universal reign of truth, godliness, and peace throughout the whole earth.

Then the last idea is *its perpetuity*. It is to be continued for ever and ever. It is not to be left as these other nations successively were, to other people and other forms of government, or to other secular societies and confederacies; but is to continue for ever and ever, never to be superseded. Now, I think, we should take this idea along with us; this kingdom that is to continue for ever and ever, is to be co-extensive with the present system of things, and will continue also throughout eternity. But we have only here to do with the present world. The phrase "for ever and ever" occurs in many parts of Scripture, meaning co-extensive and co-eval with the present system of things, extending all along the line of the present system. This kingdom which is to last for ever and ever, is that very same kingdom which begins in the stone; the kingdom of the mountain is the kingdom of the stone.

What do we learn from that? We learn that this dispensation of ours, the Gospel dispensation, and the Gospel church, as it now exists, is an ultimate dispensation. It is not a preparatory dispensation; it is not to be superseded; it is not introductory to any thing else. It is this very kingdom of the stone,

that is to last for ever and ever. I make no distinction between the kingdom of the mountain and kingdom of the stone; they are the very same thing; the stone is the mountain, and the mountain is the stone. The mountain is the stone with its elements and properties extended and extended for ages. And so I say, the nature of this dispensation which is set up is, that it is to be co-extensive with the present system of things, not to be superseded by any other dispensation, and not introductory to any other.

Two or three observations will suffice on the circumstance of *its* certainty. The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. It refers to the kingdom of Messiah; it refers to Gospel times: and you see that very distinctly by looking to the parallel prophecy in the seventh chapter. The kingdom is given to the Son of Man. Let us keep in view this fact, that this dream, and the interpretation given by the prophet, is sure and certain; that the kingdom of God set up by Messiah (for even the Jews interpret the stone of Messiah) is sure and certain. Therefore we feel a delight in the contemplation of the fact, that there is an adaptation in our holy religion for the great purpose which is here marked out, an adaptation to the general and essential purposes of the great principles of human nature. Wherever you find man's heart and man's nature, you find something which Christianity is just adapted to meet; adapted to meet its wants, its capacities, and its aspirings, and to satisfy, direct, and cultivate them aright. There is an adaptation to the mind of every individual, and there is an adaptation to their external affairs, an adaptation to men existing under any particular form of government that may be set up in the world, to any particular form of secular administration. There is, therefore, a propriety in our indulging the delightful thought that the interpretation of the dream is sure, and that the Gospel shall go on conquering and to conquer, increasing and increasing until it shall fill the whole earth.

Then there is another thought which lies on the surface of Scripture, which meets us perpetually, and is of great practical advantage, that although we admit, most unequivocally, the work to be God's, we also admit, unequivocally, the mysteriousness of the movement, under, as it were, the omnipotence of God, by which the stone is increased. We admit most unequivocally, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." We admit that God set up the kingdom, that God will carry it on, and that God will complete it; and we delight in thus referring every thing to God. But we must never forget that God in his sovereignty, his condescension, and his benevolence, has determined that this shall be accomplished by human instrumentality. God could very easily do without us, he could convert the world without preachers; he could convert the world without Bibles; he could edify the church without the recurrence of Sabbaths and ordinances. God does not need to have his omnipotence aided, (the very term is absurd) by your instrumentality. But God has chosen—and there is sovereignty, and condescension, and privilege, and kindness towards us in the very choice—to effect and fulfil his purposes by the instrumentality of His church. It shall be the stone expanding and enlarging; it shall not be other masses of stone cut out without hands, brought and applied to the original mass; it is not by God thus miraculously and marvellously interposing to fulfil and to accomplish; it is not that there shall come one after another in the same miraculous manner, pieces of rock to fill the earth, that it shall be seen enlarging and increasing. Oh, never let us forget, brethren, it is by the energy, the influence, the might, the

zeal of the church, that is expanding like the leaven that shall leaven the whole lump, and diffuse itself throughout the world.

God is present, positively and personally present, in every scene of idolatry. God is positively present in every heathen temple; he is present at every idolatrous festival; he is actually present in the very midst of the worshippers of all man's absurd and ridiculous superstitions. Aye, he is in the presence of his whole church; he is observing them, and his eye is upon them all; he is listening to their insults, observing their blasphemies, their fanaticism, their absurdity, and yet he does not put forth directly his power to enlighten, to convert, to sanctify, and to make them all that he could delight in. But he could do that, and why does he not do it? God in his benevolence and love to mankind, is personally present in the midst of them all; why, then, is it they are not brought to him and taught to love him? Why, because the instrument is not there, the record is not there, the preaching and interpreting of the record is not there; the instrumentality that he has determined to employ is not there, and therefore God cannot work; it may be said with perfect propriety, God cannot work, because he determines to do it by instruments; as he is necessary to us, we are, in some measure, necessary to him; it is from the necessity of things that God is necessary to us, but it is of his own sovereign pleasure that we are necessary to him. Let us remember always, that human instrumentality is necessary in order that the little stone may become a mountain, and fill the whole earth.

Now, why has not the stone grown larger? Why is it not by this time a mountain? Why does it not fill the whole earth? A great many reasons may be found, some of which we have to refer to the divine sovereignty, to the secret things that belong to God. But there are other things that belong to us, and causes to which we ought to give the most earnest heed. For my part, I have no hesitation at all about saying, that I think the connexion, alliance, and confederacy, unnatural and improper friendship of the church with the world, has been a great obstacle in the past ages of Christianity, and in the present, to the going forth of God's chariot in all its freedom and in all its power. Men have taken God's chariot, have decorated it, and emblazoned it, and have put upon it their splendid furniture: thus, impeding its wheels and preventing it from going on in all its freedom, conquering and to conquer. I am afraid they have done more; they have frequently put another chariot in the place of God's chariot, and then more injury was done than good. Just the same impiety and absurdity that would have been committed, if, when Jericho was to fall they had substituted gold or silver trumpets for the rude ram's-horns they were directed to employ; or if they had decorated their rams'-horns with all the little bits of finery and all the splendour they could exhibit, for the purpose of giving dignity and patronage to Almighty God. Oh, no, brethren, the stone was cut out without hands. The Christian church, before it was encumbered with wealth, went on with God in the midst of her, and the shout of a king accompanied her; and it will do so again! We exult in the thought—we feel confident in it.

This great and delightful object has been impeded by the oblivion of the church. The church forgot both the duty and the privilege of the work: she soon forgot when she fell into luxury and ease, the solemn obligation resting upon her from Christ, that so long as there was a corner of the earth in which there was not a preacher, the command remained to be fulfilled—"Go into a.



the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature." We are not alive to the fulness and the intensity of this obligation yet; we forget that duty and privilege, obligation and honour, are united, and that the highest glory of man is, to be a co-worker with God, to sympathize, as it were, with God's mind, with God's aid, and with God's purposes; to be as it were appropriated, taken hold of, and united by the Divine Being to himself; to be employed as a fellow agent in carrying on that great work which is emphatically termed the plan of Jehovah, on which the eternal mind looks with complacency. There is nothing grander than this in heaven, and angels feel themselves honoured in the fulfilment of these duties and obligations, aiding in any manner God's great purposes of benevolence in the universe: they feel it to be an honour to be employed here in the work which rests on you and me, at once as an obligation, and as a manifestation of the kindness and benevolence of God in giving us a privilege so splendid, a duty so magnificent. But we have forgotten this. We want our sensibilities refined in order that we may perceive all the goodness of God towards us, in making the conversion of the world to rest upon the church. It will be well, then, to remember that the Gospel dispensation is here spoken of under the idea of a kingdom—the kingdom of God, setting up a kingdom.

But, brethren, I cannot close without saying, that if you and I are true Christians, as we profess to be, we are subjects of the kingdom of God. A kingdom implies laws, authority, duty, respect, reverence for the government under which we live, under which we act, and by which we are protected. Let us feel that, and let us act as obedient, devoted, humble, faithful subjects of Him who is the Head and King of that government under which we live, and by which we are protected. Remember that the kingdom of God is within you, in the reign and power of principle, in the influence of the Spirit and the power of God operating upon the heart. Oh, how this animates us when we think of it! What, am I beset and surrounded by enemies? Have I adversaries? Am I called to a warfare—am I called to a contest? Yes; but the kingdom of God is within me; I have the power of God on my side; I have omnipotence to aid me, and, therefore, so long as my faith keeps hold of the attributes of God, these attributes are continually by me, they are on my side, they are round about me, and the enemy must pierce through them to injure me. God is our defence, our refuge, our home, our resting place, our security, and our strong tower. There is something delightful, both in thinking that we are under the government of God as subjects, and that we have the kingdom of God within us to give us vigour for the work of Christ.

Then I think we may feel from this subject, that we need have no fears about the ultimate realization of the intentions of God, all our fear ought to be with respect to ourselves; our fear should be, whether we are faithful to our trust, faithful to our God, faithful to our country, faithful to our church, faithful to the world, faithful to posterity. They are in our hands; they are in the hands of the church—that church which is the salt of the earth, which is to be the light of the world, from which is to go forth all healing influence, and all pure and accurate knowledge. We occupy a solemn position in the church of God, coming in between the fountain of eternal truth, of eternal light and joy, and those dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of cruelty, which are to be illumined and vivified through us. We are standing between the living and the dead; between the eternal God—between the throne of God and the hearts and spirits of his ignorant creatures. That is the position of

God's people: it is a solemn and awful position; and it becomes us to feel it, that we may be impressed with its obligation, as well as feel its delight.

And now, brethren, at the close of nearly another year, oh, let us impress upon our hearts that we shall soon have done with days, and months, and years, and times. We shall soon pass into that determined and fixed state, in which we shall have to experience, either the results and consequences of dying in our sins, for ever and ever; or experience the results and consequences of the mediation and sacrifice of Him in whom we profess to trust, and in whom we profess to believe. Oh, brethren, though we are so near the end of another of those great divisions of our time, yet the message may be sent with respect to some of us, even yet, so late, just upon the close of this division of our time—"This year," into the last month of which we have now entered—"This year thou shalt die." Some of you before the termination of this month may know the grand secret; you may have penetrated into the eternal world, and entered on that everlasting and unchanging kingdom, to which the kingdom of which we have been speaking leads, and is introductory. Happy, happy are they to whom sudden death will be but a sudden, abundant, glorious entrance into the presence of our God and his Christ! Is that your case—is it mine? Oh, brethren, are we thus living—are we thus preparing to die? Are we dying daily? Are we ready to be offered? Are we feeling an anxiety to be thus fitted for our departure? Yes, brethren, you and I shall soon be gone; we shall soon have left this glorious and noble work to others; our prayers will be ended, and our preaching will be ended, and our efforts will be ended! Oh, shall we meet before the throne of God, and of the Lamb? Shall we form a part of that great and glorious company which shall constitute God's redeemed church; be satisfied with his likeness, and happy in his presence? May God grant that these few practical hints may be impressed upon our hearts; that his kingdom may come, and that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and that you and I may be fitted by the sanctification of the Spirit to do that will, and to enjoy the beatitudes and the blessedness that are in reserve for his faithful people!

## ISAIAH'S VISION.

REV. J. STRATTEN,

PADDINGTON CHAPEL, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1833.

\* In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."—ISAIAH vi. 1—4.

"IN *the year* that king Uzziah died," which, according to chronology, was the year in which Romulus, the founder of the Roman empire, was born. "In the year that king Uzziah *died*:" for kings must die: "All flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof is as the flower of grass." 'The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, all the beauty, and all the wealth of the world, await alike the inevitable hour.

"The path of glory leads but to the grave."

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" But God lives: he is the Everlasting King; his throne endureth to all generations; his dominion does not pass away: and he revealed himself in unwonted splendour and majesty to the mind of his prophet when king Uzziah died. And so we are to look away from the mortality and mutability of man to the immortality and immutability of God. Uzziah died under a cloud; his character was eclipsed; he did that which he ought not: but God's glory is unshadowed, the divine honour is unimpeached; the purity of heaven shines forth the brighter amid the guilt and the infirmity of man.

"In the year that king Uzziah *died*," was *this vision*. I may remark, that all the communications of God and of his truth to the mind of man, have been gradual and progressive. There was some radiance in the first promise; there was a brighter light in the patriarchal age; the records of Moses contained still more illumination; every prophet added something to the common stock; and, at length, "Life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel." It is so in individual minds. First of all, there is but a dim and imperfect apprehension of the elemental truths; in process of time, there is a firmer grasp of them, and a clearer insight into them obtained; at last, there is the full-grown man in the knowledge of the Gospel, an arrival at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And it is so with men in office, with inspired men in the church, with those who sustain ministerial functions. Moses received his illumination by degrees; David did not receive the plenitude of inspiration all at once; Ezekiel and Daniel saw one vision of the Lord after another; the Apostles were pre-

pared for their ministry by three years' tuition of Jesus Christ; and even after that, they were not fully qualified until the communication of the Pentecostal day; and, which is the most extraordinary illustration of all, even of Christ himself it is said, that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." So we find the prophet before us, who had exercised the duties of his ministry many years antecedently to this period, now confirmed, as it were, in the prophetic office. There were larger and more amazing communications of God and his truth to his mind; there was a new era, so to speak, in his ministry and prophetic functions. And I may take occasion to observe, that there are now times and seasons in which the mind of a man of God is baptized with a deeper, a richer, and more overflowing unction; there are periods in which his spirit is awakened and stirred within him by fresh visions and revelations of the Lord. There are points at which he is shown and made manifest to Israel in his graces and gifts, in the weight of his responsibility and obligation. And I suppose we all find, that, as we advance in grace, and deepen in experience, our duties accumulate, and they become increasingly important. It was so in the case that is before us. Uzziah died; but God opened to the mind of his prophet a richer light, a new career, a vaster usefulness. Then was revealed this vision: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

There are but two points in this passage to which I am about to invite your attention this morning. The first is, the glory of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus to the prophet's mind; and the second is, the manner in which the seraphim witnessed the deed.

#### Here is, first—THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN CHRIST TO THE MIND OF THE PROPHET.

He says, "*I saw*;" for his eyes were opened. He was, as we express it, broad awake; his senses were not locked up. There were other instances in which God, in dreams and visions of the night, did impart religious knowledge to the minds of his servants. But, in the case before us, all the senses were in exercise; all the mental faculties were in full power, and in self-possession. It had been so antecedently with Balaam. "The man whose eyes were opened hath said, he hath heard which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." It was the case, subsequently to this, with Ezekiel; "I looked," he says, "and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself." It was so with the apostle Peter; he was entranced, and he saw heaven opened, and a sheet let down from thence by its four corners, filled with all manner of living creatures. It was the case with the apostle John; "I was in the spirit," he says, "on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet; and I turned to see the voice that spake with me; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks." He was not asleep; his eyes were opened; but Deity had the possession of his faculties. God filled and replenished his mind with divine communication, as he did in the case which is before us.

The scene of this vision is said to be the temple. You have heard much of the temple. It stood in all its pomp and spaciousness at this period. As you are aware, there was the outer court, the principal objects in which were the vast altar of sacrifice, and near to it the great brazen laver. There were then folding doors, and a vast veil, leading into an inner and very splendid apart-

ment ; the principal objects in which apartment were the golden altar of incense, the table of shewbread, and the seven-branched candlestick, kept perpetually burning night and day. Within this apartment, behind another veil, was one more costly and glorious still ; the ceiling and the floor, and the three sides of it, were of pure and burnished gold ; and at the upper end of it was the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory shadowing it with their wings ; and in the coffer were Aaron's rod that budded, the pot of manna, the tables of the covenant, the autograph of Moses, the original writing of the Pentateuch. Of these things the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, said he could not then speak particularly. In the case which is now before us, both these veils are supposed to be removed ; the whole scenery is laid open ; the august glories of the king's palace are made manifest ; both rooms are thrown into one ; and the Lord himself is seen sitting upon his throne, filling the temple with his light and with his splendour. And there is the greatest propriety in this because the vision related to Gospel times, when the way to the Holiest of all should be revealed, and, as it were, made manifest.

The prophet is in the temple. " I saw *the Lord*." The word is " ADONI:" not that which expresses the essence, the being, the glory of the Great and Almighty God ; but yet, as the seraphim celebrate the praises of Jehovah of Hosts, and as that name does express Deity in its essential attributes, in its primitive and self-existent glory, we must infer that God is here in his highest character, and in the exercise of his exclusive prerogative. And yet we are assured from the testimony of the Apostle John, that this was a vision of Jesus Christ, for he quotes the words which we find subsequently in the passage—" These things spake Isaiah when he saw his glory," that is Christ's glory, " and spake of him." We can be, therefore, at no loss to determine who that person is whose glory here shines, or what is the form of his manifestation. What Isaiah saw was, the likeness of a human person, embosomed in divine majesty, surrounded and encompassed by transcendent light, and majesty, and beauty. The same Being had appeared, without doubt, nearly in the same form, in earlier times. I have no doubt but it was a human form in glory which appeared to our first parents in the garden ; and that in that way God condescended to walk with Enoch, and to hold communication with Noah. Abraham was permitted to behold his face ; and of Moses it was said, " I will speak to him in no dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold ;" and they who went up into the mountain " saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." Ezekiel beheld him in the same mode of manifestation ; there were the great cherubic figures, the vast revolving wheels, and these sustaining a crystal expansion, a vast slab as we should call it ; and upon this a throne, and upon the throne the likeness of the appearance of a man in glory ; and round about the throne there was a rainbow, in light like unto an emerald. Daniel saw him also clothed in the fine gold of Uphaz. The Apostle John says, " His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength ; his hair was as white as wool, as white as snow, and his eyes like unto a flame of fire." We identify in all these descriptions the same divine and glorious person : it is a human form, but compassed round about by uncreated splendour and purity.

He saw in the temple the Lord of Hosts : and he was upon *his throne* ; that is, the mercy-seat. The mercy-seat was upon the ark, and was encompassed

around by an ornament, which was called its crown. It was upon this that the propitiatory blood was sprinkled: it was to this spot that the high priest came once a year: it was over it that the supernatural symbol of the Divine presence of light and life and glory, self-sustained, did hover. This is called in Scripture, God's throne. It was from thence he dispensed his justice and favours, freely without money and without price. There was no access to him, but by the sacrificial blood; but when the priest came with the sacrificial blood in his hands there was access. It is in allusion to it that the Apostle Paul enjoins us to come boldly, "that we may find mercy, and obtain grace to help us in time of need," and we are invited to enter into the holiest of all with confidence, in the full assurance of faith. We come to God upon his throne, both of glory and of grace.

It is said to be "*high and lifted up*" Upon the throne, as we have represented it, the mercy-seat, was a cloud; and the human form in glory in the text is supposed to be seated upon the cloud, embosomed as it were in the cloud. When it is said to be "*high and lifted up*," it denotes the loftiness of the Divine nature. God is the High and the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity. It intimates also his authority, supremacy, and power. It is a power in respect to might. There can be no competition; there ought to be no contradiction or resistance. His throne is like the mountain of the Lord's house, "established upon the top of the mountains," and "made higher than the hills." He is "King of kings and Lord of lords;" and however exalted earthly potentates may be, we must remember, that there is no higher than that one who is emphatically "*The Highest*;" and language can express no more. It denotes also the repose, the rest, the complacency, and the satisfaction of the Divine mind. Sitting upon a throne: there is no alarm; there is no fear; there is no agitation; there is no disturbance. God is in possession of his empire; He is King, and his prerogative is secure. God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness: His counsels shall stand: He speaks, and it is done: it is a volition, the facility and the quickness of thought, and the purpose is accomplished. "Sing ye praises unto God; God is greatly exalted.

He sitteth upon his throne. The passage describes the dominion which Jesus Christ enjoyed, and the power that he exercised, antecedently to his incarnation in his divine nature; and there is the same power, splendour, and pre-eminence now, only that it exists and is exercised in connexion with his real humanity. It is known that "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth."

"I saw the Lord upon a throne; high and lifted up," "and *his train* filled the temple." This word relates to the ornamental and flowing robe of an oriental potentate, worn upon state occasions. But what shall we say of the throne of Deity? "Thou hast clothed thyself," it is said in the Psalms, "with majesty. The Lord hath clothed himself with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself. Strength and majesty are within him; glory and beauty are in his face. Thou hast clothed thyself with light as with a garment"—flashes of celestial light, beams of uncreated splendour; and these filling the temple, replenishing and illuminating all its parts. These are the train of Deity, the train spoken of in the text. And so we have the Lord of Hosts in his temple, upon his throne exalted, filling the temple with his glory. It defines and describes exactly the pre-existent dignity and divine perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ, antecedent to his incarnation; and it is, as I think, the

exact meaning of the Apostle Paul, in that remarkable expression—"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" "with God," who is "the image," that is, the manifestation and shewing forth, "of the invisible God."

This, then, is the view of the Divine Majesty which the passage opens. Permit me to call your attention for a moment to a few inferences which we deduce from it.

The first is the *astonishing condescension and the unparalleled love of our Lord Jesus Christ, in assuming our nature and in suffering for our sins.* The Apostle John says, in reference to the fact of our Lord's appearance in human flesh, "We beheld his glory," (not as Isaiah did) "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And He who was in the form of God, and did not think it "robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and 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 and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Can any conception be more amazing? The death of the cross! You remember the cross; the ignominy, the cruelty and blood of it, without the gates of Jerusalem. You remember the execrations of the multitude; how even the malefactor who was crucified with him did cast the same accusation in his teeth; and how the people, who came to that sight, did smite upon their breasts, and return unto their homes. We ask, Is this He? Is this the same? Is this the identical Being whose glory Isaiah saw, and before whose dominion seraphim did bow down and worship? It is He! It is the self-same Being. But he is seen there in the fact of his substitution, in the light of his capacity as the Surety and Saviour of his people. He came voluntarily to this, for us men and for our salvation—made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. "Who," says the Apostle Paul, in another place, "being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, when he had by himself made expiation for our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens," where there is the self-same principle of antecedent glory and divine dignity, and terrible humiliation; the triumphant accomplishment of his work thereby. And then the repose, and honour, and blessedness, which follow at the right-hand of the majesty in the heavens. Such is our Lord Jesus, and we may well exclaim—

"Oh, for this love, let rocks and hills,  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
Their Saviour's praises speak."

I infer again that *there is a mental vision which we have of him*; that there is an intellectual apprehension which we enjoy. We see him in his word and in his ordinances; and so clear and so luminous is the manifestation, that in reference to some points it could not be more satisfactory if we beheld it with the naked and the bodily eye. I see Christ in the Bible every where, and in his ordinances every where, filling all in all. There are some who seem to see him no where: you will bear witness, at the least, that my ministry among you is a sweet odour of Christ Jesus, a perpetual exhibition of the Lord Christ, in his glory and in his grace, in his offices and in his work, as he is Prophet, Priest, and King of the universal Church. We see Jesus, and expect to see him soon in a distinct and literal sense; for how many steps are there between

me and death? How far are you from your departure out of this world into another? It is his will that we should see his glory: we do not know what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.

I ask, are you ready? Could you ascend? Are you prepared? Is your eye familiarized with the intellectual vision, first as qualifying you for the opening cloud, and then for the full exhibition afterwards? Are you in a state of concord with God—of harmony with Jesus Christ? Are you baptized with the Spirit that pervades all heaven, so that, transferred to its occupations and employments, you could take your harp, seize your lyre, engage in the song, join in the anthem and hallelujah, with the jubilating myriads that are on high?

Or are you in a state of darkness and wretchedness, of distance and alienation from him? If it be this latter, I do beseech you to acquaint yourselves with him now and be at peace, to wash in the fountain which is still open for sin and for uncleanness; that, being clothed with the white vesture, you may appear at last among those who shout aloud, "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb for ever." You must see him, whether you will or no: every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him: and upon his great white throne will he appear, in more majesty than even that which Isaiah saw. "Before him," says St. John, "the earth and the heavens did flee away, and there was found for them no place. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and the judgment was set, and the books were opened, and they were judged out of those books." There I must stand to give an account of my doctrine, and my ministry; and you must stand to give an account of the manner in which you have heard and received it. Oh, that I may deliver it in with joy, and not with grief; not on my own account only, but on your's also! And then we shall see him for ever more, without a veil between. The loftiest and the loveliest conceptions which we have of the final and everlasting felicity is, that we are to walk in the light of the Father, and of the Lamb. The nations of the Saviour shall behold him as he is, and be with him in perfect freedom, in consummate liberty and joy, in all that splendour and honour, and illumination. This is the vision of the glory of God as made manifest in Christ.

And now the second thing is, **THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SERAPHIM WITNESSED HIS GLORY.** It is said that "above it," that is, the throne, "stood the seraphim." It may mean "by the side of it," or "round about it."

But who and what are the seraphim, and how many of them are we to conceive present on this occasion? I take it that there was a company—that there was a considerable number of them; as in all remarkable and extraordinary discoveries of himself, his plans, and his glory in this world, God has had his ministers and his attendants along with him. God, it is said, "came down at Sinai; from his right-hand went a fiery-law;" and he was attended by myriads of his holy ones. When the ark was led up to Zion, it was said again, "God is among them as in the holy-place, as at Sinai: the chariots of God are twenty thousand," (that is a certain number for an uncertain) "even thousands of angels." When Christ was incarnate, a multitude of the heavenly hosts carolled him into the world. When he went up, having finished his undertaking, they attended him in his ascension, and exclaimed, "Lift up your heads ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in." When the final judg-



ment is executed upon the Papacy, and the Ancient of Days is revealed, there are said to be around his throne thousands and tens of thousands of the holy ones. At the last judgment, it is said, God will come with all his holy angels. And it is most true, that when Deity is in the house, the angels are at the door; and when God is made manifest in his glory in his temple, the seraphim are present with their wings, veiling their faces and their feet, that they may bow down to adore him.

But who are the seraphim? I take it that they are not angels in the strict sense of that word; nor arch-angels, if there be any such creatures, the chiefs and rulers in the eternal empire; nor cherubim, though the cherubim are represented in Ezekiel's vision in a way very similar to these; nor the four and twenty elders, nor the immortalities, of whom we read in the book of the Revelations: but I take them to be a distinct order of celestial beings, bearing a distinct name, and which I think occurs not any where else in the Holy Scriptures. And it opens to my mind a vast and most delightful view of the intelligent and glorified beings who populate the divine empire. God has praises ascending to his throne besides those which are uttered by human lips; his kingdom is full of light, and every where is he adored and loved and magnified, except in one dark distant corner of his universe, and upon this small, contemptible, and rebel orb.

"Seraphim." We are asking still after their name. The word "seraph" means "a burning one:" the expression means "they are like unto fire." This, then, denotes the subtilty and purity of their nature, or the ardour of their zeal, the intensity of that affection which they bear to God; as if they were almost consumed with the ravishment and the love, the light and the knowledge of Deity. I take this to be the exact import of the expression, first, as denoting the glory of their nature, and secondly, the strength of their affection; the intensity of their love being proportioned to the plenitude of their knowledge.

"Seraphim." They are said to have six wings. "And with twain he did cover his face." "His face." There is amazing intelligence oft-times in the countenance of a man, something celestial and superhuman in the face of a man. It was so with Moses: it was so with Stephen; they saw his countenance as it had been the countenance of an angel. And I was told by a friend of mine, who heard the late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, that there were seasons at which he ascended the pulpit, when he looked more like an angel than like a man; a kind of divine lustre beamed on his countenance, on account of the glory of the message he was to deliver, and the unction of God that was upon him. I recently heard of a clergyman, in a consumption, and supposed to be near to death, who yet in the reading of the liturgy, with a solemn tone of devotion, and in, as it appeared, consummate abstraction of mind, had a celestial, an unearthly aspect. There is something, as I have said, divine, oft-times in the countenance of a man; but then the countenance is mortal: that lustre fades—that beauty goes away. The face of a seraphim, if we could see it, is immortal: the lustre of it is never eclipsed, never fades away.

Yet, whatever the countenance may be, it is said, that he covers his face with his wings. That might be for two reasons; either as being unable to look steadfastly upon God—for even of them, in its strictest sense, it is true that they cannot see God, and live: they cannot sustain the plenitude of his essential being poured in upon their faculties; from them there is something held back, and necessarily concealed; to them the light is in some sense inaccessible; there

is a splendour and a majesty, in the midst of which only Jesus Christ, the son of God, can be embosomed; they could not look fully upon God, and live. Or the second reason is, they were unworthy to do so; for we must not forget, that the heavens are said to be impure in the sight of God; that he charges his holy ones with defectibility: as created beings they are necessarily defectible—they are liable to transgression, and to sin. He looketh upon the moon, and it shineth not: he sealeth up the stars. How feeble are our conceptions of the transcendent purity of God. The seraphim, who had brighter views of it, veiled their faces with their wings. We are told of Abraham, that he bowed with his face to the earth. We are told of Elijah, that he hid his face in his mantle: of Daniel that he kneeled upon his knees: of the Apostle John, that he fell down as one dead: of the seraphim, that they veil their countenances. And, one may say, if these are scarcely accepted, if these illustrious men were scarcely saved, where shall we and our devotion appear?

“With twain he covered his face, and with twain *he covered his feet.*” That is, as having not performed any work or service which is worthy of divine regard. The fact here stated is the sign and symbol of their services and their operations; they felt that they had done nothing meritorious in the divine sight. What shall we say of ourselves? Our righteousnesses are defiled, our very breath is contaminated, more or less, not figuratively, but really and absolutely by sin. And yet God did accept their services, and through Christ he will also accept ours. A cup of cold water: “I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink,” at the day of judgment Christ will say: and the answer is, When? where?

They cover their feet with their wings. It is very remarkable, that in the vision of Christ to the Apostle John, his feet are uncovered, they are revealed; and they are said to shine like fine gold, as if burning in a furnace. The great work of Jesus Christ in its spotless perfection cast the services and the labours of the seraphim into the shade; it is that great work of his by which we are to be justified, and we abandon alike our sins and our services together, that we may confide in it in the matter of our justification. His feet were refulgent and revealed, and, like gold in a great crucible, the brighter and the more splendid, the more fully it was tried.

“With twain he did cover his feet, and *with twain he did fly;*” ready on all occasions promptly to execute the will of God; to be swifter than the wind; to go with a velocity greater than the light. “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, hearkening to the voice of his word.” It is their glory that “with twain they did fly,” and let it be ours also promptly to execute the will of God. If, as Mr. Henry says, they were so ready to come down on their missions and services to us, shall we not also be ready, whenever God shall call, to go up and enjoy glory, and splendour, and blessedness with them?

“And one cried unto another.” One cried, and but one: they spake but one at a time. The text defines what we call a solo. “One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.” There is something delightful in one voice, in one lark rising in the heavens; or, when the shades of evening come down, one bird, a nightingale, warbling in the woods. One human voice has been known to replicate miraculously, and to fill the ears of a vast and death-silent audience; the audience being enchanted by it, held in the most exquisite captivation. What shall it be to hear a seraphim sing? I exaggerate nothing; I come not up to the real import of the text: for it is said, that when he

cried "the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried:" and they were no common posts; they were Jachin and Boaz; they had their names on account of their stature, and strength, and glory, but they trembled at the seraph's voice. I have been told, that on a great musical occasion in Westminster Abbey, in the reign of George the Third, there was one stroke, a swell so deep and so amazing, that the building shook, and that they were afraid of its repetition. But let me tell you, that high anthems are sung in heaven. When they laid that stone, that poor paltry stone, at the building of the second temple, there was shouting which filled all heaven again. But when Christ's great work is done, when all the myriads of the saints shall be gathered home, and all the unsinning creatures in his universe shall be gathered together to be the witnesses, they will raise such a chorus, they will hold such an anthem, as shall make the arches and the canopies of the universe to quiver again, as in sympathetic joy. And I do believe, that in the heavenly world there will be the solitary solo, and the social worship by twos, and by threes, and by fours, and the great united adoration of the immense multitudes of myriads who shall come together on high festive occasions.

"One cried unto another." And what they celebrate is the divine holiness; "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah God of Hosts." God delights in his holiness; he claims it for himself, and his creatures ascribe it to him. And it denotes in this case the transcendent excellence of it. It is uncreated purity; it is not like the holiness of an angel, it is not like the piety of man; it is something distinct and peculiar to himself. It denotes this; and also the delight which they take in contemplating and in celebrating it. God's holiness pervades all his attributes; it is the lustre which is shed over all his attributes and perfections; it is that also in which he himself pre-eminently delights; and the world, sooner or later, will be filled with the light and the glory of the knowledge of it. They said, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS JEHOVAH, GOD OF HOSTS."

## SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

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“**PAUSE**, then, for a moment, and contemplate, with the eye of faith, or if you have **no** faith, with the eye of imagination, this tremendous scene.—Look at that point, far away in the ethereal regions, where the gradually lessening form of our Saviour disappeared from the gaze of his disciples, when he ascended to heaven. In that point see an uncommon, but faint and undefined brightness, just beginning to appear. It has caught the roving eye of yon careless gazer, and excited his curiosity. He points it out to a second, and a third. A little circle soon collects, and various are the conjectures which they form respecting it. Similar circles are formed, and similar objections made, in a thousand different parts of the world. But conjecture is soon to give place to certainty—awful, appalling, overwhelming certainty. While they gaze, the appearance, which had excited their curiosity, rapidly approaches, and still more rapidly brightens. Some begin to suspect what it may prove; but no one dares to give utterance to his suspicions. Meanwhile the light of the sun begins to fade before a brightness superior to his own. Thousands see their shadows cast in a new direction, and thousands of hitherto careless eyes look up at once, to discover the cause. Full clearly they see it; and now new hopes and fears begin to agitate their breasts. The afflicted and persecuted servants of Christ begin to hope, that the predicted, long-expected day of their deliverance is arrived. The wicked, the careless, the unbelieving begin to fear, that the Bible is about to prove no idle tale. And now fiery shapes, moving like streams of lightning, begin to appear indistinctly amidst the bright dazzling cloud, which comes rushing down, as on the wings of a whirlwind. At length it reaches its destined place. It pauses; then, suddenly unfolding, discloses at once a great white throne, where sits, starry resplendent, in all the glories of the Godhead, the man Christ Jesus. Every eye sees him, every heart knows him.

“Too well do the wretched, unprepared inhabitants of earth now know what to expect; and one universal shriek of anguish and despair rises up to heaven, and is echoed back to earth. But louder, far louder than the universal cry, now sounds the last trumpet; and far above all, is heard the voice of the Omnipotent, summoning the dead to arise and come to judgment. New terrors now assail the living: on every side, nay, under their very feet, the earth heaves as in convulsions; graves open, and the dead come forth; while, at the same moment, a change, equivalent to that occasioned by death, is effected by Almighty power on the bodies of the living. Their mortal bodies put on immortality, and are thus prepared to sustain a weight of glory, or of wretchedness, which flesh and blood could not endure. Meanwhile, legions of angels are seen, darting from pole to pole, gathering together the faithful servants of Christ from the four winds of heaven, and bearing them aloft to meet the Lord in the air, where he causes them to be placed at his own right hand, preparatory to the sentence which is to award to them everlasting life.

“Christian, if you would gain more and greater victories over the world than you have ever done, bring this scene often before the eye of your mind, and gaze upon it, till you become blind to all earthly glory. He who gazes long at the sun becomes unsusceptible of impressions from inferior luminaries; and he who looks much at the Sun of Righteousness, will be little affected by any alluring object which the world can exhibit.”—**DR. PAYSON.**

## THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ORIGIN AND THE CONTENTS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, A.M.

PERCY CHAPEL, FITZROY SQUARE, APRIL 18, 1833. *Easter*

"To whom also he shewed himself alive, after his passion, by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."  
—Acts i. 3.

"PASSION," is one of those words which has changed its meaning since our Bible was translated: it then signified "suffering:" it now signifies "anger," or "vehement desire." In this text, it signifies suffering, and the statement here made is, that, to the chosen disciples, Jesus shewed himself alive, after his suffering, assuring them that it was he himself; that he continued so with them for the space of forty days, and that, on those occasions, he conversed with them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. The suffering of the Lord Jesus was a suffering unto death: this the disciples knew. The crucifixion that he endured was no fanciful act, but a real one: it was not conducted by any of his friends or adherents, to leave room for the suspicion of any fraudulent connivance or plan, whereby they might secure the subsequent advantage of a supposed resurrection. It was conducted by the Roman soldiers, who had no personal interest in the matter beyond securing their wages for their recompence; and the multitude on the occasion were the inveterate enemies of Jesus, the priests and elders of the Jews. It was done publicly also, in a public place, on a public day, in the presence of a concourse of people; and, as if to invite an extra share of publicity to the act, over his cross was written "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." His burial was also well known: it was, indeed, transacted by his friends, but it was carefully witnessed by his enemies, whose jealous fears prompted them to adopt precautions which afterwards turned into proofs against themselves. Their fears were urgent: "We remember," said they to the Roman governor, "that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." The Roman governor left them to take their own course: their precautions were well concerted: they set a watch of Roman soldiers opposite the sepulchre, and they sealed the stone. Here was a double precaution: the watch was set to guard against the disciples, and the stone was sealed to guard against fraudulent collusion among the watchmen. In the meantime, the disciples were wholly disconcerted: they had expected much from their Master, whilst they were witnesses of his wonderful works and auditors of his wonderful discourses: they expected that he would restore the kingdom to

Israel. Now, their expectations seemed to fail; and, either forgetting his prediction, that he would rise again, or losing faith in it when his enemies triumphed, their hope seemed to be buried in his grave.

It is quite obvious, that the resurrection of Jesus is the turning point of the whole question; the grand fact of revealed religion. In history, facts are plain things: in argument, facts are stubborn things. Opinions may fluctuate and vary, feelings may deceive; but facts are the doings of God, and they alter not with the opinions and feelings of men. It is the peculiar glory of our religion that it rests not upon the opinions of men, however well supported by argument, neither upon the feelings of men, however well regulated by reason; but that it rests upon the truth of God. God loved the world: this was a feeling. Had he retained this feeling in his own bosom, it could have availed us nothing. Had he revealed it in words only, still it could have availed nothing; nay, rather, it would have been worse than nothing; for it would have increased our perplexity, while we perceived that his sense of justice hindered his acting on a feeling of love. But he proved by such a fact that, while it gave most eloquent expression to the existence of God's love, it removed every hindrance to the exercise of God's love. He gave his Son, when the world was about four thousand years old: the Eternal Son of God came into it, "made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law." This was the great fact of the birth of Christ. About thirty-three years after the same wonderful act, Jesus Christ, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," was seized by the hands of wicked men, and unjustly condemned and crucified as a malefactor. This is the great fact of the death of Christ. On the third morning following, the same mysterious Being rose from the dead, laid aside his grave clothes, resumed his flesh, unchanged by corruption and mortality. This is the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. But, now, observe the essential difference between this fact and the other two. The other two, so far as the circumstances connected with them were generally known, were common occurrences. That a child should be born; that a man, after devoting his life, actively and diligently teaching the great truths of religion, and corroborating his statement by wonderful works, to prove him a messenger sent from God—that that man, after all, should meet a violent death, a death apparently provoked by his exceeding zeal and goodness;—these were common things; the Jews were accustomed to such things from the days of Abel: therefore they might admit these facts, and yet deny that there were any doctrines peculiarly connected with them: and they did not deny them. He had lived and died amongst them; and what then? It is true, there were certain peculiarities connected with these facts; but they were not generally known. It was true he was born of a virgin, which could not be said of any other man: it is true he died, by a voluntary act of his own, before the crucifixion would have caused his death: this could not be said of any other man. But these peculiarities were not known; and the fact of his birth and death were readily admitted, and any peculiarities connected with them were easily denied. There were indeed very strange peculiarities connected with them. As concerning his birth, it was declared, that He who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, was manifest in the flesh. He who had "made all things, and without whom not any thing was made that was made," was manifest in the flesh. Again, concerning his death, it was said, that it was a sacrifice for sin; that his blood cleansed from all sin. These were peculiarities indeed; but these were opinions con-

nected with facts, and men might admit the facts, and question the opinions. As touching his birth and his death, therefore, the controversy was not concerning the facts, but concerning the opinions connected with the facts.

But, now, look at the resurrection: here was a strange thing. This was not according to the experience of mankind; the experience of mankind ran the other way. Here was a strong fact, which could not be admitted like the others. The enemies of Christ might admit the birth and the death of Christ, and deny the doctrines; but they could not admit his resurrection, and then deny the doctrines. Whereas, in the other cases, the controversy turned upon opinions connected with facts; in this, the controversy turned on the fact itself. And therefore it is, we find the Apostle reiterating with such earnestness the fact of the resurrection of the Lord. God raised him from the dead: it was not possible that he should be holden of death. This is the preaching throughout the Acts. The fact of the resurrection was the grand theme of the Apostles' discourses; they could not substantiate the doctrines connected with it, unless they first substantiated the fact of the resurrection; and, therefore, you will find, if you trace the history of the apostolical preaching, that the grand theme was the resurrection. That was what peculiarly belonged to the apostolical preaching, for the reason already assigned. The Apostles could not exhibit the doctrines connected with the common facts of Christ's birth and death, until they had made good the uncommon fact of his resurrection.

Now, it is remarkable to observe how the enemies of the Lord Jesus had already pledged themselves on this point respecting the resurrection. When they saw him hanging on the cross, the Chief Priests and Scribes mocked him, and challenged him to come down if he were the Son of God: "Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. We have heard of his birth, and his preaching, and his death; and what then? We admit all these things, and we do not believe him: but now that he is nailed to the tree by the Roman soldiers—now, if he will extricate himself—now, if he will come down—now, it will be such a manifestation of divine power that we will no longer withhold our belief." Now, on their own principles, they were still more pledged to believe if he rose from the grave; because he was more holden there than on the cross—he was further gone when he was buried, than when he was on the tree. If it would have been such a proof of his power, if he had descended from the cross, still more should they yield when he ascended from the tomb. It is a common feeling amongst mankind, that if one rise from the dead, all our prejudices give way at once. It is to this common feeling among men that our Lord addressed himself, when he wished to show the sufficiency of the Scriptures: he told them that if they would "not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead;" as though that was the chief thing which man pants after, and desires as the acme and climax of evidence—that a friend should return from the dead, and tell him of the eternal world. But if the evidence laid before you, or if the sufficiency of Scripture be not sufficient to overcome your unbelief; if you receive not Moses and the Prophets—the pentateuchal history, and the doctrines connected with them: neither would you believe though one rose from the dead. This wish of man's heart, that a man should rise from the dead—this liberty, or rather this pretext of unbelief, was granted in the case of Jesus Christ. God went to the very extremity of what man says he wants for evidence; and he has put man on his trial by this last sign. This is the last sign that he gave—the sign of the Prophet Jonas: that

“as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” And he said at the same time, “Verily, the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here.”

It is evident, then, my brethren, (to resume our argument) that the fact of the resurrection is the grand turning point of revealed religion. Now, I am desirous of shewing, that our Lord did not require immediate belief of that fact without giving proofs of it. Many things he said for which he has advanced no proof; but upon what authority were these things to be received? We must be well satisfied what he is, before we can rely with confidence upon what he said. And this is a most important distinction, a distinction that lies at the very root of all reasonable religion; to distinguish between that for which we must demand reasonable proof, and that which it then becomes reasonable to receive by proof, is a most important distinction. Now, I say, before the Lord Jesus Christ required implicit confidence in what he said, he supplied his disciples with infallible proofs of what he was; that is, before the contents of his communications from heaven were pressed upon the faith of the disciples, the origin of that communication was demonstrated to the reason of his disciples. We must distinguish between the origin of a communication, and the contents of that communication. If we can once be satisfied of the origin of a communication, that it is really from God, then it becomes most reasonable to submit our reason to the contents of that communication. There must be evidence of the origin, and then faith in the contents.

Now, to establish the divine origin of the communication that he made, he must give infallible proofs of who and what he was. This he had all along rested on his resurrection. The works that he worked in life would not prove what he was, because other men, by the power of the Spirit of God, had wrought miracles before: but he rests the grand proof upon his resurrection; here it was to hang. If he be not risen we are yet in our sins, our preaching is vain, our faith is vain. All turns on this point, Is Jesus Christ risen from the dead, or not? If he be not risen I have no proof of what he was, and without proof of what he was, I can have no confidence in what he said: of the one point, I demand reasonable proof before I can place in the other the acquiescence of faith. Now, it is said in the text, that Jesus Christ “shewed himself to the Apostles alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs:” let us examine for a moment of what description these proofs were.

In John xx. we learn, that Jesus came to them when they were assembled together, and shewed himself to them as their old friend and companion, and invited them even to examine the wounds which he bore from the crucifixion, in his hands and in his side, and said to Thomas, who was lingering in unbelief, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.” In Luke xxiv. 38, we learn, that he said to them, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and feet.” And as if that had not been sufficient, as though their eyes might have deceived them so far, he proceeded to give them another infallible proof: “And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye any



meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Now, observe the nature of the proofs he gave them of his resurrection, that it was he himself. They were proofs addressed to their senses and to their reason. They had known him before; they had every opportunity of examining him now again. They saw it was the same person who was submitted to their senses; he had opened their memory; there was a mingled appeal to their reason and their senses. Memory is a part of our reason; he called upon them to exercise that memory; and this, but a few days after they had been going out and in with him. They knew him perfectly, they had seen him put to death, they had seen him buried, they had seen the precautions of his enemies to take care that his body should not be stolen. They knew perfectly well, that stealing his body never entered into their heads; for had they stolen his body, they would have known he did not rise, and that by such deceit and fraud they would gain persecution and contempt. They saw his enemies were desirous to hinder his being raised, and now there was an appeal to their senses, a reasonable proof given to them, applying itself to what was in them already as God's people, to what was already in them as natural men, giving them an infallible proof that Jesus Christ was alive after his death. On this, when their understandings were opened, to recollect what he had said on this would depend the whole proof of what he was. When this was reasonably established, and they had thus a conclusive and infallible proof of what he was, then, but not before, he could most appropriately demand faith from them in all he said.

My brethren, this is a principle of the very deepest importance; it appeals to the Holy Scriptures themselves for its proofs. The proofs offered of the origin of the Holy Scriptures are reasonable proofs, addressed to our judgment and our understanding, to our capacity of examining evidence, to our historical information, and our powers of comparing one historical statement with another; so that the proof which can be laid before you of the origin of the Holy Scriptures, is an infallible and reasonable proof addressed to that which is in you, even the natural man. Having so proved the origin of the Scriptures, then it becomes most reasonable to submit to the contents, because it belongs to man's reason to know, that if God speak, what he says must be right. If God speak, the utterance is infallible; if God speak to question the truth or the propriety of the utterance, to question for a moment, and deny obedience, is opposed to the reason of man itself. Even the Deist will acknowledge, that if, indeed, God should speak (he denies he has spoken to man), it would become instantly reasonable to submit to what he says.

Now, it is for this reason, that we ask faith in the contents of these Scriptures, and on this principle we refuse to give evidence of all the contents of the Scriptures. There are many things in the book which we cannot prove, neither is it necessary that we should prove them: we *can* prove the divine origin of the book itself, and having so proved the divine origin, we ask you most reasonably for faith in the contents; for if we have proved that God spoke, we have made a reasonable appeal to you to submit to what God says. If I declare to you, that I stand here to speak as a minister of God's word, to read the Scriptures, and pray for the enlightening power and grace of the

Holy Ghost to show the proof, convinced and satisfied that God has taught me truth, and that I attempt to teach you truth as it is taught me; yet that it is still taught through the medium of a fallible man, and that in receiving it I may have marred some of it, and in teaching it I may have marred more of it; and that, therefore, though you are called upon to hear, and respect, and without fail to examine what is said, and to honour and fear, yet still there is no claim to infallibility; if I say so, you may admit such a pretension as that, because you have not by admitting it involved yourselves in any awful consequences; you may still receive what I say, and compare it with the Scriptures, to see if these things are so. But if I tell you that the Holy Ghost speaks by me, without using my flesh at all, that I am but a mere organ—that I do not know what I am going to say—that it is the Spirit that speaks, not I—and that I am (to use a phrase that is common now) that I am “made to speak,” and that the Holy Ghost speaks, and not me; now, then, mark—there is an assumption that it is God that speaketh. What is the consequence? The utterance is infallible; you are involved in all the consequences of entire submission to what follows. Mark the difference between the origin and contents. If you believe the origin is from God, you are bound to receive the contents: the first step is the chief step; and if you will allow the first step to be taken, if you will allow merely the first step of the argument to be slurred over, you will involve yourself in all the consequences of what may follow in the utterances, or rejecting what you have already acknowledged God is the speaker of.

You see the importance of this distinction, then: the Lord Jesus gave infallible proof of the first step of the argument. The first step is to substantiate who he was, and that was done by his resurrection: that being done, it covered all he said. First, let us know what he is, and then we shall receive what he says; first let us know the origin, and then we will bow to the contents. First let us know, is it God that speaks? That is the question; for if that be settled, we shall not hesitate about receiving the contents of what is uttered.

Now I beseech you, my friends, patiently and quietly with yourselves, to examine this matter. It is not merely to form an opinion *ex parte* on it, as you hear me speak it. Some may commend it to their judgment, others may doubt it; but take it home fairly with you, and I think you will find it commend itself more and more to you in the distinction between the origin and contents of the communication; and that, while we are bound to demand the proof of that origin—supposing that proof given that the origin is divine, then it becomes reasonable to receive the contents without any further proof.

I need not apply this closely to some matters in hand at the present time in the Church; you will readily apply them yourselves so far; and I may advance, therefore to the second clause of the text, which tells us, that after Jesus had given such proofs, such infallible proofs of his resurrection, he spoke “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

The “kingdom of God,” is the reign of righteousness, of goodness, of truth, of holiness, and love: it is the supremacy of all that is good. The kingdom of God in its bursting principle, struggling for triumph, is lodged in the bosom of every saint, producing righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God in its full triumphant manifestation is what is understood by the Millennium: it is the manifested triumph of all that is good under the manifested Son of God, in the new birth wherein dwelleth righteousness. So that the kingdom of God is a large expres-

sion, including the whole scheme, both as to the present dispensation—where the beginnings of the kingdom are entrusted to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, so that it is a dispensation of the Spirit—and the coming dispensation, when the triumph of a kingdom will be manifested in a present king. It is, therefore, called a kingdom itself by pre-eminence; and all those who have now the principle of the kingdom within them, are called “children of the kingdom:” they are translated out of the kingdom of Satan, and brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. And they are children of the light and children of the day. The kingdom of heaven, therefore, is an expression, including the whole subject; and that what our Lord spake about did include the manifestation of the kingdom in its triumph appears very plainly from the inquiry which the Apostles made of him after the resurrection: they said, “Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?” They had mistaken him; still it proves that that formed a part of what he spake of; and his answer proves that they were only wrong as to the time, and not as to the subject-matter after which they inquired.

But it is to the spiritual dispensation that I would now address a few observations, as to what the Lord says, “pertaining to the kingdom of God.” We are not instructed as to what he said after his resurrection; yet we have a few hints, a few intimations, and those few intimations do so identify themselves with that longer discourse which he addressed to his disciples before his crucifixion, that we are proceeding on good evidence, when we say, that the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John contain the substance, though not perhaps so plainly as was afterwards revealed, of his communications respecting the spiritual dispensation. Now by comparing John, xx. 21, with the whole scope of the discourse contained in the preceding chapter, we find a very remarkable coincidence. Jesus said to his disciples when he appeared to them after his resurrection, “Peace be unto you.” We find him previously to his death, saying, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you.” And again, here he said to them, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” He breathed upon them, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” This is the whole genius of the discourse referred to. “I will send you another Comforter: I will not leave you comfortless; but I will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” And when he spoke to them of it after his resurrection, he breathed upon them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” intimating, as I judge, that they were to receive the Holy Ghost through the medium of his human nature; that was the link and channel, through which the fulness of God was opened unto man; so that every man who should afterwards, by the faith of God’s elect, be united to that human nature of Jesus, should, in that bond of union, imbibe the Holy Spirit of God. “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” “Peace,” and “the Holy Ghost,” were the legacies that he left as regarded this present dispensation of the kingdom of God. That is, not peace in the worldly sense: he told them, that in the world they should have tribulation; but, said he, “in me ye shall have peace.”

Now, this is another remarkable feature, which is connected with these discourses, and to this I would wish to direct your attention. In John, xiv. 12, after referring to his works as a proof of what he was, he says to them, “Verily,

verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." This speaks of the dispensation of the Spirit, which takes place during the time that he is absent with the Father; and here is the promise, that believers on him should do the same works that he did, and "greater works than these should they do, because he went to the Father

My brethren, what can this mean, or what can these "greater works" be? We do, indeed, find, that some of those who immediately followed Jesus performed works similar to his works; that the sick were healed, that the diseased were with a word recovered into health again, and even that the dead were raised, though not under such remarkable circumstances, as in his own works. Of this description of work, where is the record of "greater work" than Christ's work? Where is such a record as the raising of Lazarus, who was four days buried, and, as his sister testified, was in a state of incipient corruption? There is no record of such a work having been performed by the disciples as the raising of Lazarus. There were wonderful works performed by Paul, and Peter, and other of the disciples; but nothing, comparatively speaking, to equal this work. But our Lord says that they should do "greater works" than these.

Now, "greater" and "less" are words of comparison in our sight; as regards God, all works are equally easy with him. Thus "greater" or "less" are spoken of in condescension to our capacities; and this is a common feeling amongst men to whom Christ addressed himself, that that which belongs to the soul is of greater value than that which belongs to the body. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body," said he; "but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." And again he said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world," which would be of great advantage to the body, "and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Many similar passages might be quoted manifestly setting the soul in a much superior point of view, and making what belongs to the soul greater, of more value, of more consequence than what belongs to the body.

Now, it is remarkable, that it was not the design of God in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, there should be the conversion of souls carried on; he lived to *be* the Gospel, rather than to preach it. Christ was the Gospel, in order that the disciples might preach Christ, or preach the Gospel. Christ is the glad tidings embodied; he lived and died the Gospel, in order that afterwards it might be preached. While he lived and died, few men, if any, were really and truly converted to God, few men were snatched from the bondage of the devil; few of those greatest works were done—the greatest works on the face of the earth that God has directed the attention of men to. Greater works than all that occupy the attention of statesmen, greater works than all that occupy the attention of naval and military commanders, greater works than occupy the attention of philosophers upon the earth, are the works that rescue immortal spirits from the damnation of hell; works that rescue the descendants of Adam, (into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, so that he became a living soul) the immortal descendants of Adam from sinking into immortal torments. These are the "greater works." Oh, my brethren, we talk so lightly of the conversion of sinners that the magnitude of it loses its effect on us; we do not appreciate it; we have no adequate ideas connected with it. The salvation of a soul, of an immortal spirit, is of more value than a whole world of matter; and there are

immortal spirits all around us, just propt up by a frail, sickly, and tottering prop of flesh, which, if withdrawn from them, would allow them to fall headlong into hell. There are thousands and tens of thousands all around us. Oh, we should appreciate this work more. It is the greatest work man can be instrumental in accomplishing. It was to be carried on when the Lord Jesus went to the Father, because when he went to the Father he would send the Holy Ghost. It is by the Holy Ghost that the Saviour's work is quickened into life; it is by the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son that an immortal spirit is snatched from the burning, and rescued from that death which is the end of sin.

These were the works which they were to do, greater than miracles in nature; these were the works "greater" than Christ did. Christ did works for evidence; he did works to give infallible proofs of who he was: the Apostles did works, and connected with the works what Christ said. Christ's works were given as signs that we might believe that he is the Christ the Son of God; the Apostle's works were done, that believing, we might have life through his name. The outward signs in nature are let down to what is in the natural man; God appeals to human reason, as we have seen—appeals to sense. Man has nothing to be appealed to; except God would descend, in the first instance, so low as to appeal to what man has, he cannot appeal to him at all. When he does descend so low, he descends with the sense of evidence. To preach is a descent to man's sense; it is God's condescension to man's sense. This is in order to take first steps to win him to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; but then, believing he stands upon a higher ground, then he begins to imbibe life; he begins to find a "greater work" then; he begins to perceive that the outward sign was the appeal to his lower faculty, to his sense, his reason, in order to bring him up higher, that he might imbibe and enjoy eternal life.

You see that in order to force belief upon men, or, at least, in order to give them an opportunity which leaves them inexcusable if they believe not, the original appeal must be to what is already in man. When God would work a work which should appeal to the ignorant Philistines, how was it done? When the ark was carried amongst the Philistines, had one of God's prophets gone down to them and suggested some high revelation respecting some service to be carried on in the temple, it would have had no effect on the Philistines, it would have been appealing to something not in them. But he dealt with them by appealing to their senses. When the ark of God was put up in the house of Dagon, the image of Dagon fell down. There was an appeal to the senses of the Philistines. When they put it up again it fell down again, and was broken in pieces; moreover, the land was plagued with various plagues of emeralds and mice that God sent amongst the people. And when some of their infidel hearts doubted whether this was by accident, or by the hand of God, God made another appeal to their senses. They put the ark on a new cart; two cows were put to it, whose calves were taken home from them. The Philistines knew that the instinct of the animals would lead them where their young were; but instead of that the kine went forward directly, lowing, and running toward the land of Israel, with the ark of the God of Israel on the cart. There was an appeal to what was in the Philistines; there was a condescension to the state of the Philistines' mind; there was one of the smaller works. But when the ark of God was brought back, and all the contents of

the ark were enjoyed by David and his people, singing round it, there was a greater work; there was the enjoyment of life in that. The outward sign was the smaller one, and the contents of the communication the enjoyment of the greater one.

Refer to the passage, to which reference has been so frequent, in John xx. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written." What for? What are the signs written for? "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and (then there is another step) that believing ye might have life through his name." The signs led to the belief, belief leads to the life. This was the progress. The signs descend to the infidel to lead him up to faith; faith communicates with God, and he has life, and has it more abundantly. Now, is not faith higher than sight? and is not that which belongs to the Spirit a greater work than that which belongs to the sense? and is not the work entrusted to the Apostles, and therefore a greater work, in this sense, than the works which their Master did. "Greater works than these (the miracles) shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

Now, my brethren, it is of great consequence that we understand the comparative value of things. There are two principles which I wish to set before you. The one is the difference between the origin and the contents of the communication from heaven; the origin requiring reasonable proof, and, when that is furnished, it being then reasonable that we submit to the contents. The other is, that the use of signs, and wonders, and miracles, is to give infallible proofs of the origin; whereas the contents are higher, they are the enjoyment of the life with God. Now, when we hear of signs, and wonders, and outward manifestations, being exalted above the spiritual and inward life, we have Scripture turned upside down, and that declared to be greater which the Scripture declares to be the lower, and that declared to be the lower which the Scripture declares to be the greater.

But, observe further, we are taxed with carnal and worldly principles, with coldness, with unbelief, and every thing that is mischievous, when we demand proof; and we are told these are things not to be proved. I mention this to guard the unwary. It is said in a high tone of apparently spiritual feeling, "These are things not to be proved by human reason; they are matters of faith, matters of spirit; they are to be perceived in the spirit, in communion with God; and, if you stand upon carnal human reasoning, you cannot receive them; they are not to be so received." So we are told; and it seems plausible. But I ask, Is it the origin of the communication, or the contents, that are spoken of? If they mean that the contents are not to be judged by reason, I say, Very well; but you are premature in presenting the contents: I want proof of the origin first. If you were to go to an intelligent heathen, to a Brahmin, and set before him some of the more spiritual principles contained in the Scriptures, and he were to say, "I cannot understand them; I want a proof;" it would be most unfair to say that he was an infidel because he did not receive those principles: there is nothing in him which can receive it. We are only to lay before him what God has laid before us—the signs which appeal to what is in him. He wants reasonable proof of the origin before he can place dependence on the contents. And what we say now to some of our brethren is, Give us reasonable proof of the divine origin of these communications before you demand our implicit faith in their contents. You tell us that God speaks. It is an awful

saying: the alternative is frightful. To allow yourselves to admit that God is speaking, when it may be but a fallible creature, is dreadful. Your assumption is so awful, your alternative so frightful, that we cannot move a step without infallible proof of the origin of these communications. The Lord Jesus gave infallible proofs of the origin of his communications, and therefore we are contented and happy to receive their contents, and to submit to them without having them proved: and we submit, with joy of heart, to many sublime mysteries in the Scriptures, because the divine origin of the Scriptures has been proved.

But now let this principle be established; let it be placed before our brethren, who are endeavouring to proselyte us to the assumption of God speaking among them: let this principle be examined fairly. They ask us to place the same sort of confidence on that speaking that we now place in the Bible. If God speaks we can judge of it in no other way than we do by the Bible, and are they not bound to give us such proof that we can judge of it as by the Bible. If they do, then with what delight shall we submit to the contents. But where is the proof—where is the infallible proof that it is from God? When they assert, that it is more important than faith—more important than regeneration, that it is that without which the Church is Babylon, and with which the Church is the Church; then we stumble because the principles of Scripture are subverted. When they declare that the Lord Jesus was exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give the Holy Ghost, and that he received gifts for men; certainly we agree to this, that he gave forth those gifts for men, and that he gave some prophets, and some apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; and that he gave languages supernaturally, and interpretations of languages. All this is true: we do not require proof of this, because it is contained in the Scriptures, the origin of which is already proved to us; but when they go another step, and say that some of our countrymen have these gifts—that is not contained in the Scriptures: therefore we want proof of it. The other is contained in the Scriptures; and so far we have proof, and rejoice to declare those things out of the Scriptures; but as soon as the assumption of these things is claimed by persons not named in the Scriptures at all, then there is something needed before we can rely with confidence on the contents of what is uttered.

My dear brethren, I do entreat you with all carefulness to watch yourselves respecting this question; it is one which is calculated to do much mischief if lightly regarded. Suppose that, in these frightful days of infidelity and blasphemy, God were pleased to revive these smaller works, these appeals to man's sense; suppose that, in these days, God were to revive such gifts for missionary labour, as would supersede the slow, the laborious, the praiseworthy, but still laborious and, in many respects, fallible and difficult work of translating the Scriptures into divers tongues; suppose he were to qualify man to declare amongst the heathen the Word of God in their own language; and suppose that he were to qualify his church at home to make appeals to the senses of the infidels by whom we are surrounded—the deists, and even the atheists, by whom the most favoured states in Christendom are pestered at this day; suppose he also said this—"Take heed to these things, lest the devil, by aping these things, and endeavouring to gain credit for these assumptions, were to harden your heart against the realities when they do appear, and so indispose you to receive any account of God's wonderful workings, that there might be a wonderful work wrought, which you would in no wise believe, though a man give proof of it;"

I say, therefore, it is a subject for much prayer and watchfulness. I say not this

as having any doubt respecting the present pretensions; for there is not a shadow of proof; they have not been able to offer a shadow of proof to any reasonable being—and it is only a matter of common sense—there is a total absence of any thing like proof; but I say, should it please God to give proof at any time, to meet the necessities of the case; should it please him to put forth his hand to these lower works—(for we rejoice to think he is constantly doing higher works, and we experience delight in the higher works; and, thanks be to his name, we live with our God in peace and joy and love in the Holy Ghost)—but suppose he were to do these lower works, to appeal to the infidels around; then, what I wish to guard against, is such a state of mind, from false assumptions, as indisposes us to receive the evidence of truth.

Let it ever be remembered, that our Lord Jesus Christ did not require confidence from his apostles in what he said, without giving them infallible proofs of the truth of what he was saying; that, before he demanded from them, as a reasonable submission to the authority of God, faith in the contents of his communications, he gave them reasonable proofs, addressed to what was in man, of the origin of that communication. I know that this is an objection brought, that such proofs are not always effectual, that they do not always produce belief. It is true; yet they are suitable for the purpose; and just as the Gospel does not always work conversion, though suitable to the purpose, signs wrought, do not always overcome unbelief, though they be suitable to the purpose. It is no disparagement to an instrument, to say that, though suitable to its purpose, it will not accomplish that without a powerful agent to work it. And it is true, there is a powerful instrument in man's heart, which neither testimony nor miracles will overcome, without the secret and invisible agency of God himself. The turning point in every man's case, in the last resort, is a matter of the "exceeding abundant" grace of God; but God uses means, and when he exerts his grace, he does it in the hearing of the Gospel and the seeing of the sign: not always in hearing, neither always in seeing. We read of persons in the Scriptures who when they saw the miracles wrought, blasphemed instead of being convinced; and we hear of persons who, when they hear the Gospel preached, instead of being converted, gnash with their teeth in enmity against the preacher. Nevertheless, by means of preaching, many were convinced; and by means of the Gospel many were converted. These are the instruments, though they are not always effectual. Therefore, the argument derived from the insufficiency of miracles, in regard to faith, is not effectual to the view of the case I have been giving.

But I must conclude. I felt it necessary to examine this question respecting the nature of evidence, and what it is we want the proof of before we can rely on what remains behind. I felt it reasonable to set this inquiry before your minds; for I am deeply persuaded that, for want of attention to this, many have shrunk from a reasonable examination of the pretensions of certain persons around us, lest, in exercising that reason, they should themselves have been blaspheming, and yielding to criminal principles instead of submitting by faith; and that there is an unadvised and unexamined submission to faith, which is not christian: for christian faith is a reasonable thing after all; and we are commanded by the Apostle, to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. I entreat you to observe, that, though we cannot reason on every one of the contents of what God says, but that we have reasonable proof that it is God that says them. The one point, that it is he that speaks, is the point to be proved



One hundred points of the things that he says, may contain ninety and nine that no man can prove: but the one point, that it is he that speaks, is a thing which must be proved, or we can have no confidence in what is said.

I earnestly entreat a blessing from God on your meditations on this simple principle. Simple as it is, I am persuaded it has escaped notice, and that the want of attention to it has been the means of ensnaring multitudes, with the best intentions in the world, with the most pious intentions, with the most earnest anxiety to serve God, and the most trembling apprehension lest they be guilty of criminal rejection of spiritual things. They have trembled at the audacity of rejecting, when they ought to have received, when they should have demanded a proof: they have trembled at what seemed the criminal policy of waiting for a proof. They have been falsely accused as criminal reasoners, instead of simple believers who have stood out for a proof. We, who have asked for proof, have been told that our reason has rendered us incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God. I know that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. "The things of the Spirit of God"—those are the contents: but the natural man can receive a proof that it is the Spirit of God that says the things; but the things themselves cannot be received. The simple fact, that it is the Spirit that says them, is capable of proof; and we must have it, before we can, after a christian manner, submit to the things that are said.

Now mark, practically, the consequences of overlooking this, and see how some that we love and value are involved in one contradiction after another; because, admitting the first step, that it is God that speaks, they are obliged to admit what is said; and those sayings involve them in such contradictions, that we know not what the reality is likely to be. The common principles of reasoning among men are outraged by the consequences that follow, by admitting that it is God who speaks, without having proof that it is God who speaks.

Brethren, I have done. May the blessing of God be amongst you, in meditating on this great question and these general principles, which are true and valuable, not only in this question, but in all others connected with revelation. The distinction between the inspiration and the contents of Scripture; the distinction between the proofs of the Lord's resurrection, and faith in the Lord's doctrines; and the distinction between the proof we want of the standing that a man occupies who says that God speaks by him, and the submission we yield to all that is spoken, when once it is proved that God is the speaker. Bear in mind, also, that you are already, by faith, in possession of the "greater things," the life; that the signs are lower things to lead to faith, and faith the higher thing to lead to life. And while we are said to have no life amongst us—while it is asserted that the church is dead—that there is no Holy Ghost in it, because there are no wonderful signs and manifestations in it—while this is alleged, I beseech you to contradict it by the enjoyment of God in the Spirit, rather than in the mere speaking of words. Let all see that there is indeed a Holy Ghost amongst us; that we live with God by the Holy Ghost; that we are brought to God, sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost within us; that we have faith in us, wrought by the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us; and that, by faith, we have life, and enjoy life, and walk with God, and deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in the present world. Let all see that, while there is a due and calm and well-regulated attention to all the duties of life in God's providence, there is at the same time a warm, and tender, and affectionate, and holy enjoyment of God himself in the Holy Spirit; and that, while

we are evil entreated and evil spoken of on every side, we can, being defamed, entreat; and that we can, being injured, return good for evil; and that we can warn one another, and exhort one another, without speaking evil of others--in love, warning against evil principles, while we live in peace, and pray for each other's salvation.

My dear brethren, God in infinite mercy enable us to show, by the best of proofs, infallible proofs presented to the eyes and ears and understanding of all who know us, that the Holy Ghost is in us, dwelling in us, and ruling in us; that he is our God, and that we are his people. May we be enabled to show those higher works of spiritual enjoyment to a world of souls, that they may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus.

Before we separate, let me put you on your guard with reference to the season which awaits you within the next two months: it is a season of privilege, but it is a season of danger; hurrying from one meeting to another, and from one sermon to another, without time to digest what you hear. It is a season when you will be tempted to live like so many Marthas, busied about the less services, but not sitting at the Lord's feet. Oh, beware! I would not wish to abridge the privilege of Christian hearers: it is a blessing to hear, but it is possible so to hear, as not to retain: it is possible so to run, as not to win the prize: it is possible so to eat as not to digest—and then eating will lead to disease. Take care, therefore, how you hear, and let your capacity for benefiting by it be the measure of your wise hearing. If you find, that by all your hearing you cannot benefit, but rather that you are disturbed, I would suggest whether you would not, upon the whole, love God better, and profit in yourselves better, by hearing a little less, and meditating and praying a great deal more.

## DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

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REV. R. W. HAMILTON.

LAMBETH CHAPEL, APRIL 28, 1833.

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“The evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?”—  
ACTS xix. 15.

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THAT effects existed which strictly correspond with our ideas of diabolical possession, or, in other words, that evil spirits were permitted to haunt and to tyrannize over the minds of certain persons, we must believe, unless we convert narrative into fable and transform miracle into imposture. We concede, that considerable difficulty attends every view of the case and every construction of the mystery. We concede, that the external indications were sometimes scarcely, if at all, distinctive from other morbid symptoms. We concede, that the loss of voluntary power over the bodily instrumentality and the mental exercise, was the ordinary sign and effect of this visitation.

But, whatever were the difficulties the first Christians felt to entangle their admission of the fact, it was universally credited by them; and whatever embarrassments we may feel to lie on the side of the affirmative, a thousand more, and a thousand far more perplexing, would attend the refutation. Many objections, of course, may be suggested which we cannot solve, and many inquiries to which we cannot reply. It stands related to a department in the empire of being with which we are most dimly acquainted. It involves effects and operations of the human mind which we are very far from being able to explain and adjust. It combines mixed agencies which seem to have little affinity for each other, and each of which is inscrutable in its separate and integral state. It comprehends general principles and analogies of the divine government, requiring us to project a scale of thought beyond the reach of our conception, and to take a grasp of observation which our dull and narrow faculties are unable to seize. But we know this, that there was such a power, and that such a power was dispelled. Until moral causes are better understood, and the moral relation which binds different systems together be better apprehended, we shall be at a loss to show the manner in which evil spirits obtained their lodgment in the human soul, or, perhaps, to exhibit all the reasons why this form of evil and of penal infliction was allowed under a government of justice, purity, and love.

But even were we to allow, that only bodily distempers and mental ailments were included—such as palsy and insanity—we should be warranted in ascribing these to the same source. The patriarch of Uz is afflicted: Satan has put forth his hand upon him. One daughter of Abraham has suffered eighteen years, and Satan's hand bound her. Different personages under the christian dispensation had disobeyed and violated the divine commands: they were

delivered to Satan—bodily indisposition and ailments—that they might learn not to blaspheme. Paul is afflicted with a thorn in his flesh—a messenger from Satan to buffet him. Can language be more precise? Can statement be more uniform? Or, is this a poetic turn of expression, caught to explain some machinery of a drama—caught to explain some particular circumstances of long conflict—caught to give emphasis to some ecclesiastical anathema—caught to give effect to a mournful narrative?

We must recollect, if we would bring our minds to a right state of judgment, that this was the miracle which was commonly deemed the most stupendous of all those which were performed by Christ. If it be an adaptation of language to popular prejudice, an accommodation to vulgar ignorance, let us weigh well the alternative. Jesus addressed fiends, and fiends replied. Such is, with all allowances, the surface of the fact as represented to us. The Apostles reported, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us by thy name;" he partakes of that rapture—"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Was this the deception of the oracle? Was this the illusion of the tripod? Was it on the Apostle's part an empty boast? And, on the part of the response, was it all artifice and pretence? Did gesture, did look, did tone, did manner, in professing to cast out evil spirits, merely appertain to that which was unreal and untrue—that which did not, and could not, exist and operate? What is this but to transform Him, in whose "mouth was no guile," and who could always say, "If it were not so, I would have told you," into the juggler practising upon the senses of by-standers, and sending forth his apostles to carry on the same powerless, though the same deceptive incantations. However, we may "declare the Saviour's generation;" and whatever we may think of the contradiction of sinners which he endured against himself, we know that even the fiercest adversaries admitted the fact that he rebuked the malice, that he menaced the downfall, and that he resisted the inroads of those spirits, those fallen agencies and existences, who thus expressed the depth and the extent of their malignity. Yet, by the wildest of all perversions, and the strangest of all infatuations, they attributed these acknowledged effects to the concert and energy of devils themselves.

We have before us a case in point. Paul, by the miraculous endowments entrusted to him, has cast out an evil spirit. This was in reply to an abortive attempt made on the part of others to imitate that stupendous miracle. Whence proceeded the indignant rebuke of the text? Was it a mimic voice? Was it a curious deception? He addressed a spirit; that spirit replied. Who were the parties in this well-managed collusion? Who were the actors in this well-plotted scene? We must remember, that the fame of this was known to all those who dwelt (Jews and Greeks) at that time in Ephesus; and the occurrence is related by history, and by history in its simplest and least ostentatious manner. Well, then, this is an attestation from hell, and proves that there are certain things transpiring on earth connected with our religious principles and our evangelical institutes, which are understood and recognized by beings which we must necessarily loath and abhor. Belying all truth, and opposing all goodness, they are the natural and the wilful enemies of human happiness and of human improvements.

What is the precise feeling we should entertain towards these agents and existences, it may be difficult for us to determine. It can never become a question of practical application; but, surely, we must harbour a deep abhorrence

of their impurity, for they are "unclean," and of their treachery, for they are "seducing spirits." The enemies of God—we must cast them out; our enemies, and intent upon our destruction, we must watch their approaches and guard against their machinations. Their eyes are keenly bent upon this earth as a theatre of operations deeply affecting their own condition and destiny. Their passions of enmity, and of jealousy, and of rage, flash from them upon our ears; for their kingdom is diminished, their agony is embittered, their malice is provoked by every accession of influence obtained by Christianity over the understandings and affections of mankind.

A review of this passage, this oracle of hell, may not be altogether inapposite to the present occasion. It is the language of taunt and of disdain: it is the language of one who has kept his palace and preserved his goods in peace. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" We found upon these words the three following remarks:—That there are powers of demon evil widely diffused and ceaselessly active in our world: that there are expedients formed to counteract their influence, and to depose their ascendancy, which only provoke their contempt: that, nevertheless, means of resisting and overcoming them exist, which these malignants comprehend and dread.

*First*, we observe, **THAT THERE ARE POWERS OF DEMON EVIL WIDELY DIFFUSED AND CEASELESSLY ACTIVE IN OUR WORLD.**

We know that a host of spirits, numerous and glorious, under a chief of consummate stratagem and impious daring, fell from their original estate, and left their first habitation. We learn that a restless principle of hostility pervades their very temperament, instigating them to oppose all that is holy in God, and all that is good in man; on every spot to erect a standard of revolt; into every creature to infuse the venom of disaffection; and to seize upon every opportunity and occasion to oppose the divine will, to impugn the divine authority, and to mar the divine image. Hurling from their original sphere, they seem to have selected our earth as a favourable scene to perpetrate their cruel intentions, to make it a hold for their prey and a den for their ravings. It was a favourable field for annoyance and for rallying; it was a suitable magazine for storing the elements of their infernal warfare; it was a vantage ground on which to plant the engines of their attack; and he who was filled with a love of murder from the beginning, still goeth about seeking whom he may devour. And I must declare my conviction, that these spirits possess a far more potent and enlarged influence than is commonly ascribed to them. Subtle, they cover their purpose that we may fall the more unsuspectingly into their snare. Vindictive, they love to drag us into their condemnation. Watchful, they never cease to observe the season when they may bring us into captivity at their will.

This is not, indeed, a popular theory; and we are fully aware, that he who would establish a fame for liberality and sobriety above his fellows, must make a very considerable deduction from the statement we now exhibit. We know that this is the earliest concession demanded and exacted by a modern theology. We know that there are those who would have it to refer to a distant date; who would compel us to affix it to a very rare and infrequent occasion; and who would demand of us to shadow it away into personification and allegory. But though it may not be the doctrine of the day, it is for us to inquire whether it be not founded on scriptural evidence, and be related to scriptural truth. It is, perhaps, replied, that the evil is in ourselves. It is; or else there would be no

moral liberty. It is; or else the extrinsic temptation would fall harmless upon us, as an arrow blunted, having only rung on the opposing object. But who are they who affirm the objection? They who grudge human depravity its all-prevailing ascendancy, and by whom every thing is done to deny its existence, and to qualify its strength. And yet they will explode the idea of these fallen spirits having power to impress forms and positions of moral corruption on our nature, which have hitherto been deemed, by common consent, fiend-like and demoniacal; as though they fell not within the sweep and the range even of human corruption and mortal wickedness.

There are those who, sceptics of the Saviour's deity and impugners of the atonement, very firmly and very resolutely raise themselves against the idea and the supposition that any such spirits existed; and it may not appear at first, that this is but an accidental appendage. Why should it be blended with a system with which it seems not to have any thing in common or sympathetic? But, on further reflection, we shall find, that, if such spirits do exist, then sin is an evil widely spread, and according to its extension must be its evil and its turpitude. But in their creed, evil is their good; and it is by evil that evil is to be cleansed; and it is by evil that evil is to be extirpated. Besides, if these spirits do exist, then there is an intrenchment that they have made in our world which would defy all popular argument, all philosophical analysis, all moral suasion. How, then, could they form these intrenchments? What principles, what incentives, what appetites, are theirs? But if such spirits do exist, they exist to depreciate the Saviour's glory, and to deride the Saviour's atonement, and to draw a veil over every mystery of his kingdom. See the alternative: if these spirits exist, they are their own adversaries; so that if there be fiends who oppose the Saviour, the opponents of the Saviour in the human form must strike a truce and alliance with them; and thus we find house divided against house, kingdom divided against kingdom, and Satan casting out Satan.

I want but one argument to satisfy my mind of that wide influence, and of that subtle power, which these demons possess amongst us; and that is, that there can be found those who deny and ridicule their existence. By looking to those numberless and those proverbial associations, in which their very name becomes the subject of merriment and of sport, he has well laid the snare when he can induce in his victims a disposition to jest concerning him. This it is that must give point to an antithesis, and breadth to a lampoon. Oh, how intoxicating must be his blandishments, how potent must be his spells, how subtle must be his toils, how distilled must be his poison! The very names with which he, who leads the van of the infernal army, is invested, those ascendant titles which are given him, may well rouse our watchful alarm. He is *Satan*—the adversary, standing in an ever-opposing attitude of hostility to God and to man. *Apollyon*—the destroyer, loving misery and mischief for their own sake. *Belial*—the libertine, sanctioning and fomenting insatiable passions, and spurring on to constant gratification of the flesh. *Beelzebub*—prince of devils. He is the prince of this world; and here he has his court and his retinue. He is the god of this world; and he has his temple, and his altars, and his worshippers. He is the murderer, the liar, the deceiver, the accuser: he is the lion, the dragon, the old serpent. He hath the power of death; for he introduced it. He still deceiveth the whole world, and the whole world lieth in this wicked one, in his fell bosom, and in his deadly embrace.

Look at *idolatry*: it is the debasement of the human intellect: it is the little-

ness of our reason, and also its disgrace, in leaving its own province, and in not endeavouring to assert its own independence. And yet we know that an idol is nothing in the world: "eyes have they, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not; neither speak they through their throats." Are there behind those grim visages, those quaint forms of polytheism, any listening, any gazing, any existing spirits of the primal fall? To them are offered these lavations of blood, these strumpet orgies; to them they bend the knee; around them the incense curls; to them the song arises. "They sacrifice their sons and their daughters to devils:" the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and every such altar is a "table of devils." And we know, that when we think of idolatry, we have to think of idolatry in connection with the name, and under the symbol of the arch-fiend himself; because it is so much his instrument, because it wears so much of his character, and does so much of his work.

Look at *superstition*. By compromises, by torturings, by curtailments, by perversions, truth may be made the most active agent and the most capacious vehicle of error. There are two forms of superstition which obtain the most prominent notice amidst the obscurities of inspired revelation: there is the little horn added to the ten horns of the fourth beast, diverse from all the rest, speaking great words against the Most High, thinking to change the times and the laws, and wearing out the saints—and also the little horn added to the fourth horn of the he-goat, which waxed exceedingly great towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land. We find that these prophetic symbols are responded to by others in a future inspired page: thus we read of the beast and the harlot; and we read of the Euphratean cavalry. Now it is observable that the papal usurpation is represented as "after the coming of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders:" the dragon gives its state and its authority and great power to the beast: "Babylon is the habitation of devils." The rise of Mahometanism is distinguished in the same manner; for that usurpation is represented as having a presiding chief; and they have a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit. And when Paganism, and when Romanism, and when Mahometanism, are represented in their conjoint influence, it is said there came out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, which are the spirits of devils. And it is observable, that when the beast and the false prophet are bound and cast into the lake of fire, then the old dragon is represented as also bound, and a seal is set upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more.

Look at *infidelity*. Men boast themselves because they have the light, and because they can triumph in the illumination; but to other intelligences, when they boast of their light and triumph in their illumination, it is a darkening interposition, it is an eclipse, it is a being struck blind their very selves. For how are we to account for those whose eyes do not see, whose reason does not judge, whose heart does not appreciate the truth. How has the evidence been obstructed? What dark page has come between them and all this effulgence? It is a proof how these spirits after all domineer over our race. "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." So that it would

seem that notwithstanding their proudest reason and their clearest intellect, they are the subjects and they are the victims of that pestilential breath which has gone over our world, and that deep darkness which broods upon it.

Look at *dissipation*. There is recklessness, and there is daring. How attractive is its glare, how inventive is the musing, how soothing is the dream! But what is the happiness of the world in this respect? It is only the song of captives—it is only the dance of slaves. They follow the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience. Hear, ye worldlings, who is your Lord; for he stands in strict fellowship with you. His very name is your own: it is he who is in the world; and there must have been a truth and an emphasis even in his own effrontery, when he said, offering the kingdoms of the world and the glory of to Christ, “All this is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.”

But these general statements may seem to leave the individual unaffected. These are institutions of wickedness—these are the strongholds of evil: they rule mankind in masses: they have all the influence of long established customs: they surround themselves with all the authority of usages: they have a joint field of empire: they may be compared to the nets of some mighty hunter, drawn around every avenue, leaving only a small intervening space, but so tenacious of the prey already ensnared, that it need but be more closely drawn to affright and to harass its present victims. Satan cannot have a small power when he is called the prince of this world, having his kingdom, and having his vassals. He cannot have a small power when he is called the god of this world, having his temples, and his worshippers, and his missionaries. It may be said that this must leave the individual unaffected; but the Scripture shows there is an individuality in this representation; and it is in the multiplication of individual cases, that the domination of hell consists. “Ye are of your father, the devil; for his works ye do.” “The devil sinned from the beginning;” and he that sinneth is therefore of the devil. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.”

Can we doubt, therefore, the influence of which we speak? The fall is a monumental fact which proves it; the first-born of man “was of that wicked one, and slew his brother:” and the ancient dispensation knew no deeper curse than this, that “Satan standeth at his right hand.” Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. Think of his temptations! think of his agony! think of his crucifixion! and then say, did he combat with a shadow, or were they ideal things against which he struggled, and against which he prevailed? Ask further, what is the purpose of Christianity? It is a great scheme of deliverance and disenthralment; therefore it is to turn us from the power of Satan unto God—to deliver us from the power of darkness, and to translate us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. And observe how the fact is constantly admitted and assumed. Is the ministry of the word ineffective? “The devil cometh, and catches away the good seed out of the heart.” Is there hypocrisy? Satan is transformed into “an angel of light;” and, therefore, no great wonder if his ministers become ministers of righteousness. Is there prevarication in holy engagements? “Why hath Satan put it into thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?” Is there persecution? It is “where Satan dwelleth,” and where Satan’s “seal” is, and he casteth into prison. Is there defection? “Many have turned aside after Satan.” But there is no end to the wiles of the devil, nor can we ever sound the depths of Satan.



My brethren, what a melancholy spectacle opens to us to-day. The prince of hell, the anarch of heaven, has traced his dark footsteps to our earth. Here he has raised his cursed throne, here he exercises his cruel mastery, here sways his iron sceptre. The vassal nations crouch before him. He has blighted our earth into moral barrenness, save a few acres of verdure, a few inclosures of fruitfulness skirting the wide waste. The battle-blast is his music, the breath of pestilence is the wing on which he strides onward in his course: tears and sighs are the libations and the hymns of his worshippers: the shouts of idolatry and superstition are received as the applause of his supremacy, and the homage of his deification. He travels like light from region to region; and from pole to pole he drinks in the groan of creation's travail. He goeth to and fro in the earth, and walketh up and down upon it. Because his time is short, he scatters the brands of mischief and ruin thick around us; and they, setting on fire the course of nature, are themselves set on fire of hell. This is the voice from the deep; and it tells us that demons are not forgetful of their power, nor unmindful of the tenure on which they hold their dominion.

*Secondly*, we observe THAT THERE ARE EXPEDIENTS FORMED TO COUNTERACT THEIR INFLUENCE, AND TO DEPOSE THEIR ASCENDENCY, WHICH ONLY PROVOKE THEIR CONTEMPT.

The full rage and violence of human depravity could not consist with our social institutions: give it but way, and all their designs, all their safe-guards, their very frame-work, would be shattered and swept away by the torrent. Therefore, men, though unenlightened by religion, have often resorted to particular methods for restraining somewhat, and rectifying somewhat of human depravity. They could not reach the source, they could not purify the fountain; but they rolled back some of the overflowings: and you will observe, therefore, that man, being a social creature, finding his interest in particular relationships and interchanges of charities, is quite competent to form some social rules, some salutary precautions. And there is, likewise, a dissatisfaction in the human mind constantly urging men to reflection, to retrieve their losses, to enlarge their vision, and to raise themselves in the universal scale.

But we know that man is a restless being; he not only thinks of his simple safety, but he is dissatisfied with what he is; and this belongs to himself. He has often been disappointed; again he enquires: he has failed; again he investigates. You will therefore find that in the very restlessness of human nature some good is done. He has sought out many inventions, and some of the inventions are worthy the being. His long-imprisoned limbs he has stretched forth into an attitude of freedom, of power, and majesty; and in consequence of that restless ambition there have arisen important results. And there is, perhaps, in us, distinguishing us from "the beast whose spirit goeth downward," a zest for improvement which determines us not to live as former generations did. The animal never reasons upon its ancestry. The bee no better builds its mellifluent comb than when it retired homeward to its cell beneath the twilight of the world's young days, and laden with the honey of the world's young flowers. But man is constantly improving on his ancestors, improving on himself: and it is by a paradox that we may measure his career; for he gains by losses, he wins by defeat, he vanquishes by discomforture: and we must allow that human nature has done great things to adorn and to dignify itself. What exquisite polish has it impressed on its manners; what keen penetration has it infused

into its researches; what daring flight has it given to its imagination; and what sagacious foresight has it poured into its institutions. We behold man constantly rousing, and constantly elevating himself; and while we behold him thus, we see what is the force of his intellect. But it is his intellectual part which is aggrandized to the neglect of every moral part. And what are all his energies of thought but those which give strength to the delusion? And what are all his elegancies of taste but those which give refinement to the temptation by which Satan binds him to himself and to his cause? Some of the expedients have been more designed, others have been mere accidents; and the philanthropist and the reformer have employed themselves on these different measures to embank (so to speak) the current of human passions, to stanch the wound with which human nature bled, and to extricate it from the tendrils by which it was impeded. But let us just view some of those expedients

*Education.* What master minds, what prodigious intellects have employed themselves to expand the human understanding and to develop the human character. The grove, the portico, the lyceum, awaken within us fervent and impassioned recollections. Noble were their courses of thought, deep and profound were their investigations; and those who were the choice and elevated men of their age always felt it to be their duty and their dignity, to step from their seats, and, so far as possible, to enlighten and to awaken susceptible minds. They did not, indeed, descend to the crowd, deeming, in their prejudice, that the crowd was incapable of any such excitement and any such tuition.

*Legislation* was another expedient. The ancient bards probably were the first legislators; and when we hear of their minstrelsy, as they passed from country to country, it was that men listened to their instruction and to their laws, who were more senseless than the trees, and more obdurate than the beasts: and you will remember, therefore, that the jurist, and the publicist, and the legislator, stand amongst the most choice of the benefactors of mankind.

*Art* has been another expedient. It attained a very early perfection; and this seems to have been one of its characteristics. Such is eloquence—such is poetry—such is grammar—such is rhetoric—such likewise is painting, is music, is sculpture, is architecture. These have all excited inquiry: these have all produced a taste for improvement: and these have all tended to harmonize human character and human conduct.

*Science* is of far earlier date than we may suppose; for men have always observed and collated facts. Science tends to take away some of the grosser opinions to which men were addicted. Thus, there is a superior element thrown around it, and it lives in a little world of its own. Knowledge is a doubtful and equivocal good; but ignorance is a certain evil.

Some of these expedients, therefore, we must allow were beneficial: they did produce an advantageous effect: and those who took part in urging them were amongst the most benevolent of their species. They might have their golden dreams, but they were dreams which would only pass current in well-constituted and well-dispositioned minds. But what was the result? Allow that there was the tiger, it was only the tiger tamed; that there was the serpent, it was only the serpent charmed. Did they expiate guilt, and detach any of its stains from the conscience? Did they subdue the principle of depravity, or throw any hallowing influence into the heart? Did they produce any thing like a state of being, called a state of well-being? We have melancholy proof—we have grievous demonstration, that here all was useless, and that the hostility which these

expedients opposed was fierce and formidable. They graced with flowers the battlements they would overthrow: they could only shake the branches of the tree they were desirous to uproot: the arm dropped short of its aim—the weapon broke in the hand that brandished it; and the taunts of hell fell thick on its unarmed opponents.

But these expedients have not all worn an ancient date: some modern attempts have been made. Civilization was to do much; and when it could do nothing, we were told the great vice in the human constitution, and in all the institutions of human nature, was the excess of refinement and civilization. We were told first to attemper the savage, and then were told that he occupied a superior degree in the scale to ourselves. There have been systems of which it has been observed that their abettors loved their kind and forgot their kin: there have been other systems which have avowed the most undisguised self-ism. But, remember, my brethren, that so far nothing has been done to shake prejudice—nothing done to disperse ignorance, and nothing to substantiate the vision of human happiness and human perfection. And natural religionists may be called into the work, who acknowledge the archetype, who believe that there is a truth in natural religion, that it has its rudiments and its sanctions. But we know what natural religion is when it proceeds out of certain moulds, and when it is stated in certain conditions. Natural religion do you speak of? Let her point to the thousand idols of her shrine; let her point to the human hecatombs of the Egyptian altars; let her point to the cursed pollutions of her Brahminical school. Will this natural religion redeem the human race? Is this to relieve mankind from the mistakes and from the prejudices of so many thousands of years?

View all these expedients—all that has ever been done to counteract hellish influence and depose hellish ascendancy: you see the prostration of the work of so many years; and each sends up its cry of derision and scorn.

But we observe, THAT NEVERTHELESS, MEANS OF RESISTING THEM EXIST WHICH THESE MALIGNANTS COMPREHEND AND DREAD.

The salvation of man is the subversion of Satan. You will remember that the Saviour came “to seek and to save that which was lost;” and yet the original promise which pledged him, and in which he virtually exclaimed, “Lo, I come,” was not a promise made to man; it bore not the general character of a promise; it was denunciatory; it was the prediction of a woe upon him who had defiled, and ruined, and destroyed us.

Jesus at length came: he came to put away sin; he came to cast down the predominating influence of him who was stronger than we, to cast the wicked one out of the way. In so coming, we must remember he was made a little lower than the angels; and this doubtless would excite the attention of those who had heard from the beginning his purpose, and knew that that purpose was to be fulfilled, and with what wonder must both happy and infernal spirits have beheld him while bending downward in his flight, stooping lower and lower, sinking from higher to inferior measures of being still seeking new varieties of suffering, still plunging from deep to deep, till arrested by the curse of sin, the last stone was rolled upon him in the sepulchre. The mysterious condition of his intervention was that he must die; and this effected the downfall of Satan, and the salvation of man. It was predicted that he should die a martyr; but there is a triumphant magnanimity, a redeeming

glory in the martyr's death. It was predicted that he should die a sacrifice; but there is a splendour, a grandeur in the offering up of the oblation. It was predicted that he should die a conqueror; but the conqueror dies amidst a blaze of renown; fame blows its trumpet, and victory unfolds its banner. But he died "the death of the cross;" and Satan and his compeers seem to have rejoiced in the peculiarity of the selection. They did all they could to wrest him from the Jewish judicature, and made the Jewish judicature deny and stultify itself, in order that it might abandon the meek sufferer of Nazareth to the pains of a Roman crucifixion. And Satan put it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and we may imagine that he was so overwhelmed by the torrent of the Saviour's anguish, that he would feel a kind of infuriate joy when he saw that the attempt succeeded, when he saw the sufferer bending under the cross, when he saw nail after nail driven through his limbs, when he saw the spear piercing his side and rooting in his heart, when he saw him bow his head in death. But oh, the immensity of Satan's sufferings! Oh, the ghastliness of his despair! Oh, the terror of his fall! While principalities and powers were spoiled, made a show of openly, and triumphed over by that very cross, he felt the iron goad, it entered into his soul, and the chains of darkness are at once seen to manacle him.

This is the view we must take; Jesus died the death of the cross in order to destroy the works of the devil, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And we may naturally think of the early success of that name, we may naturally recall its present efficacy, and we may remember that till now all its results had been dark conjecture on the part of those whom he trampled under foot. Until now, when they saw him prepared for the fight, they imagined he would choose another field; but it was this place upon which he was intent; and as they had long known and often confessed, so now they perceived, that their thoughts were not his thoughts, and that their ways were not his ways, and they sunk down into the hell of their own digging, and to their own contumely.

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know," said the exorcised fiend, "but who are ye?" Not that there was any comparison; for "was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" And yet had Satan afterwards presumed to enter amongst the sons of God before the Lord, he might have said as of old, "Hast thou considered my servant Paul?" The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is the strongest proof of Christianity, apart from the resurrection of Christ. If he were not sincere, all we can say then is, that the most sober judgment, the most sterling truth, the most cautious investigation, the exercise of the greatest sobriety over the imagination, can never lead to satisfactory results. If he were not sincere, we must believe, (and a strange contradiction it is,) that for the first time selfishness is covetous of sacrifice, that ambition is intent upon dishonour, that pleasure rejoices in austerity, and that hypocrisy sighs for death. What a changed, what a renewed character! He weeps, he prays! Those hands, which haled women and children to prison, are now suppliantly uplifted or penitentially clasped. They no longer bear the murderer's commission, nor the murderer's weapon. Those eyes weep which had been unmoved amidst the wailing of mothers and orphans; and though once flashing with defiance, they now overflow with tears. Those lips which had breathed out terror and slaughter can now only utter, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The enemy said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will

divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will destroy my sword, my hand shall destroy them;" and as he went hell was seen to follow with him. Where now is the fury of the oppressor? What a new creature! What a marvellous transposition! The lamb may lie down with the lion, the sucking child may play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child may lay his hand on the cockatrice's den.

Were there time, we might connect this with evangelical doctrine, with ministerial faithfulness, and with upright zeal. But we hasten to an immediate conclusion. Remember, that though we have had to speak in military terms, the project is one of benevolence. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet." Now, what is this, but to stifle the last atom of evil, to extinguish the last tone of strife, and to purge the universe of that hostile principle which has so long distracted it? The strong man, for a long time, kept his goods in peace; but a stronger one has come on him, and overcome him, and taken away his armour, and now divides the spoil. And while demons are represented as scowling on our salvation, purer and more benevolent spirits rejoice, and when there is an accession made to the Saviour's kingdom, an enlargement obtained to his dominions, there is joy in heaven among the angels of God; heaven is all gladness and jubilee; the vaulted sky reflects angelic happiness, and the everlasting hills reverberate the thunderings of their praise; the tree of life hangs with a more luxuriant fruit; the marriage supper of the Lamb presents a more cheerful festivity; the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world assumes a more royal state; paradise is clothed with fairer beauty; and the bright seraphim in burning robes lift up their angel trumpets. And while there is this demon influence at work there is another influence far stronger than it can exert; the Holy Spirit comes down, and casts out Satan from the human heart, tears him from his royal throne, and turns that heart into his own temple, and into his own shrine.

And now, my brethren, what part take you? Satan has his confederates and colleagues on earth, and he who toucheth any unclean thing is himself unclean. Shall we bring down on ourselves the rebuke of heaven—"What have you to do with me, who refuse to take my cup unto your lips?" Or shall we expose ourselves to the contempt of hell—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" There is nothing but the practical surrender of the heart, nothing but coming to the Saviour's feet, and devoting ourselves to his service, plucking out a right eye, and holding ourselves in readiness to do and to suffer all his will, can secure to us the favour of heaven. If we are thus employed we do well. You are engaged in a good work, and we this day invoke you with all affection and fidelity, that you would contribute to this work of your prayers, and your influence, and your substance. The gold is the Lord's, and the silver is the Lord's. If you frequently give, you more and more frequently receive. You brought nothing into this world, and it is certain you can carry nothing out. There is a talent by which you may benefit others, and a cup of cold water, the costly shekel, or the poor mite, alike presented to Him that loved us and washed us in his own blood, shall in no wise lose its reward. You have as much common sense and as much piety as I can pretend to; you know that missionary institutions must have many expenses, and that those expenses must be met; I therefore make my simple appeal to you as Christians, wishing not to amuse, wishing not even to excite unduly, but praying that as Christians you would freely give, for you have freely received.

## THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST.

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RIGHT REV. C. J. BLOOMFIELD, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

ST. EDMUND THE KING AND ST. NICHOLAS ACONS, LOMBARD STREET,  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 1833.

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“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isaiah xxv. 9.

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THE chapter from which these words are taken contains a noble description of the glory and the grace of God: of his glory in ruling with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm the nations of the earth, and in crushing the opposers of his counsels and the enemies of his church; of his grace, or rather I should say, of his glory and his grace, in the salvation of mankind. It records, by anticipation, the triumphs of the Gospel, the downfall of the powers of darkness, the annihilation of death itself, the reign of perpetual peace and joy. “I will destroy,” says the Prophet, “in this mountain,” that is in the spiritual Zion, his church, “the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations,” the covering of thick darkness and ignorance; the veil which is spread over the hearts of mankind, and which no hand but the hand of God can take away. “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the rebuke of the people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it.”

A description so magnificent as this could not belong to the actions of any human conqueror or deliverer. To abolish the primeval penalty of sin, to banish grief and sorrow from the precincts of human existence, to penetrate and dissipate the darkness which was proof against all the powers and energies of the human mind; this was the work of which the prophet spake, and this was a work not to be achieved by any, nor by all the powers of man. The church therefore was prepared to receive—at least, it ought to have been prepared to receive, and the few who knew and believed the words of God were actually prepared to receive—a mightier person than had ever before mediated between God and man; and the just expectations of the believing servants of God, and their joyful praises for the fulfilment of their hopes, are expressed in the words of my text: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

It is matter of historical certainty, that the people of God did wait for the coming of the Saviour, from the time of the very first promise given to the woman after the fall, to the period of our Lord's appearance upon earth; at which season we know there was a general expectation, not only in Judea but

in all the neighbouring regions, of the advent of some mighty personage, who was to realize all the sublime descriptions of the ancient prophets. We are told that Simeon, a just and devout man in Jerusalem, was waiting for the consolation of Israel. Anna, the aged prophetess, spoke of the child Jesus to them that looked for, or waited for, redemption in Jerusalem. Joseph of Arimathea, we read, was one of those who were waiting for the kingdom of God. It would have been well for the Jewish people if they had waited for their Messiah in the spirit of meek submission to the will of God, in a ready acquiescence with his counsels: they would then have verified both parts of the Prophet's description: they would not only have waited for the coming of their Saviour, but they would have welcomed him, and rejoiced in him when he did come: the chosen people of Jehovah would have hailed, as in the advent of their deliverer, with songs of congratulation and triumph, the same in words, far different in sentiment, from those which ushered in the Prince of Peace into the walls of that city, from which he was so soon to be led forth to crucifixion—"Hosannah to the son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest."

Now let us look somewhat more closely to the words of the Prophet, as being properly descriptive of those feelings, with which every one who has meditated upon the condition of man, and the promises of God, is accustomed to acknowledge the fulfilment of those promises in the person of Jesus Christ. "Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us." "This is our God:" not merely a prophet, a priest, a king, chosen by Jehovah from amongst his people, and commissioned to give laws and statutes, as Moses was; or to assert his divine authority, and to punish idolatry as Elijah was; or to denounce his wrath against an apostate people, and at the same time to foreshadow a great deliverance to come, as was Isaiah himself, or Jeremiah, or any other of those holy men who spake in old times by the Holy Ghost: but this is our God; this is Emanuel, God with us—God manifest in the flesh. His divine nature is announced by an angel before his conception: it is added by a voice from heaven afterwards, "This is my beloved Son." It is asserted by the Great Teacher himself, "I and my Father are one." It had before this been proclaimed by the voice of inspiration, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness:" "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

But Jesus Christ evinced this grand and solemn truth by his display of the divine attributes in his own person; by his omnipotence, by his mighty power, he showed himself to be indeed "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." The works which he wrought he wrought not as a delegated agent, but as possessing an inherent power; the spirit of might, as well as the spirit of wisdom, dwelt in him without measure. No unprejudiced person, who heard his teaching and saw in his works the confirmation of that teaching, could hesitate to exclaim "Lo, this is our God."

And now, my brethren, understand the vastness of the work which he had taken on himself to execute, by reconciling in his own person sinful man to an offended God; the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan; the abolition of death. We can perceive some reason why it should not have been entrusted to any inferior agent. No inferior agent could have performed it. Man could not redeem his brother; for he could not atone for his own transgressions. Could any of the angels, then, have taken the enterprize in hand? "Lo, he chargeth his angels with

folly, and the heavens are not clean in his sight." It was a work not only beyond the power, but above the conception, of any being of limited goodness and knowledge. It was fit to be accomplished by Him who alone could accomplish it, even by the Son of God—"Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, and by whom also he made the worlds."

We must not permit ourselves, my brethren, to contemplate the work of man's redemption in any point of view less striking, less awful, less sublime, than this; that it is God's work, devised and executed by Omnipotence. We must not content ourselves with any acknowledgment of the nature and office of the Saviour short of that which the Prophet has made, in the name of his universal church—"Lo, this is our God;" and with the Apostle, once for a time incredulous, but soon convinced of the fact of his Divine Master having risen from the dead—"My Lord, and my God."

But if this be indeed an established truth, that we have a Saviour not less able than willing to rescue us from the curse of sin, and from its power; in short, if God himself, in the person of his Eternal Son, is pledged to our salvation; if he was in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; is not this a fit subject for rejoicing and thanksgiving? Can any one, professing belief in the Gospel, have any adequate notion of the riches of divine love, of his own unworthiness and helplessness, of the mercy and condescension of his Saviour, who does not feel that gladness of heart, that holy, humble exultation, which is expressed by the Prophet, "This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation?"

And, now, let me ask, is this really a subject of joy with every one of us, my brethren? Are these, indeed, the feelings which animate our breasts? Is the redemption, which has been wrought for us by the Son of God, the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh—is this habitually made by every one of us a subject of devout inquiry and meditation, of prayer and thanksgiving? Does it furnish materials for continued acts of prayer and adoration? Does it, in fact (I beseech you, put the question to your own consciences,) constantly, or at any time, excite in us the same, or any thing like the same, gladness of heart, which is sure to be awakened by some contingency of temporal good, success in our schemes of ambition, or our projects of money-making? Here it is the grand difficulty lies in the work of religion, in bringing men to a just apprehension and to a lively heart-felt feeling of the exceeding value of that salvation which is offered them in Jesus Christ. Why should it be so exceedingly difficult? It is because that apprehension can be felt only by those who have been first brought to a sense of their own sinfulness, and of the extreme need in which they stand of an Almighty Deliverer. He, alone, who has been induced by such feelings to exclaim with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" can joyfully answer with the same Apostle, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We must be filled with that anxious desire for such a deliverance, which can only spring from a just view of our sinfulness and danger, and which is implied in the Prophet's expression of waiting for the Lord, before we can feel an assurance that he will save us, or rejoice, as we ought to rejoice, in his salvation.

It is, therefore, wisely appointed by the church, that the attention of all Christians should be especially directed, at particular seasons of the year, to a nearer consideration of the mercy and condescension of the Son of God in taking upon himself the nature of man, and accomplishing all those glorious



promises of deliverance upon which the faith of God's servants has been fixed, and upon which their hopes have been stayed, from the first moment that sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so created the necessity for so wonderful an act of love and kindness.

But we are also reminded, that although Jesus Christ undertook to fulfil all the promises which had been given to the church, and to complete the deliverance of mankind from the dominion of sin and Satan; and, although by his death upon the cross he secured the accomplishment of his undertaking, yet still the actual accomplishment of the work which he came to do, in all its features and dimensions, still remains to be achieved, and is a fit object of anxious expectation, and of earnest prayer, to the members of his church. The kingdom of Satan, although its foundations are effectually loosened, and its downfall decreed, is not yet overthrown. The great adversary of mankind knows perfectly well that he has been conquered, and that he must at last be carried into captivity, and thrust down into chains and darkness; but he is on that very account the more malignant and active in opposing the progress of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth. In the guise of friendship, or of open enmity, he is continually labouring in his evil vocation; and he is too effectually seconded by the corrupt affections and perverse reason of man in thwarting the gracious purposes of God, and in retarding its accomplishment. It is, therefore, still necessary for the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, to wait for his coming in power to establish his kingdom upon earth, and to destroy "the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations" of the world; and it is still their duty—a duty, alas, too much neglected—to pray for the more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the more rapid and extensive enlargement of the elect of Christ's fold. That he will, in due time, take the work in hand, and execute it completely to the discomfiture of all opponents, we are perfectly sure, for we have his recorded promise: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Our aspirations then should be, "Amen; even so come Lord Jesus."

It was for the furtherance of that work—the work of establishing and building up the church, of which he had himself laid the foundation upon a rock—that our blessed Lord ordained a ministry, and gave an especial commission to the Apostles, and through them to their successors, to go into all nations, and baptize them, and to feed them with the bread of life, and to bless them in his name, to declare the terms of pardon and acceptance, to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, to console and to minister the sacraments of his blessed body and blood. A work not less varied in its features than awful in its responsibilities; a work, my brethren, in the performance of which we claim for ourselves—under a deep sense of the solemn obligation laid upon us by such a claim—peculiar rights and advantages which we consider to belong to us, as having been ordained into the ministry in unbroken succession from the Apostles, and therefore from the Great Head of the church himself. We say, therefore, and we say it not in the spirit of pride and vain glory, but with an anxious concern for the unity of the church, and for the edification of its members in sound doctrine, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;" and we say under a serious conviction of the truth with which St. Paul immediately follows up that sentence—"Moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful."

I have thought it not unsuitable to interpose these remarks on the nature of our ministry, as the appointed means of preparing the world for the Second Advent of Christ, for which the church is waiting, on an occasion like the present, of more than common interest. The liberality which you, my Christian friends of this parish, have evinced in repairing and beautifying this place of solemn assembly, I trust may be regarded as bespeaking the value you set upon your privileges as members of a true branch of the Apostolical church of Christ, of the privileges which you enjoy in her ministry, her discipline, and her ordinances. For more than twenty years past you have enjoyed those privileges under the pastoral care of one, whose heart, I firmly believe to have been in his Master's cause, who conciliated your regards by his kind and charitable disposition, and who is now gone, followed, no doubt, by your regrets, to wait for his final recompense at the hands of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. The spiritual charge over you is now entrusted to another\*, whose services already rendered to the cause of Gospel truth are a sufficient pledge of the faithfulness with which he may be expected to feed that portion of the family of God which is entrusted to his care. May the Lord prosper and bless the work which he is now taking on him—make him an instrument to build up his church, and fill him with an abundant measure of that Holy Ghost, which has been promised to that church, an abiding and sanctifying Spirit, even unto the end; that both by his life and doctrine he may set forth the glory of God, and set forward the salvation of man.

But I would further call upon you to improve the Scripture which I have selected as my text, by learning from it the duty incumbent upon us individually to wait for Jesus Christ, with a view to deliverance from particular sins. There is no other quarter to which we can look for effectual aid. Here we are invited and assured—"Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

But how are we to wait for him? Not surely in a state of listless inactivity, of dreamy abstraction, but with anxious enquiring eyes; not with folded hands and sluggard feet, but with most earnest and unremitting endeavours on our own part to qualify ourselves for his reception and indwelling, striving, according to his injunction, to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; conscious that for effectual strength to complete the task we must look to Him who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. The diligent looking for Christ, which will be practised by him who believes him to be a Saviour, is well described in that comparison of the Psalmist—"Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress—so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us." But the eyes of the servant look to the hands of the master, and the eyes of the maiden to her mistress—for recompense, indeed, but first for direction and employment; for work, and afterwards for wages. Let us, therefore, wait for the Lord, in the diligent use of all the means he has already placed within our reach, for working out our own salvation.

If we are really waiting for him, we shall wait upon him in his word, his house, his ordinances, and his providence, seeking for and acknowledging him in all the means of grace, and in all those dispensations, either of temporal good or evil, by which he reminds us of our entire dependence upon him. Are we, for instance, struck down with sudden calamity, or worn away by lingering

\* The Rev. T. Hartwell Horne, B. D.

pain and sorrow? Let our language be that of Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Are we delivered from impending danger, or raised from the gates of the grave? Still more, if we are brought to a sense of sin, and our thoughts sweetly turn to our eternal interest, then let us with the people of God say, "This is the Lord: we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

We must also be found doing the Lord's work—the work of charity, especially that of bringing others to the knowledge of their Saviour. There lies upon ministers first, but also upon every member of Christ's church, a sacred injunction to impart to others the knowledge of Christ, which we ourselves have received, "As ye have received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." If you are Christians, we need not say another word on behalf of those institutions which now require your aid. Yet there is one other argument in which all the motives of charity are centered and summed up: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Yet once more: we are admonished by the Church that there is a Second Coming of Christ, for which the Church is waiting, and for which we, with every member of the church, ought to be looking with earnest and anxious expectation. The past fulfilment of prophecy is a sure pledge of the future accomplishment of all the rest. Is our language, "How long, O Lord?" Our answer is, How long the final triumph of the Saviour may be deferred, how long a period may elapse before the world is ripe for judgment, is one of those secrets which God has reserved to himself. "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; no not the Son, but the Father only." All things are in progress to that consummation; the counsels of Jehovah are silently but surely maturing for execution; the course of events marches on in foreknown and pre-determined order; and the end of all things, if it be not in the literal sense of the word at hand, is every year, and every day, and every moment, drawing nearer to each of us. We are all, my brethren, in silent but unceasing movement towards the judgment-hall of Christ. In the meantime, at different points in the duration of that period which is to terminate in the annihilation of the visible universe, we are grasped one by one in the iron hand of death, arrested in our career, and fixed in the very state and position in which our souls are surprised, so to remain till the second coming of our Lord. In this point of view, the moment of our death may be regarded as placing us at once before his awful tribunal; for the space between the two, as it affects our eternal destination, will be to us as nothing. When the judgment is set, and the books shall be opened, we shall suddenly stand before the Judge, precisely in that state of preparation in which we were found at the moment of our departure out of life. Those who lived as children of God, as servants of Jesus Christ, under the solemn, yet not fearful expectation of that day, will then be able to lift up their heads, and raise the song of joyful recognition, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." But, as for those who, instead of waiting for him have derided his claims, and set at nought his authority; or who have shut their eyes against his warnings; or who have never thought of him as a Saviour from the sins to which they remain willing and contented captives; what will be their language, when they shall witness the final triumph of Him whom they opposed—the irresistible

authority of Him whom they disobeyed—the supreme majesty of Him whom they derided and despised—the eternal truth of his Gospel in the fulfilment of his prophecies? Why, they will say to the mountains and the rocks—but they will say it in vain—“ Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?”

My brethren, why is it, that we do not more diligently and fully realize this picture to ourselves by meditation and serious, solemn inquiry? If ever there was a great practical truth, this is one. If the Scriptures be the Word of God, it is perfectly certain—forget or elude the certainty as we may—that if we do not wait for the great day of the Lord in such a spirit of carefulness and circumspection, as to refer to it all our actions, words, and thoughts, I say, it is perfectly certain that we shall be surprised at its coming, and taken utterly unprepared. It will come on us as a thief in the night, and we shall sink into everlasting perdition; not for the want of means and opportunities of being saved, but for want of common prudence and forethought in the most momentous of all concerns.

What, then, is the conclusion? Live like men who are waiting for their Lord; that when he arrives, he may be welcomed. Accustom yourselves to his presence in his sanctuary, at his table, in his Word, in secret communings with him in the temple of a purified heart. Learn to appreciate the vastness of his love towards yourselves, that you may be drawn closer to him by the bonds of gratitude and affection, and that you may be animated by something of the same affection towards your brethren. Look upon that which he has already done by his ministers, as establishing the certainty of all those sublime truths that he will yet realize to his creatures—the Last Judgment, with its glorious or tremendous issues. Habitual thoughts like these, guided and made effectual by prayer, will weaken the ties which bind us to the world, and strengthen all our good resolves. We shall find in them the secret of moderation in prosperity, and of patience under calamity and distress; of christian charity and love; of right judgments on doubtful questions of duty; and godly resolutions, when the path is plain. To whom, then, shall we accustom ourselves to look? for whom shall we continually wait? on whom shall our confidence and hope be fixed? The Spirit answers us by the mouth of his Prophet, “ Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”

## HEAVEN AND HELL

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“**NOT** one of the long train of diseases and calamities, introduced into the world by sin, can find an entrance into heaven. The glorious body of the saints will not be subject to sickness, or weakness, or weariness, or decay. ‘The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick;’ it shall bear the bloom of an immortal youth; and when myriads of ages, beyond the power of angelic calculation, shall have passed away, it shall be strong and vigorous as ever. The trembling limb, the shattered frame, the quivering lip, the emaciated countenance, the wasted form, the furrowed cheek, the hoary head, the deep-sunk eye, and the faltering voice; the throbbing heart and the aching head; the rheum and paralysis, and palsy, and fever, and all the fell diseases that prey upon the vitals, and strike this clay tenement with a sudden blow that shakes it to its foundation, or that bring it down to the dust of death by a slow and almost imperceptible decay;—all those maladies, that fill our families with gloom, our streets with mourners, and all our places of sepulture with the ashes of our friends, will be banished from that new heaven and new earth which the redeemed are destined to inhabit. There every eye sparkles with delight, every countenance beams with the smile of complacency, every tongue drops manna, every pulse beats high with immortality, and every frame is built to sustain, without weariness, an eternal weight of glory. ‘God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and the day of their mourning shall be ended.’ There shall be no bitter regrets, no sad recollections, no anxious desires, no harassing fears; for theirs is an inheritance ‘incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.’ Theirs is a sun that never sets; a river of pleasure that ever flows; an ocean of felicity that cannot be exhausted; a day without night; a spring without winter—pure, spiritual, unmingled, never-ending felicity! Every thing in their blest inheritance affords them satisfaction, so that they have not a wish ungratified.”

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“Who shall say that God is unjust in punishing the sinner, so long as he remains a sinner? If his rebellion endure for ever, it is but right that his punishment endure as long. And what evidence have we, that the rebellion of the finally impenitent will not endure for ever? What Scripture do you bring to prove that it will not? In what portion of Holy Writ are we told of the repentance of the lost in hell, and their ultimate return to God? Here, then, for a moment pause; fill your imagination with ages, and myriads of ages, till they equal in number the atoms that compose the universe; and even this mighty calculation, could you make it, would not measure the duration of the torments of the damned. Oh! eternity, eternity! ’tis an awful word, even amid the advantages and opportunities afforded us in time; but no knell that ever struck to the heart of a criminal, on the morning of his execution, was half so dreadful as that word must be to him, the duration of whose misery it too well expresses. The hireling watches with joy the lengthening of the shadow, and retires to lose the toils of the day in the bosom of his family and the slumbers of the night;

but, in this abode of torment, there is no cessation—not a moment's ease. 'They are tormented day and night.' Even death itself comes not to their relief; yet it is eternal death they suffer; they are dying, yet can never die! They seek for it as for hid treasure; but the monster whom they shunned on earth shuns them in hell, and, like a phantom, ever eludes their grasp. Even annihilation, from which the mind shrinks back with horror now, would be a welcome guest; but it must not be: this last boon that despair solicits is denied. No! they must not be annihilated: they cannot die: they shall live for ever—for ever—in torment, compared with which our most excruciating pain were ease, and the most terrible mortal calamity a trifling accident. No ray of hope is ever cast upon the blackness of their despair: no dawn of joy shall ever break upon their night of horror. The distracted eye wanders over a vast abyss of torment, and finds not a single resting place! 'Who,' as he surveys the dismal prospect, the unhappy wretch exclaims, 'Who shall dwell with the devouring fire, who shall dwell with everlasting burning?' But such is his doom, and he must endure it.'

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"Ah! if, at some distant period, however remote—if, after ages, beyond the power of human calculation, had passed away, the unhappy man might secure his release from the prison-house of hell, hope would not utterly desert him: by her enchanting visions she might render his captivity tolerable; for an eternity of ease and joy would still stretch its immeasurable realms beyond the long period of his suffering. But what must his condition be—of what alleviation does his misery admit—who, after these periods have elapsed, will have to pass through them all again, in the same torments; and so on, period after period, age after age, to all eternity! O! dreadful accumulation of ideas! every bitter reflection, every excruciating pang, every feeling of remorse, every emotion of shame—all the pinings of envy, all the burnings of rage, all the sinkings of despair—bitter accusations and cutting insults, unwelcome associates and horrid society of hell—all, all eternal!—all this, frightful and appalling as it is, for ever!

"Christian! think of this—and learn to regard your trials as 'light afflictions which are but for a moment.' Sinner! think of this—and cease to esteem sin a trifle, and rebellion against God a little thing, or the reception or rejection of the Saviour, a matter of inconsiderable moment. Heaven and hell are suspended on it—the scene of glory or the place of torment—a happy or a miserable eternity—'He that believeth shall be saved—he that believeth not, shall be damned'—Choose."—DR. RAFFLES.

## THE DUTY OF HOLDING FAST THE TRUTH.

REV. T. J. JUDKIN, A. M.

SOMERS' CHAPEL, SOMERS' TOWN, DECEMBER 22, 1833.

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‘Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.’  
Revelations, iii. 3.

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IT is a truth, my Christian friends, of the most solemn importance, that just in proportion to my faithfulness in declaring to you the whole counsel of God, your accountability increases for the use you make of my labours. Perhaps in the great day of the coming judgment no witness shall appear against a careless and a negligent people so fearfully powerful as their spiritual teacher. It may be that he shall then be called upon again to repeat those truths and expostulations which he so often uttered to no purpose, and which, as they stood charged with comfort and joy in believing, will become so many sentences of condemnation and of ruin. To every sincere pastor of the visible church, who watches with an anxious and with an affectionate spirit over the little flock confided to his care, there cannot be a character under which he would choose the less to appear than this: and yet, from the evidence of the eye and the ear, respecting the many around him, it amounts to a moral certainty, that he shall so appear to testify against some whom it was the great burden of his hands and of his heart to recover unto God, and to build up in the truth of Christ. Amongst his other discouragements, this consideration must needs oft-times inflict a pang, that is not the less acute because it is not seen by mortal eye, but only by the kind Father who seeth in secret, and to whom the minister bears the spiritual condition of his people, so far as he knows it, making mention of it with tears and with prayers.

I would trust, my Christian friends, that there are none here that shall give occasion to these painful forebodings. I would trust that there are none here who would not spare me the sorrow, as well as themselves the awful consequences, of my thus becoming their accuser at the bar of retribution; but rather, through their belief and through their practice, I would feel strong in the consciousness, that with the same congregation on earth, over whom I am minister, I shall worship as the glorified spirits of a brighter world, to dwell together with them, (in Saint John's words,) as a family in heaven.

“Remember therefore how thou hast received, and hold fast, and repent.” Upon these words I would remark briefly, that it is the duty of Christians to meditate upon and to recall what they hear; that they are commanded to hold fast what they have received; and that, lastly, they are exhorted to repentance.

In the first place, I say, that I have to record a great and general neglect of the duty enjoined. I apprehend, that many come to church with even devotional and properly affected minds, so far as the solemnities of the time and the place are concerned; that they hear with attention and with respect, even as persons “desiring the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby;” but who make no after effort to retain what they have heard: like a man beholding his natural face for a moment in a glass, and then straightway going away and

forgetting what manner of person he was. Such leave this place with their memories unstored, and the mere act of coming to church stands in their life like a parenthesis in a sentence, having no visible connexion with what has gone before or with what follows. And so it consists with such habits, that, as soon as the service is over, the transition should be in no manner violent from the church to the world, from the temple of God to the temple of Mammon; and so it consists well with such habits, that the most trifling and the most idle of subjects should rapidly, and in a moment, succeed the deep and the weighty matters involved in their spiritual interests. It is not only that the openly wicked should, upon their chance attendance at the house of God, wish and resolve to get rid of what they have heard, to stifle in the very birth every recollection that might become their disturber and troubler—to strangle (shall I say?) this serpent in its birth. But I am remarking on the conduct of those who profess themselves wise, and who thus become fools—of men well-affected generally to the interests of religion, but who take no pains to rivet and to fix on their memories the things which they have received; who close the doors of their attention with the doors of the church, to be opened only with them on the following sabbath.

Now when I last met you, as a minister amongst his people, it was my object to deliver to you some of those solemn truths which vitally connect with your present your everlasting peace. Allow me to try the question, (for I would bring no unfounded charge against you, I would willingly think well of you,) allow me, I say, to try the question; put the matter to your own souls. How often have you recalled and meditated upon those solemn things which I delivered to you? It is in vain for you to expect any substantial good to follow from what you hear, unless, like Mary, you keep these things, and ponder over them in your hearts: just as vain as the expectation of a sick man, who should hear with attention the physician's advice, but neglect to take the medicine which the physician prescribes; or just as foolish as the conduct of that prisoner, who, having liberty presented to him at the open door, shrinks back again to his chains, to the hugging of his chains; because his way home lies over a steep and a rugged mountain, and he cannot gather heart enough, and resolution enough, to exert his strength in ascending that black mountain.

After adverting generally to this fact, and leaving its natural inference to your own thoughts, praying that you may judge yourselves, that you be not judged of the Lord—I will now call your attention to the duty of holding fast what you have received. I will answer these several questions: *What* you are called upon to hold fast: *how* you are to hold fast the things you hear: and *why* you are to hold fast that which is delivered unto you.

You are, my dear hearers, exhorted to hold fast *the truths of the gospel*; to lay to heart those precepts, and commands, and promises, which the great God hath condescended to utter on your account. You are required to receive the moral and religious discoveries of the New and of the Old Testament, after the spirit in which they were conceived and delivered. You are to trifle with none; you are not to decry the less in compliment to the greater. All that teach the moralities of the head and of the heart are to be remembered with the deeper mysteries of godliness, as issuing from the spirit of Him who was the truth, who was the light, who was the life of the world. You must consider the law of Moses as equally searching, and equally binding in its greater obligations as the sublime doctrines of the gospel. It is your happy privilege to hold fast the truth as it is in Jesus, as it is revealed by Him who spake as never man spake.



The great doctrines of the fall of man, of the alienation of the heart from God, of its evil and depraved principles, and of the recovery and restoration of our degraded nature through the precious blood of Christ's atonement; of the necessity of a holy life, as an illustration of a holier faith; of justification by faith, and of sanctification by the Holy Spirit; of your adoption as sons by the grace of God; and of the perseverance of all saints; these things I apprehend comprehend the greater doctrines which it is your duty as Christians to hold fast.

Now I come to the question, **HOW YOU ARE TO HOLD THESE THINGS FAST.**

First. *With the assent of your judgment*, holding fast that which is good, not suffering the sophistries and false arguments of others to blind and to confound you. In St. Peter's words, "Seeing ye know these things, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness:" or in St. John's words, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Secondly. *With the consent of the heart*; the word being grafted in your heart. We should ever hold fast that which we love; even as the sinner cleaves to the error of his ways, and the heart of the righteous is bound up, as it were, with the things of God. It were like doing unholy violence to a righteous man's nature, to a man who is led and sanctified by the Spirit—it were like doing an unholy violence to that man's nature, to endeavour to detach his exercises and desires from heaven: his affections so wind and so intertwist themselves with the doctrines of the gospel, and with the tree of life itself, that they must live and flourish, or fall together.

Thirdly. We are to hold fast *with faith*. Not a mere historical faith; not a mere speculative faith; but a faith apprehending the greatness of the Son of God in the glory of his spiritual offices, thus conferring a greatness on the doctrines which the Son of God delivered; by faith holding fast the words of eternal life.

Fourthly. There should be a holding fast *in our lives and conversations*; walking no more after the fashion of a vain world; but walking in the light and in the truth of Jesus, "holding fast with a pure conscience."

Fifthly. *With distrust and meekness; with fear* when our personal efforts are depended upon; but *with resolution and uncompromising boldness*, none making us afraid, when we place a simple reliance upon the might of the great God, who giveth us the victory, even by his Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sixthly. We should hold fast *with prayer and perseverance*. With *prayer* that the divine assistance may be bestowed in the time of our greatest need. "Hold up my goings in thy paths," said David, "that my footsteps slip not." With *perseverance*, knowing that he who hath begun a good work in us is able to perform it until the great day of the Lord Jesus.

I will now answer the third question, **WHY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS DELIVERED UNTO YOU.**

*Because of its excellency; the incomparable value of divine truth.* It is more precious than gold, it is more to be desired than fine gold. Natural men have called truth the daughter of time; divines say, that truth is the daughter of God. Truth reflects the divine image; truth attempers the glories of the great God, and exhibits his perfections.

Again, *because of the violence and the wrong which were otherwise offered to God.* Truth is essentially his; it is the source of his nature; and the people that renounce it, "change their glory for that which does not profit."

Again, *because of its blessed tendency*; for, by making us holier, even in this life, that which we hear makes us happier. We are doing criminal

injustice to ourselves, and a criminal wrong to our children, when we disregard the solemn obligations that are pressed upon us. I say, a criminal wrong to our children; for we stand as a beacon, or as a pattern to them: our present conduct is not confined to ourselves, it shall reach our posterity. The influence of example is beyond all calculation: like a rill almost imperceptible in its first rise, it swells and swells until it at length becomes a river and a sea. It was the solemn charge of old, as written in the Revelations, the solemn charge against the professing church of God—"I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead." It is incumbent on all present especially to afford a practical illustration in the life to the words of Solomon, "Cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

You must hold fast the words of sound doctrine, *because they affect the great and the coming destinies of the imperishable soul.* Deceive not yourselves; we hear not for time, but we hear for eternity. Sermons will be witnesses against us at the bar of the Great God at the Last Day. Ministers will be witnesses against you: you hear for eternity. The voice of the preacher discourses upon all things only as they bear upon the awful realities of the world that shall endure for ever. The hands of the preacher spread wide the gate that leads from the vain and unsatisfactory honours of this present scene to the glories that are everlasting; the gates that conduct to undying blessedness. And is there not a stirring amongst you? is there not an eagerness amongst you, as it regards your own admission? Shall the recording angel—for a recording angel is present amongst you—go, as it were, silently back to heaven without seeing one sacrificial offering of a broken and of a contrite spirit; without having heard the utterance of any new and holy desire; without having witnessed one tear of contrition falling down the cheeks of him that hath erred and that hath caused to err? Shall he silently go back, and give in no account but that which will bring shame and indelible disgrace? You must determine for yourselves. Would you prefer the pleasures of sin for a season to an eternal inheritance with the saints in light? It is for me to beseech you to hold fast the truths which you have heard, and to conjure you to repent; to repent of the past, not only with the confession of the lip, but with the serious prayerful movement of the heart; to repent not only in the church in a set form of prayers, but to show the sincerity of the act in the newness of your lives; that men may take knowledge of you, of the mighty change that is wrought in the heart and that purifies the life. Ah, Christian friends, the assigned period of your hearing and my preaching is daily contracting; your opportunities are fast slipping away, like the noiseless atoms of earth that fall from beneath your feet at every lift; and you shall soon sink into darkness and into death. Oh! you shall sink,—whether beneath the agonizing throes of reflected guilt, whether amidst the shuddering scenes of a darker gloom than that in which the spirit retires, or whether it shall be with a peace and a comfort still brightening as the shadows of death spread broader and deeper upon you—it is, I say, for yourselves to determine. It is certain, it is morally certain, that your future destiny shall only be the eternal fixedness of your present habits, in pleasure or in pain.

Be ye, therefore, wise; cultivate the things which be of God. "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." Remember this, by the dread solemnities expressed in the concluding words of the verse, than which there is not a more solemn sentence in the whole Word of God: "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Amen.

## THE FINAL ADVENT OF CHRIST.

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REV. H. P. BURDER, D. D.

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“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”—REV. xx. 11.

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THE volume of unfulfilled prophecy must be almost unintelligible to those who have not studied the bold imagery and peculiar symbols of the ancient prophets; a want of acquaintance with the meaning and use of those striking metaphors, has led some to apply to the literal and final advent of Christ, predictions which were to be understood figuratively, and which refer to signal interpositions of the power of Christ, without his personal advent and without his visible reign. As the shortest and the safest method of proof and illustration, previously to entering immediately on the consideration of the subject appointed, let me read to you a few specimens of prophetic language.

The first to which I will direct your thoughts you will find in Isaiah xiii., and it is entitled (for it is a separate prophecy), “The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see;” and was unquestionably a prediction of the capture and desolation of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. Yet observe in what terms that prophecy is expressed: “They came from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.” Now this is not the only passage in which the heavenly bodies are represented as symbols of the ruling powers. The cutting down of the sun and moon and stars is intended to mean the fall and ruin of those who did bear sway in the political relations of a country.

Again, in Joel ii., we have this phraseology: “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.” Now, the Apostle Peter himself, on the day of Pentecost, applies the first part of that prophecy to the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost on that very day, and therefore authorises us to refer that day of the Lord, which is so terrible, to that period in which Christ may be said figuratively to have come, to destroy Jerusalem, and lay in ruins the temple, and terminate the civil polity of the Jews, so that they may be dispersed over all countries; which dispersion, you know, continues to the present day.

I will only refer to one other passage, in order to confirm these preliminary remarks, and that is in Daniel vii. : "I beheld till the thrones were cast down; and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Now when you examine strictly that prophecy in its connexion, and attend to the chronology of the whole passage, it is plain that it is a description of the destruction of the Papal Antichrist, the beast and the false prophet, previous to the millennial reign of the Son of God; a period, not we presume very far distant, but which is to take place in order to the peaceful, glorious, yet invisible, spiritual reign of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this earth; not that he will then appear and reign in person, (as some suppose, from mistaken views of the figurative language of these and other passages,) but that he will then, by the power of the Word and his Spirit, be the acknowledged Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and also when the whole of this world's population shall be brought to believe on his name, and to subject themselves willingly to his peaceful rule.

Very different however from the passages already adduced, is the meaning of the predictions given in the words that have been read as our text. Of this we may be certain, from the place which it occupies in the scheme of prophecy in this book of the Revelations. It is not only after the prediction of the termination of the great prophetic period of twelve hundred and sixty years, which is to mark the duration of the reign of the Papal Antichrist, a period to which the last passage I quoted distinctly refers; but after the millennial period itself shall have closed, which is introductory to the consummation of all things and to the final state of the children of men. And, brethren, it is impossible to arrive at close, definite, satisfactory, sober-minded views of this, or any other prophecy, without taking the whole system and scheme into view—seeing the place it occupies, what precedes, what follows, what is the general bearing of the whole, and on what scriptural principles it may be justly and correctly interpreted. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him." To this the passage I first read refers; because it includes the distinct prediction of the glorious period of the millennial reign: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Now a similar phraseology is introduced in that passage in the book of Daniel. As is common in many other parts in the Scriptures, the phraseology is borrowed from the proceedings of the last day, though applied to predictions that are to take place long before: but that other passage refers to judgment.

of nations, and nations can only be judged and punished in the present life: that was the judgment of Antichrist: but the passage before us refers to the judgment of the whole world as made up of individual men. Such is the representation of the passage which is read before us; "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The spirit-stirring words which have been read set before us three things:—The final advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to judge the world: the proceedings of the judgment itself: and the results by which it will be followed.

In the first place, contemplate **THE FINAL ADVENT OF CHRIST IN ORDER TO JUDGE THE WORLD.** "Where is the promise of his coming?" the sceptics will be contemptuously asking, after the period of the one thousand years of millennial blessedness shall have closed. And in the midst of all their infidelity—(for infidelity is to assume a power—it is distinctly asserted there will be a conspiracy against the saints of God, even after the millenium shall have closed,) and in the midst of all their infidelity, of all their malignity, and all their conspiracies against the people of God, the day will come upon them as a thief in the night; at a moment when they shall be saying "Peace and safety," sudden destruction shall arise. At midnight, perhaps, the cry will be heard, "Behold he cometh!" A splendour, such as Saul beheld on his way to Damascus, such as the Apostle John beheld in Patmos—yes, an appearance far more intense, may suddenly beam forth from the face of the approaching Judge, and light up the heavens with a blaze of glory. *Now* will be the manifestation of the Son of God; he will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, appearing in all the glory of his Father, when he shall come to be justified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. How unlike the babe of Bethlehem—how unlike the carpenter of Nazareth—how unlike the wearied traveller at Jacob's well—how unlike the prostrate suppliant at Gethsemane—how unlike the buffeted, scourged, and crucified man of Calvary is He that cometh, with all his holy angels at the last great day! The multitude of angels, with a shout loud as from numbers without number, pause only in their acclamations that the deep silence which succeeds may be broken by the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God. That Archangel, the herald of the highest rank in the creation, shall first proclaim the second advent of Messiah, and then that appalling and unearthly trumpet, once heard on Sinai, shall summon from their dust the sleepers of the grave.

Now mark the language of the thirteenth verse of the passage before us: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell"—or rather *Hades*, retaining the word in the original—"Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them." Death is represented here as having had possession of the bodies of men, both as regards the righteous and the wicked. "Hades," that is, the world unseen, (for so the word signifies) not the place of punishment, for that is not here meant; it is not the same word in the original—Hades is represented as having had possession of the souls of men, both as regards the righteous and the wicked. Death, then, is compelled to surrender the bodies, and they rise to die no more. The unseen world surrenders the

souls of men, from its two great divisions—the one the abodes of the righteous, and the other the abodes of the wicked, and these souls now enter their risen bodies, preparatory to the judgment.

With this connect the words of our Lord in John v. where we find him saying—“As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” From this passage, compared with that before us, we may suppose, that when the trumpet of the Archangel shall sound, all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will come forth; they who have been buried with every honour that could be paid them, and they who have been buried without honour, they who have not been buried at all, and they who had been cast into the depths of the ocean, or devoured by its mighty inhabitants—the sea, as well as the land, shall give up the dead that are in it.

It is indeed said, the dead in Christ shall rise first; but the meaning, as explained by the Apostle himself is, that they shall not rise before the saints then living shall be transformed: the happy spirits of the departed, who have slept in Jesus shall accompany their Lord on his descent from heaven. When the trumpet shall sound their happy spirits shall re-enter their bodies, now vigorous, beautiful, glorious, resembling the glorified body of the Saviour. That resurrection shall be immediately followed by the glorious transformation, without death, of those saints of God who shall then be living on the earth. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” shall that stupendous change take place. Oh, how impossible, my friends, it is for us to conceive of the rapturous ecstasy of those who, in a moment, shall exchange, without tasting the bitterness of death, such bodies as ours, for a transformed, perfect, glorious body, to live in blessedness to all eternity! What must be their ecstasy and transport when conscious of the wondrous change?

And now comes down the fire from God out of heaven, kindled by the word of the Son of God: and now the flaming fire lights up, in one tremendous conflagration, the burning world. The day of the Lord now comes as a thief in the night, and the earth and the “heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.” To this hour they had been kept in store, reserved unto fire in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Previously to this, both the risen and the transformed saints will have been taken up together to meet the Lord in the air, so as to be elevated above the dissolving elements of this burning world, and be in tranquil security the astonished spectators of the awful scene. Doubtless, the wicked that will be destroyed in that deluge of fire will subsequently receive bodies formed for degradation and suffering, in which they must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Oh, my friends, what a thought is this, that they shall rise, it is expressly said, “to shame and everlasting confusion!” The world has never yet seen a human body raised from the dead for the very purpose of being summoned before God for judgment, there to receive the sentence due to the sins committed in the body. Oh, how terrible is the thought, how tremendous the contemplation!

Such is the Scripture revelation with regard to the advent of the Son of God

**Let us now contemplate, in the second place, THE PROCEEDINGS TO WHICH THIS WILL LEAD.** "And I saw a great white throne." It is the judgment-seat of Christ. He is the Judge of all: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;" the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the prince and the peasant; none are too insignificant to be overlooked; none too great to be brought to the bar. And shall *I* be there? is the question which every one now present should ask himself. And there is but one answer that can be given: every one of us must actually stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. It is recorded in the chapter that sets before us, in our Lord's own language, the proceedings of the Judgment, that when the dead shall be raised, and the Son of Man shall come in his glory, he shall separate them one from another with as much facility as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall place the sheep on the right-hand, and the goats on the left. Thus the sentence will be anticipated; and how can it be otherwise? Those who have died in successive ages have known already whether they are among the saved or the lost; for no human spirit can quit the body at death, and enter the unseen world, without having a place, even then, assigned it, which will fix the eternal destiny, and make that destiny distinctly and perfectly and irrevocably known to every one that goeth forth out of this life and out of this world. Do you ask, then, What end can be answered by the scrutiny of the day when the Son of Man shall come the second time? The answer is, It is to bring forth, before the universe, the entire manifestation of individual character; it is to publish to the whole world the evidence on which the sentence will in every instance rest; it is to justify, as well as to pronounce, the decision of the Omniscient and Righteous Judge. For this reason it is represented in the passage before us, that the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works. There is here evidently an allusion to the records which men write in books, because reliance cannot fully be placed on the register of their own memory. But can any thing escape the memory of Him before whose eye the past and the future are alike and perpetually present? His memory is itself the book by which he will judge the world; his own eye penetrates the entire character of every one of all the myriads before his bar, seizes all in one view; all the actions, and all the motives, and all the principles, and all the passions, of every human being. With what feelings, my friends, ought we to read the 139th Psalm: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." What will be the memory of man at that great day! What a resurrection there will be of thoughts! What crowds of deeds and words and habits and thoughts will rush upon the memory, and arouse the conscience! Oh, how the rapid, the impartial, proceedings of that silent tribunal within the heart will anticipate the decision of the Supreme Judge! Have you never known, my friends, what it has been to have the memory of past events and of past doings crowd upon your mind, instantaneously, when the recollection has been roused by something you have heard? The deeds of other days, and the thoughts of other days, long since gone by, may rush upon your memories like a torrent, which it is impossible to stay; perhaps inflicting most insufferable anguish, perhaps most unwelcome and most disquieting. What, then, must be the rush of memory, the crowd of recollections when the spirit

is roused to a degree of energy, and of thoughtfulness, and retrospection, and anticipation, unknown on earth; and when it is known, that on the sentence about to be pronounced, an ever-during eternity must depend?

But what is the character and the design of that other book, which is called in the passage before us, "the book of life?" What a title! What a record that must be! Of this it is said, "Whosoever is not written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire." This is the register written in heaven of the names of all who compose "the general assembly and church of the first-born." And what cheering light, my friends, is thrown upon its character when it is described as "the Lamb's book of life;" the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. Now well we know, that whosoever has spiritual life, whoever has life through the Lamb that was slain, has his name written in the book of life; and well we know, that whosoever has the Son of God by faith has life: "He that believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life. Believest thou on the Son of God, my fellow sinner? Hast thou exercised "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?" Then certain it is that thy name will be found written in the Lamb's book of life, and that there it was written even before the foundation of the world. At his first advent Christ said, "I am come that ye may have life;" at his second, he will unfold on the judgment-seat the pages of the book of life. Yes; and if your name, my fellow sinner, be not found there, to you the Judge will say, "Ye would not come to me that ye might have life. The life was made known to you, the life was set before you, you were invited to seize it, you were invited to obtain it; but you rejected it; you rejected the Saviour in whom alone there is life." And what will be the sting of conscience in fixing and inflicting unutterable anguish, that you would not come to Him that you might have life? Are you lying under that condemnation? Death and life are now set before you; which will you choose? Choose life, and your souls shall live; for whosoever, conscious of his guilt and condemnation, at the last day, now comes and submits himself to God's way of salvation—to flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before him in the Gospel—shall receive pardon now, the beginning of salvation now, and the completion of that salvation at the day when the Son of God shall come the second time. I have no doubt, some may, perhaps, be saying, "My name is in the book of life." Happy, indeed, you are, my friends, if you can say this on good grounds. "In this rejoice not," said Jesus to his apostles and disciples, "that the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

But let me remind you, it is one thing to feel confidence, and another to be entitled to it. To prevent self-delusion, let us observe, it is here written concerning all that were judged, that they were judged every man "according to his works." Blessed be God, the sinner that believeth is justified freely by his grace: the book of life is the book of grace: all who live will owe their lives to the Lamb that was slain, to his atoning blood, and his perfect, glorious righteousness: for Jesus is made, to every one that believeth, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of the body at the last great day. Yet, unquestionably, there is a sense in which both believers and unbelievers will be judged according to their works; that is to say, their works will be adduced as the evidence of character. It is precisely with that design that our Lord represents an appeal being made to their actions, when he himself gives an account of what shall take place when he comes the second time. He represents himself as saying to his disciples, "I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty,



and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." These were their works; Why were these works brought forward only to show that they had a merit, on the ground of which sin is pardoned and heaven bestowed? That is opposed to the whole canon of divine revelation, because sinners can only be justified and saved freely by the grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. But, then, a reference to these works answers a most important and valuable purpose: where there is true faith, that works by love, and that secures obedience. Now, those who are true believers, love their Saviour; and, loving their Saviour, they love to do his will; and his will was, that they should show love to their brethren. And, therefore, when they showed love to their brethren, by relieving their wants, by befriending the destitute, by giving food to the hungry, and clothing to the naked, that was the proof that their love was sincere; and their love was the evidence that their faith was genuine. And, therefore, these works are brought forward at the last day as the outward evidence of the reality of the inward change: so that they will be judged in that sense, by their works. Such is the meaning of that part of the passage before us.

It remains for me to contemplate, in the third place, THE EVER-DURING RESULTS OF THE JUDGMENT OF THAT GREAT DAY. First of all, hear the doom of the first, and the oldest, and the greatest sinner in the universe. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." "The beast and the false prophet" were the ministers and agents he employed, particularly during the papal reign. But the first tempter, and the great destroyer sinks under the doom he has dreaded ever since the curse was pronounced on the serpent in the garden of Eden. With all the unholy and rebellious spirits, over whom he was chief, he must now be shut up for ever in the abodes of misery. Oh what anguish, what self-torture, what recollections of heaven lost, and what a tremendous weight of wrath will he endure, from the judgment pronounced by Him that sits upon the throne!

It is added, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Death and *Hades* (that is, the unseen world, which had been the abode of the separate spirit) can no longer have existence. Death holds the *bodies* of men only; the bodies being restored to life, death is no more; death is at an end; death has no more any reign; death has no more any being. *Hades* held the spirits of men in a state of separation from the body; but these *spirits* being now re-united to the body, *Hades* is no more; *Hades* has no longer any existence. death and *Hades* are now destroyed. But then begins the second death. The first death, my friends, is the separation of the soul from the body; the second death is the separation both of the body and the soul from God, from glory, and from blessedness. It is said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Ah, what that fire is who can tell? Were it like the fire which shall reduce to ashes a burning world, it were torture; but it would at length burn out, or the victims would be burned up; but this is a fire of which it is said, it never will be quenched; it is a fire

that acts upon spirit—perhaps, also, upon the resurrection body, and yet without consuming either. That lake of fire is to receive, both devils and their human victims, which have taken part with these malignant spirits, in their enmity against God, and against his Son, and against his salvation. “Depart,” says the Judge, “into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh, what should be the effect, my hearers, of such warnings as these upon every sinner that hears me? Do you think, that the God of Grace has any delight in making any of his creatures wretched? With what design, then, has he caused these disclosures of the wrath to come to be made in his word? With what design did Jesus speak so much—the benificent, compassionate, and benignant Saviour—with what design did he speak so much of judgment to come, and of the wrath to be revealed against the unrighteous, when he should come the second time? Was it to harrow up the feelings? Was it to create consternation and dismay, unprofitably and unnecessarily? Or, was it not to arouse the sinner to escape from ruin, and to lay hold of eternal life? And was it not the same reason induced the benevolent Apostle of the Gentiles to set before his hearers and readers, the terrors of the law, the terrors of the judgment-seat of Christ? It was to shew them the folly of continuing exposed to the guilt and danger of the soul’s perdition; it was to urge them without the delay of a day, or hour, or moment, to lay hold of the covenant of grace, to believe on the Son of God, that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

Now, for what purpose has this subject been brought before you to-night, but to shew the tremendous danger of those who are living without the pardon of sin, who are living without renewal of heart, who are living without repentance. Is there not a Saviour? Is there not one able and willing to “save to the uttermost all that come to God by him!” Go to his throne; plead the death, and the glorious work and righteousness of the blessed Redeemer, plead the promise of a free and full pardon to every one that believeth on his name; and you shall not perish, you shall have everlasting life.

But what is the destiny of those whose names are written in the book of life? We may find it gloriously set forth in the two concluding chapters of this book. Let us just in conclusion read a few verses from the first of these chapters. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Oh, my friends, how should your hearts beat with joy and gratitude, when such an announcement as this brings to a close the canon of Scripture; “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Remember, at the same time, it is only he that believeth on the Son of God shall partake of that blessedness; whereas, he that believeth not “cannot see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

## THE SANCTIFIED CONTEMPLATION OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

REV. W. DODSWORTH, A. M.

MARGARET CHAPEL, CAVENDISH SQUARE, DECEMBER 22, 1833.

“ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”—2 PETER, iii. 11—14.

THERE is a practical influence which the Christian expectation of the coming of the day of the Lord must exercise over the life and conduct, when we contemplate the dissolution of all present things. There is much in the consideration that all these things shall be dissolved, independent of the expectation of those things which shall succeed in their place, which is calculated to exercise a most wholesome and beneficial influence over our use and enjoyment of the things of time and sense. There is much indeed in the single circumstance that all have an end, that they are transient and perishing, which is calculated to produce a most salutary impression on a reflecting mind. There is much in the very fact, that our walk and intercourse in this world is amongst the dying and the dead, that we cannot fix our eyes upon aught that is unchangeable or abiding—there is much in the testimony which our own consciousness, as well as divine revelation bears, that there is within us that which must outlive the objects which surround us—there is much in this single fact which has a tendency to produce that chastened and sober mind, which, under God’s grace and blessing, will prove most salutary to the soul.

But when, in addition to this, we consider the nature and character of that death which all things must eventually die, and when we reflect, that a judgment of fire from the Lord is threatened against them, and is even impending over them, that their time is fixed in the counsels of God, and that the tokens of his anger must be revealed upon them, here is another feature which is calculated greatly to add to the impressiveness of the anticipation of the great day of God. It tells us, that all things are, in some sense, still under the power of evil, that all things are employed by the great enemy of souls to our injury; it tells us that all things must be cleansed and purified before we can indulge in the free and unsuspecting use of them. It is indeed true, that if we are Christ’s, all things are ours, things present as well as things to come; and this is one great use to make of the redemption of Christ, embracing all the world. By faith we may be said to have entered on our inheritance; but inasmuch as all things, so far as they are objects of sense, are yet under the fall, so have we need to exercise a holy jealousy over ourselves in the use of every one of them, and to look

beyond that great purification which is revealed to us in the text, for the time when we shall be free, without hesitation, without danger, without reluctance, to expatiate over all the works of God, and freely, because holily and spiritually, to enjoy them all.

There is, however, yet another consideration of great importance connected with this. The Christian believer is represented in the text, not merely as standing under the expectation of this dissolution of all things, but also as "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," in which this will take place. Now this is an additional feature in the text, opening in a very striking point of view the power of this expectation to wean the heart from an undue attachment to the world; for it might, perhaps, at first sight appear from the view which we have already taken of this subject, that however the awful scenery of a world in flames may be forced upon our attention in the words before us, however we may force our minds into the contemplation of it in our more serious moments, that yet it is a topic which we naturally endeavour to shun, from which the mind would shrink, except when under some constraint; and we well know how much less influential and impressive any subject is from which the mind is ever attempting to escape, than the one on which it loves to dwell. I need not remind you of this; how much the influence of any subject, whatever be its nature, tells, to which the human mind is perpetually recurring; how it works by gentle, and perhaps almost imperceptible degrees, until in many instances it gains possession of the whole mind, and affects every action; whereas more important subjects exercise a much less influence when they are ever absent from the mind.

If then our contemplation of this great day of the Lord stood associated only with feelings of terror and dismay—if the mind should shrink from the thought of it as from the thought of an appalling and awful scene; we could not look for any extensive influence from it. It is to be feared, in point of fact, that this view of it has stood greatly in the way of its sanctifying influence on the minds of many of the people of God. They have put away the thought of that day, as presenting only to the mind images of terror. An erroneous notion has prevailed, that it is but a gloomy subject to look at. They have looked at it chiefly, if not exclusively, as connected with the execution of vengeance, with the fire of wrath poured forth on the wicked; and then in the absence of the pleasing view of their acceptance through the blood of the Redeemer, they have trembled to approach that day, they have trembled to contemplate it, they have put it from them as a day of evil.

Now it is to be admitted, surely, that there is much that is awfully grand, and even appalling, in the recorded transactions of this great day of God. Who can read the description in the text and context without feeling its awful grandeur? "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It must be admitted, that there must be something appalling in the idea of the fiery element seizing on every object around us, consuming our habitations, and reducing all that is material to liquid fire; and, above all, that there is something terrible in the contemplation of thousands of the despisers of the gospel, and thousands and myriads of false professors of the gospel, who cannot dwell with the devouring flames, and who must be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. But still the believer is represented in the text in the attitude of ardent and longing expectation for this day; he is "looking for

and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Awful and appalling as are the characteristics of that day, dreadful as its consequences will be to myriads of men, still it is an object of intense desire (must be so) to one that is looking for conformity to the image of Christ, longing for the purification of all things from pollution, and the deliverance of all things from the curse, and from the power of the devil, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and the display of his glory throughout the whole world.

Now what I wish you to observe is, what a powerful impulse this influence must give, of the expectation of the world's dissolution, as a motive to abstinence from the unlawful use of the things of the world. Oh how different should we regard the world and the things in it, if we were living under an abiding impression that the consummation of our best hopes stands inseparably associated with the breaking up of this earthly fabric, and the fiery judgment that shall pass on all its works; that the event which we most long for, which is nearest to all our hearts, and first in our wishes, and most frequent in our prayers, will be accompanied with the dissolution of all things from which our temptations to a worldly and selfish course of conduct arises? How must such a thought operate as a check to all covetousness, if, indeed, we are looking for the day when the merchandise of the gold and the silver, and all that the soul lusteth after, according to the words of the prophet, are to depart from us, and all things that are dainty and good are to depart from us, and we shall find them no more at all. Oh would it be possible to set our hearts on uncertain riches, when at the same time we were intensely longing for that event which was to bring these things to nothing, and making them us dust under our feet? Would it be possible to lay up treasure on earth while at the same time our eye is fixed, with longing desire, on that fiery deluge which is to consume the earth and all things upon it? So we may say of all other sources of temptation, what can prove such a death-blow to self-indulgence, to the permission of a false ease, as having the eye steadily fixed on "the consumption of the Lord of Hosts, even determined on all the earth?" "for all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof fadeth away, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." How can we seek the indulgence of the flesh, while we have vividly portrayed before the mind, that our own flesh is involved in the ruin of that day, and while we are ardently longing for that consummation? And it is the same with regard to the use of worldly power and influence, and the desire of fame, and the pursuits of ambition, and all the things which can engage the earthly mind. What can be a more effectual safeguard against their abuse, than our having vividly portrayed before the mind, as an object of desire and expectation, "the day of the Lord of Hosts," which shall "be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up," and he "shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." With such imagery before the mind, with such an object before us, which the mind is intensely longing after, we could not abuse the power and influence which God has put into our hands

But we must now proceed to the other division of the text, which presents to us the glories of the new world rising out of the ruins of the old, as the object of a sanctifying and life-giving hope. You will observe, on examination of the text, that it has this two-fold aspect: there is something of a sanctifying character to be drawn from the anticipation of the dissolution of all things around us; and there is something more of a sanctifying character to be drawn from the expectation of the re-establishment of all things around: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things"—that is, the re-establishment of new heavens and a new earth—"be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." The intimation here is clearly this—that the expectation of new heavens and a new earth ought to inspire us with diligence in approving ourselves to God, in every holy work, and word, and thought; that there is a something most sanctifying, most holy, in the hope of the restitution of all things of which he hath spoken by the mouth of his prophets.

But I know it has been thought by many a matter of little importance, whether this world, in a renewed and glorious state, or some other part of the immense universe, will be the place of habitation of the blessed. It is enough, it is said, that the people of God shall be perfectly happy; it is enough to know that they shall be where Christ is; and wherever that may be is to be happy.

Now, we may observe, in the first place, on this opinion, that if this seems to be such a matter of indifference, why not then receive the Scripture in its plain, unsophisticated meaning? Why be at such pains to mystify and allegorize the plain language of Scripture, which speaks of "new heavens and a new earth?" Why, if it be admitted that the coming of Christ to this earth, and his abiding upon it, can make it more blessed than Paradise of old, might not then we receive the words as they are written? Why seek for a figurative meaning? Why this reluctance to receive the testimony of God just as it is recorded? If, indeed, it could be shown from the Scriptures, that this material world around us has no promise of a season of refreshment and restoration; that it is doomed to everlasting desolation, and that the promise to the saints is not to see all things restored, and to inherit all things in a purified and blessed condition, but to be transported away for ever and ever from these regions of sin and misery and desolation, and to leave the world either to its annihilation or to the hopeless dominion of Satan, if this were revealed to us, then we must willingly submit to the testimony which is given by God concerning it. We must not be allowed to indulge any wish which it has pleased our heavenly Father to deny. We, who are mere pensioners on the divine bounty, owe all that we have to grace and of grace: we could not, we dare not, complain, whatever might be the Lord's will, either concerning ourselves or concerning the created things around us. If the beneficence of God should, then, seem to us less extensive and less exuberant than the Scriptures reveal it, still we could but be filled with thankfulness for what he has bestowed upon us. For if it be true, that all were once perfect, all must be at length restored, so as God originally purposed; who, else, in his dishonoured works, would endure dishonour, and be wronged without

redress. If it be, indeed, true, that we are to look for new heavens and a new earth, then we may be sure that this promise of the restitution and refreshment of the visible creation is no matter of indifference; but that, in proportion as our hope is Scriptural, and in proportion as we can see God's design in the future dispensation, we shall, under his blessing, and by his grace, find it sanctifying to our souls.

It is surely a mistake, brethren, to imagine that the Christian's hope is exclusively directed to what regards his own safety and happiness in a future state. It may be admitted, indeed, that, until this point is in a great measure settled, there is room for the mind to dwell on little beside this. The interests of eternity, as it regards our own souls, come upon us with such overwhelming force, when the question is mooted, "Is my everlasting portion to be in the torments of hell, or in the blissful presence of my Lord and Saviour?" this, I say, is a question which must set all others aside for a time, and is a consideration too overwhelming and too engrossing to allow the mind, perhaps, to look after them; but are we, therefore, to admit that no other consideration is worth our attention at all? Because a man cannot enter into a house without passing over the threshold, is he to continue to stand on the threshold for ever, and refuse to enter into the house at all? And because we cannot look with delight on the prospect of the divine glory, and on the purpose of God respecting the material world, unless we have some assurance that we are to be partakers of its blessedness, are we, therefore, never to look beyond our own interests? Are we continually to be engaged with the selfish inquiry, What must become individually of me?

Now, I believe, my brethren, that it is one great reason for the sanctifying character of the expectation of the text, that it does look beyond self; and that it has in it both sympathy with the rest of God's creatures, and a supreme regard for the divine glory. It is never to be forgotten (I have warned you against it often, and by God's grace will warn you against it again and again) that our religion itself may be of a selfish and unholy character; we may look too exclusively to our own state, and live in an atmosphere of selfishness, which is most unfavourable to the growth of genuine piety and to the enlargement of the soul in the contemplation of the divine glory. No, beloved, the hope expressed in the text is the more sanctifying, because it leads us to look out beyond ourselves, beyond our own individual interests. And is there nothing inviting, nothing life-giving, in the prospect of that complete victory that is then to be achieved over Satan? Is there nothing inviting in seeing his kingdom spoiled, his usurpation brought to an end; in seeing the bruiser of the heel bruised upon his head unto death; to see creation, now groaning under his yoke, disburdened, and delivered back into His hands whose right it is? And when we call to mind especially this, that the curse was inflicted upon all for the sin of man—for the sin of which you and I and all are accounted guilty in the sight of a holy God: when we feel that the whole creation groaning and travailling together in pain until now, is thus groaning and travailling because of our sin, and for our sake; shall we feel no sympathy with this suffering creation, and shall we not feel the life-giving power of the prospect of the curse removed, and the spoiler spoiled, and the earth and all that is in it breaking forth into joy, and, with one harmonious language, showing forth the fame of Him who hath brought us out of darkness into his marvellous light—of Him "that sitteth upon the throne, and saith "Behold, I make all things new?" Can

we contemplate this without sympathizing? Can we realize it as about to be, and not feel the heart drawn forth unto God, with a feeling of larger love? Or can we fail to experience a desire to bring all men now, as far as we may, into subjection to God? In fact, can we realize this without feeling a mighty impulse given by these words to all our hearts: "Be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless?"

But, further, there is another consideration connected with this text, which shows the sanctifying character of the expectation of the day of the Lord. One of the most impressive, and one of the most important views to take of the life which now is, and which renders it, indeed, a blessing from God, is, that it is at every step a preparation for the life to come. Not merely that a life, according with the will of God here, will be followed by a life of blessedness hereafter—this is not all; but more than this—that our present life is a state of pupilage for the life to come. Our present occupations and employments of our time, our desires, our affections, our thoughts, and all our faculties, are all preparatory to another state. It is the time for forming and enlarging our capacities, which shall be filled in the eternal world. There is a spiritual process going on in the mind and heart of every man, analagous to that by which the soil is fitted for the seed when the seed is sown in it; analagous to that which the limbs of the body undergo when they are to be fitted for any particular service. I mean, that just as the ground undergoes cultivation, in order to fit it for the crop, and just as the limbs of the human frame are fitted for any peculiar work, by previous exercise and use of them; so, in spiritual things, whatever may be our immediate and worldly calling and desires and affections and dispositions, they are cultivating here, and are fitting us for the cultivation of them hereafter.

Now, this I think, is a matter of great importance, in connection with the sanctifying influence of the Christian's hope of the day of the Lord. The vague and indefinite notion which some entertain of the place and the occupation of the saints in glory, cuts off all sympathizing connection between the life present and the life to come; it takes away from the present life the character of active intelligent preparation for the life to come. By directing the mind chiefly, if not continually, to some vision, some imagery, of the glorious halo of the ærial mansions of flitting spirits and visible brightness, and such things as persons' thoughts very often turn to in the mention of heaven; I say, this draws the mind away from the great essentials of future blessedness. What, indeed, may be the occupation of the saints in the world to come, may not be clearly revealed; but we have no reason whatever for denying them an analogy with those we have at present, so far as they are lawful and commendable. We have rather reason to infer the contrary, that there is a striking analogy between our occupations here and our occupations in eternity. I do not mean the immediate occupations in which we may be engaged in business; but I mean in the state of the mind and heart which those present occupations require for their exercise. There can be no doubt of this, at any rate, that the life of the saints in the world to come will be one of activity and diligence and enjoyment. The future state cannot be characterized as a lazy state of inactivity; nor is it the eye only gazing on the glory of God, as in the face of Jesus Christ; it is to have the faculties exercised, and the capacities filled. But, surely, all the other powers, both of mind and body, which are cultivated in every holy exercise here, are to have their capacities filled in the world to come.

And what then is the great change which is to take place? Wherein is the



great distinction to consist between things present and things to come? Wherein is contained, in other words, the essentials of the Christian's hope? It is just here; that in the new heavens, and in the new earth there "dwelleth righteousness." We look for a kingdom into which nothing shall enter that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie. It is not that we seek a change in the elements of things; but we are groaning under the burden of sin and misery which rests upon all things.

Now with this view to which the text directs us, we shall be led more powerfully, surely, than by any other consideration, to endeavour to use every object around us, and every faculty within us, to a spiritual and holy end; we shall feel the absolute necessity of making this life strictly a preparation for the life to come. For what do we need to make us truly blessed? We need the banishment of sin, that our breast should no longer harbour thoughts offensive to Him who lived and died for us; and this shall be, because "when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." And we need the removal of the curse, the transferring sin from the creature, that we may no longer see around us the miseries of the creature, groaning and travailing under the pain which sin has brought upon it; when this earth and ourselves shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We need see all things restored to their right use, and directed to their right end.

The effect then of such hope is to lead us to use this world without abusing it; for it leads us to exercise all our faculties and all our powers in holy things; it is to lead us so to see the service of our God in our worldly avocations; it is to see all things in him; it is to put away from us the love of money, and of fame, and ambition, and all other false and worldly motives for advancement, and to look to approve ourselves unto the Lord as his servants. We look not for the annihilation of the objects which demand now our attention, we need it not; but only for their purification; and therefore, "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," we shall "think of these things," and pursue these things.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye *look* for such things." Oh, bear in mind that this is an apostolical description of the Christian character, to look for a new heaven and a new earth. Are you then answering that description? Is that the object which you long for? Have you before your minds the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? If it be, then feel the force of the accompanying exhortation: "Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless." Yea, "without spot and blameless." Oh, how expressive those words are! That ye may have nothing that ye wish to retain when the fire of God's wrath shall consume and destroy, that you may be so weaned from all that is sinful, from all that is worldly, that you may see it purged away with that devouring flame as dross, without one repining thought. Oh, are you thus living in the world? Oh, are you indeed thus living; living in such abstemiousness from the things of the world, that you can see all that is sinful in it, and all that is dishonourable to God, burnt up with that consuming and purifying fire, and not feel a wish to retain one single object or one single feeling which it shall destroy?

Oh, that you may be all so found in him—built up in Christ as your only foundation—found of him in peace, reconciled to God through the blood of

his Son. And blessed be God that such is the measure of attainment that he has set before us. Blessed be God that he has set before us a standard of perfect holiness to aim at, to which we must be labouring to attain; that we may be at his coming "without spot, and blameless." Let me warn you against that chiefest of all errors, the allowing any state to the Christian as a right state in which a spot of sin remains. Let me warn you against that most fatal of all Antinomian errors which regards the sacrifice of Christ as a covering for sin, so as to make you content to remain in sin. Of all errors this is the very worst, the doctrine of perfection in the flesh, bad as it is, (and it is an awful heresy—it is at least an awful error) is not worse, if it be so bad, as lowering the standard at which a Christian ought to aim, and allowing himself to use Christ as a covering for sin and iniquity, and so making that blood, which was shed, not to cover sin, but to cleanse from sin, a cloak to hide it; and so leading Christians to all kinds of carelessness of living, to a neglect of the ordinances of God and the means of grace, and making them satisfied to be in sin. Oh, let me warn you against that as the most awful and the most destructive poison that the devil ever infused into the mind of man. Oh, no; let us know, that to be without sin is our Christian duty; to be blameless is the privilege which Christ has conferred upon us: this is the power with which Christ has invested us: that we fall short of it is our ever unceasing sin: a state not to be satisfied with, but a state unceasingly to be mourned over. "Having, therefore, brethren, such promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

## HYPOCRISY IN PRAYER.

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REV. DR. THORP.

BELGRAVE CHAPEL, EATON-SQUARE, DECEMBER 22, 1833.

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“ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”—MATTHEW, vi. 5—8.

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It is remarkable that, in his sermon on the Mount, our Saviour points out sin and guilt, not merely in those things which are universally acknowledged as wickedness, but in those things also which are regarded as good; in those which are excellent and meritorious acts. Thus he points out sin, as connected with alms-giving, as connected with fasting, and, in the passage before us, as connected with prayer. Now, these are the things which we are all disposed to treat and to consider as most important and valuable: and they are most important and valuable. But our Saviour's instruction teaches us, that by our perversion of them we may convert them into sin and folly and guilt. Our Saviour shows, with respect to the three things we have adverted to—prayer, fasting, and alms-giving—that hypocrisy may be connected with them: and, thus, what is in itself excellent is converted into what is refuse and vile.

Let us attend to the instruction which our Saviour gives us in the words of the text, on the subject of prayer. We must all be sensible, that this is a most important subject. Prayer is what we all have recourse to; it is what we are all ready to think of as our resource in seasons of difficulty and danger. When distress is imminent, then we are ready—even those who neglect to pray at other times—to fly to prayer. Surely, then, this must be an important subject for examination; especially when explained and enforced, as it is here, by the Wisest and the Best of Beings, by that Being who knew best how prayer ought to be offered up—who knew best what that ingredient in it is which renders it acceptable, what we ought to pray for, and how we ought to pray so as to procure an answer to our supplications and the divine blessing.

It deserves to be noticed, that our Saviour does not here command us to pray. He had given commands to this effect before; and he gives them one other caution: “ Ask,” says he, “ and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” His Apostles also direct us to prayer: “ In all things by prayer and supplications, with thanksgivings, let your requests be made known unto God.” “ Pray,” says the Apostle, “ without ceasing.” Our

Saviour, by his own example, taught us the importance of prayer; his apostles, and all his servants, whose acts and histories are recorded in Scripture, all set an example of prayer; and by their conduct mark their sense of its value and of its excellence. Our Saviour, in fact, has given us a form of prayer which we are to use, and according to which we are to model our own supplications. He does not, in this passage, give us then a command to pray; but he gives such a direction, as implied that his real servants would all be in the habit of praying.

In fact, my brethren, the necessity of prayer arises from the condition in which we find ourselves. What is our condition? That of creatures dependent on our God: it is "in Him we live, and move, and have our being:" we derive from him all the supplies of life; we depend upon him every moment, even for the breath in our nostrils. Surely, then, nothing can be more suitable than prayer. But this is not all: we are all accountable creatures to God; we not only depend upon him, but we are to answer before him. His observing eye is now upon us; he marks us incessantly; he is "about our path, and about our bed, and spies out all our ways;" and we are at last to appear, and render an account for the deeds done in the body. It is most proper and becoming, therefore, that we should prepare for that account, by prayer and supplication continually.

But even this is not all. We are not only the dependent and accountable creatures of God, but we are his sinful and rebellious creatures. We have brought his displeasure upon us. What act is it we perform that will bear his observation? What thought that ever arises in our breast is clean before the Holy One and the Just? Are we not continually defiling ourselves? Are we not continually living in a world that is defiled, and in which we contract sin? Are we not hourly offenders against the Majesty of heaven? Oh, then, should we not deprecate his displeasure? Should we not entreat his pardon? Should we not, in prayer and supplication, habitually cast ourselves on his mercy and pardoning love? Yes; our condition marks to us at once the value and necessity of prayer.

But our Saviour's language here teaches us, that prayer may be connected with hypocrisy. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." A hypocrite is one who is wicked whilst he pretends to be good: he is one who endeavours to throw an air of sanctity over wicked acts and evil conduct: that is the ordinary sense of the word "hypocrite." It is taken here in a somewhat different sense; but in a very proper one also. Our Saviour uses it to denote a person whose great object and aim is to be seen of his fellow men; who has one great object in what he does of a religious nature, and that is, to attract the observation and regard of his fellow-men. "When thou prayest," he says, "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." Their object was not the proper object of prayer—to be seen of God, to have his regard fixed upon them, to have his ear open to their supplications, to have his grace and mercy exercised in their behalf. They had an object, indeed; but it was a most unworthy one: it was to be seen of men, and commended of men. Our Saviour, probably, had here in view the besetting evil at that time of the Jews. These persons were, many of them, mere formalists in religion. This was probably the case with the Pharisees: all the essence of religion had evaporated as it respected them; all their religion consisted in mere outward

forms; the aim and object of it was to attract the attention and commend them to the regards of their fellow-men. These persons used to pray at certain stated times and hours, a certain number of times in the day; and no matter where they were when the stated time came—whether in the synagogue or walking in the streets—they stopt immediately, they put themselves in a posture of supplication, and commenced their routine of prayer to God. Our Saviour, who knew the heart of man well, asserts that they did it “to be seen of men.” Now, it would not become us, if we saw a man in a situation, however untoward and improper, it would not become us, to say that that man’s only object is to attract the attention of others; because we cannot see the heart: the man may be a very imprudent and foolish man, and yet may be very sincere in praying at that time; but what it would not become us to say, our Saviour might well say; for he penetrates the mind, he sees the sources and the springs and the motives of human conduct, and he knew the parties when he said, “They pray to be seen of men.”

Now, are there not those who pray only in public; who offer up their supplications, or join in supplications only in public? They come occasionally, or it may be habitually, to the house of God to pray there. Are the prayers of such offered in an acceptable manner? or, are they such as are regarded with acceptance by the Divine Being? We may, surely, say of the man, whose prayer is only offered up in public, that there is much of the spirit of what our Saviour here condemns in him. Mark, my brethren, the real servant of God. The real Christian will habitually come to the house of God, and join in its public worship; he will, in coming to the house of God, and joining in its services join in them with feeling and with fervour, and show that he can worship God with his brethren. And he also values the privilege and the opportunities of doing so: he will show this by his outward manner, by his demeanour in the house of God. We should all endeavour, in the house of God, to have our minds impressed with the importance and solemnity of what we are engaged in; we should show it in our demeanour, and we should show it by joining audibly in the service. Look into your Prayer-Books, and you will see it was never intended that merely the clerk and the children should join in the responses of our service: the church is constructed, and the service is constructed, on this principle—that the whole congregation are to join in its service. The minister takes his part, the other part is to be taken audibly by the people. And, surely, our public services would exhibit a different appearance from what they do, if, instead of answering by proxy, by means of the clerk and children, each, in an audible but subdued tone, offered up his own supplications to God, and joined his brethren in the services of our excellent church. I repeat, that the servant of God will habitually present himself in the house of God, and thankfully and joyfully join in its services.

But I come back to the position, that the man who only prays in public shows, by his neglect of it at other times, that he has much of the spirit of the men whom our Saviour here reprehends. You will see this, when you contrast it with what our Saviour says: “Be not as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Contemplate this interesting and blessed scene which our Saviour here describes. The sinner going into seclusion and retirement, shutting himself out from the world—that world which

lieth in sin, and so often tempts him into its sinful ways—going aside to commune with his God and his Father that seeth in secret; going to confess his offences and evils before that Being against whom they are committed; going into his closet, and shutting his door, and saying, “Lord, thou seest that I am worthless and vile; but I remember that thy mercies fail not; thou art infinitely compassionate and gracious. I come to cast myself on thy divine mercy, through our Lord and Saviour.” Then follows a confession of his offences; then follows supplication for grace and strength; then follow thanksgivings for that gracious Redeemer, through whom the assurance of pardon and peace is given; and then he departs strengthened and refreshed.

But we have only given one view of this interesting scene: our Saviour gives another. He says, that God sees him, that he marks it, and will reward, what he has done secretly, openly and before the world. There is the eye of God bent upon this supplicating sinner: there is the prayer of this sinner entering into the ear of his gracious and heavenly Father; the Divine Being looking at him with complacency, rejoicing over him to do him good, and treasuring up for him grace and mercy against the day of the revelation of the full salvation of our blessed Saviour. Here is a scene which we should endeavour to realize ourselves in the course of our lives as we pass through this world.

But our Saviour cautions us, in this passage, not only against hypocrisy, but also against what we may denominate superstition. He says, “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathens do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” Our Saviour here had reference to the practice of the heathens, who, in addressing their gods, used constant repetitions, and other superstitious services, by which they should call the attention of their false gods to the supplications they offered. You have an example of this in what occurred in the time of Elijah, when the worshippers of Baal besought him to send down fire from heaven upon the sacrifice which they were preparing, and for which we are told they cried out, from morning to night, “O Baal, hear us!” and that then “they cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them.”

These were some of the superstitious observances which these people practised on such occasions. Our Saviour cautions us against them: but his direction here against repetition does not imply that we are not to use repetitions of a certain kind in our prayers. Earnest and intense desire will lead to repetition in our prayers. Our Saviour himself furnishes an example of this; we are told, that in his agony in the garden, he prayed three times to his heavenly Father, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him: and the Evangelist distinctly says, that he used the same words on the three occasions. We have an example of that repetition which arises from earnest and intense prayer in the excellent Litany of our church, in that part where, after frequent supplications offered up to God, it is supposed that the congregation have caught (if I may so express it) the very spirit of prayer, and are earnest and intent in their prayers to God for what they ask: then it is, we are directed to say, “Good Lord deliver us;” “We beseech thee to hear us good Lord,” and to use other repetitions of that kind, marking our earnestness and the intenseness with which we offer our prayers to God. The repetitions which our Saviour disapproves of in this passage are vain repetitions: repetitions, which (as the latter part of the passage shews) would intimate that God does not know what we are in want of, or would not be willing to give us what we want. Our Saviour, so far from

disapproving the repetition which arises from earnestness and intenseness of desire, set us an example, as we have seen, in his own case.

There is a remarkable abuse of this kind, a remarkable violation of this instruction of our Saviour, enjoined by the Roman Catholic Church: its votaries are directed to offer up multitudes of prayers; they heap up great numbers of prayers together, and these false teachers instruct their people to use them as penances; for thus, they tell them, they remove their sins, and at the same time bring on themselves God's favour. This is not only a direct violation of our Saviour's instruction, but it is a perversion of prayer which we could scarcely suppose it possible, if we had not proof furnished us, that any rational person could be guilty of. To convert prayer into penance, to call the soul's drawing nigh to God, the God of all grace and mercy, the soul's drawing nigh to him for pardon and eternal life, and the blessings he has to give, to call that a penance is absolutely such an absurdity, that one could scarcely suppose it possible it could enter into the mind of any rational being. But to such a degree of infatuation has that church proceeded, and so easy is it to deceive persons with regard to the things connected with their eternal peace.

In order to have a full view of prayer as our Saviour has set a full example of it, and as we are instructed to use it in the Scriptures, let me call your attention to a passage from the writings of the Apostle Paul: Hebrews iv. 14—16, "Seeing, then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Now here, my brethren, all that is connected with prayer, as it is set forth by the Holy Scriptures, is most perspicuously and impressively presented to us by the Apostle. Here we see how it is that God can regard us, as our reconciled and heavenly Father, in the manner our Saviour instructs us in this passage; and here we see why it is we can come boldly to the throne of grace. The reason, the Apostle tells us in connection with this, is, that "we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens:" we have an advocate in the court of our God and King above, and, therefore, we may come to that court ourselves. The apostle calls him, "a great high priest," to remind us of the sacrifice which he had completed on earth, to remind us of his atoning death, by which he has cancelled sin, to remind us that he has passed into the heavens with his own blood to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat above, that that is our reconciliation with our heavenly Father, that it is that which assures us we shall be saved and blessed, that procures our welcome, and brings down blessings from a God whom we have offended.

The apostle reminds us further, that he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He knows we have sinned—that disgusts him not: he knows we have weaknesses—that disgusts him not—"he was tempted," the Apostle says, "like as we are, yet without sin." He knows, therefore, what we are: We have his atoning sacrifice to remove our sins; and he has promised his blessed Spirit to them that ask him, to help and strengthen their weaknesses. A sense of sin, therefore, should lead us to him; and a consciousness of weakness should make us cast ourselves on his mercy and grace. We should come, then, remembering that he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and not concealing our sins, our weaknesses, our temptations, or our trials from him, but confessing them before him

The Apostle adds, *what it is* we are to ask for. He says, we are to "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The two expressions appear to be synonymous: but in fact there is an important difference between them. As here used, the expression "mercy," is put for "pardon," we are to go confessing our sins, and asking the pardon of them. The expression "grace" is used to denote those blessings and gifts of guidance and strength, of peace and comfort, which we require while passing through this life. He directs us to ask for "mercy"—that is pardon—and "grace"—that is, all his various blessings to help us in our time of need; that is to ask for all we require. Our God has treasured up all the riches of wisdom and power and grace, in our Substitute and Mediator Jesus Christ, that out of that rich treasure he may dispense to us according to our necessities. Pardon we require every hour, and strength we require every hour also, as we pass through this vale of tears. We are to go, then, remembering, that we have a great high priest who was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, that he was tempted as we are, yet without sin: we are to go and ask for mercy and grace.

But the Apostle teaches us also *how* we are to go. "Let us," says he, "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace." Boldness warranted by our God's encouragement; boldness the result of an assurance that we have a Mediator and Intercessor before his throne; boldness resting upon his promise, that he hears, and answers, and blesses us.

Now, my brethren, we see on comparing this instruction of our Saviour with the Apostle's instruction in this passage, what an important privilege prayer is; what blessings we are to derive from prayer and supplication offered up to God; how it is our prayers are offered up—through our great High Priest who has passed into the heavens; and what it is we are to ask for—mercy and grace. We are to ask it not with vain repetitions, as if our God knew not what we require, or as if our God were not willing to dispense it. We are to ask it not to be seen of men, but that we may be seen of our heavenly Father, and with a view to the promise of our Saviour, that He "who seeth in secret will reward us openly." Oh, yes, many a prayer which was offered up when no eye but the eye of God saw the suppliant, will before the assembled universe receive its blessed answer and reward—the grace of our Gracious and Heavenly Father. May it be so with respect to us! May we pass through life, habitually in our seclusion and privacy offering up our prayers to God! And may he pour down upon us day by day that grace which we all need!



## THE CHRISTIAN'S DEBT TO THE WORLD.

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“ I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians ; both to the wise and to the unwise.”  
Rom. i. 14.

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THE man who wrote these words felt very deeply the force of those obligations under which the Gospel had placed him ; he felt the obligation in no ordinary manner. God had laid upon him a weighty charge ; and to the accomplishment of the work assigned him, he desired to bring all the powers of his mind, all the faculties of his body, and all the feelings of his heart. He desired to be a living sacrifice, yielded up unto God as a reasonable service.

I propose, my brethren, on the present occasion, to make some remarks upon the nature, the grounds, and the extent, of the obligations to which the Apostle here refers. May the Spirit of that God under whose direction the Apostle wrote, imprint upon our hearts such impressions of his own truth and grace, that we may find it good to have listened to the exposition of God's word ; and that that blessing which maketh rich may rest upon every one of us.

I. The Nature of the Obligation to which the Apostle refers “ I am a debtor.”

The debt to which he alludes was one of a peculiar kind : it was a debt which none but God himself could justly estimate, but which the Apostle Paul was enabled to value in a very considerable degree. He felt himself to be a debtor to all mankind. What was the debt? Love—“ Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” This was a debt which the Apostle delighted to owe—a debt he desired to contract every day more and more deeply, in order that he might by every successive view of the extent and character of that debt, be enabled to rise by the power of God to discharge it.

This debt was to carry the gospel of Christ to mankind. He owed to them the manifestation of that truth which God had entrusted to his charge. We find the nature of this trust described in his own language. Descanting upon the history of his conversion to Christianity, he declares, that when he was cast to the earth by the splendour of that vision with which God encircled him, he heard a voice saying, “ Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” These expressions mark out the nature of that debt, under the pressure of which during

the rest of his life he felt himself to live. He was never hereafter free from the pressure of that obligation; it clung to him with a tenacity which could be relaxed only by death. His determination henceforth was to realize in his own mind the continual presence of that obligation; that he should no longer esteem himself to be his own, but God's; and for God's sake, and by God's power, he was to belong to others, and not to himself. He was to live to God as his motive; he was to live to men as his action. This was to be his pursuit—to search out the sheep of Christ scattered through the wilderness of this world; and to bring them, as an instrument in the hands of the Great Shepherd, to that mysterious but secure fold where they were to find goodly pastures, where their weary feet were to lie down beside the still waters of comfort, and where they were to know the actings of that grace which is in Christ Jesus, out of whose fulness they were to receive.

II. Consider the grounds upon which he specially rested this obligation.

It is very evident that the command of God was the first and prominent ground of this obligation. He received the charge, not from man, not from the conjectures of his own mind, not from any fancy or any taste which he might have for that Christianity into which he had been marvellously conducted; but he had received this charge, and had come under its obligation, by the direct command of God his Saviour, (Acts xxvi. 13—20.) This was the source of the obligation to which the Apostle referred: it rested on a direct command from God his Saviour—a command that he was not at any time authorized to invalidate—a command which was henceforth to be operative to the end of his life—a command of which he was never to lose sight, from the obligation of which he was never to escape. He was to identify life with this debt of obligation. In after times when, in the execution of his trust he anticipated the most disastrous trials to which human fortitude can be exposed, he declares, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." This was the source of the obligation. If he proclaimed the message of salvation to a lost world, it was because the dispensation was committed to him to preach that gospel; it was because he acted and went forth under the direct mandate of heaven: and he could not be disobedient to that vision which broke upon his astonished soul, by God's effective interposition: and which made him hereafter to be the man he was—bold as a lion in the cause of truth—uncompromising before Jew and Gentile—and yielding up himself willingly to all the consequences of his embassy, and ready to take his station in the grave when God should please to place him there.

But there are other sources accompanying this paramount ground of obligation. One of them I find in the experience which the Apostle had of the worth and efficacy of that gospel with which he was put in trust. We find him declaring, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Do you wish to know whether, while expressing his sense of the value of that gospel, he had applied it to his own soul? Witness his declarations to the Galatians:—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved

me and gave himself for me." Witness his declaration to Timothy:—"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He was personally interested in the gospel which he proclaimed to others; he had felt its value to his own soul. It had healed the diseases of his own heart: it had blunted the arrows of conscience, or, rather, had drawn them out, and had poured in the balm of a Saviour's love. It had opened to him bright and glorious truths, casting their radiance upon the darkness of time, upon the obscurity of the grave, and upon the uncertainty of the future. It had opened to him a view never to be closed again—Christ placing a crown of glory upon his head, Christ having already been formed in his heart the hope of glory, and having made him a joint heir with himself in an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Another source of this obligation was the love which his union with the gospel had been instrumental in effecting in his own mind, which Christ had imparted to his spirit. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." There is a special character of this new nature to be found in love. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." "Beloved, God so loved us as to give his own Son to die for us." If that atonement has been applied to our spirits—if it has been life and peace and strength to our souls—"if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another." God is love; and it is the nature of the gospel, when received in the heart, to produce a conformation to the mind and will of God. It is stated by the Apostle Peter, that, by the exceeding precious promises among which the Christian is placed, he is made partaker of the divine nature; and that divine nature is manifested in love. God is love. Whatever other characteristics may be proclaimed of God, this is the most descriptive, and stands forth in a manner the most astonishing. We have heard in the annals of human creatures that love can produce love. We have heard of those who were willing to part with life to save the life of a friend; but we have never heard, except in the annals of the gospel, of divine love clothing itself with humanity, in order to become the subject of suffering and death for enemies. God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet without strength, yet enemies by wicked works, Christ died for us. Now, in the manifestation of this love in the gospel, while the Apostle felt he was to act under the direct commission he had received from his Master—while he felt encouraged by the experience of the gospel, with which he was put in trust, as to its efficacy upon his own heart to heal the wounds of sin, to raise the degradation of man, and to open to his view the bright prospects of eternity—he added to these circumstances by which he was impressed this likewise—that "love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." There are no declarations in Scripture so forcible as those contained in the negative. When it is said, "the Lord will *not* hold him guiltless," it means it will hold him *very guilty*. When it is said, "love worketh *no ill*," it signifies "love worketh *all good* to his neighbour." Love is an active principle, pressing forward to its object, that object being the happiness of others. Therefore, the Apostle Paul, having by the gospel become a partaker of the divine nature, through the influence of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, now acted beneath that influence, and longed to be the agent of communicating happiness to others. And perhaps I am not wrong in saying, that if the Lord God had repealed the direct charge under which he bore his commission, and said, "You have carried the message of mercy to many nations; you may now rest, and enjoy in solitar

communion the declarations of my love"—he would have replied, I doubt not "Lord, what is life but the season for thy service? What is life but an occasion to manifest the love which thou hast shed abroad in the hearts of thy people? And if I may not testify further of thy great name, and proclaim thy mysterious love, then, Lord, let me depart in peace, and dwell not on earth, but with thee in glory." Love cannot hide itself: love cannot be at rest. There is a holy energy in love which never admits of depression. It may depress itself for a moment, but then it is in order to burst forth with more effective agency. In the only transaction in the history of Christ which might seem to bear an aspect inconsistent with every other aspect—the repulse which he offered the poor Syrophenician woman—it was only love refusing for a moment to act, that it might burst forth with increased power and efficacy—"O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

III. Let us notice the extent of the Obligation under which the Apostle felt himself placed. "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." Many of you know that the Greeks habitually called other nations *barbarians*, because they were proud of their own advantages: they deemed themselves to be wise, and other nations to be fools. Hence it is said respecting the gospel, that it was to the Jew a stumbling-block, it was to the Greek especially foolishness. It was indeed a stumbling-block, but of a different kind from that which it had been to the Jew. To the Jew it was a stumbling-block, because it wrecked, as it were, all his fond hopes of temporal aggrandizement, and forbore to snap the iron chain by which his country was enthralled. The Messiah who came as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, was a Messiah they anticipated not. Therefore, when the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, proclaimed, by miracles indeed, and by his character as well as by his miracles, that he was the long predicted Saviour, they spurned the evidence he adduced, and put him to death as a blasphemer and impostor. But to the Greeks there was nothing of this disappointment: there was no barrier of this kind between the gospel and the mass of the Greeks. But there was the "foolishness of the gospel." It ill comported with that philosophy which had prevailed among and given a peculiar character to the Grecian nations—it ill assorted with their views of human dignity to be told that man was an outcast from God—that he lay under the sentence of condemnation—and that he could return to that God from whom he was an outcast, by no other way than that of the atoning blood of the Son of God, "very God and very man;" and that he must be indebted for life eternal, for all his hopes of happiness to that free grace of God that is exhibited by the mediation and blood-shedding of Christ; who, though he had hung between two thieves upon the cross, and had expiated, as his countrymen would say, the guilt of his imposture by his own death, was nevertheless proclaimed as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The Apostle says, "I am a debtor to the Greek as well as to the barbarian." I am ready to carry this gospel to the poor savages, and am not less ready to carry it to the refined inhabitants of Greece; I am ready to stand the butt and scorn of the philosopher, as well as to be the astonishment of the barbarian; so I may but point to the cross on which the Saviour died, and to the empty grave which he forsook, and to the heavens into which he ascended, and from which he will return the second time without sin unto salvation; and may repeat in the hearing both of the philosopher and the fool, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

We may easily imagine a reason why the Apostle would make no distinction

between the Greek and the barbarian, between the wise and the unwise; because he knew well that worldly wisdom, however it might elevate a man above his fellows—however it might produce superior legislation—however it might produce refinement of manners—however it might produce superiority in art—however it might enable a man to range the natural world—he knew well that this wisdom was mere folly when it connected itself with the deeper wants of man; when it connected itself with the acceptance of a creature with his Creator; when it referred to the cleansing of the guilty conscience; when it referred to the restoration of spiritual life to the man dead in trespasses and sins. Where is the scribe, where are the wise of this world, when these mighty blessings are made known, which alone are adequate to fill up the capacity of any heart, to rectify its disorders, and to heal its sorrows? What are the superiorities of science? They are nothing. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Therefore the Apostle knew well, when he stood on Mar's Hill, in that city which is called "the eye of Greece"—he knew well that all her philosophy left her where it found her, an outcast from God; without accredited hope, without religious principle, without conformity to truth, without any part in the inheritance of future happiness. When he saw the proud Greek stand side by side with the besotted idolater, into whose mind no science had shed a single gleam, he saw them standing upon one level—exile from God, degradation of heart as well as of understanding, and the experience of all the terrific ills that lay crowded, though concealed, in the regions of eternity. Therefore, he was a debtor both to the Greek and to the barbarian; therefore, he longed to carry the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of Jesus to the philosopher as well as to the fool. He knew well that the remedy for the one was the only remedy for the other; and that if that remedy were received and applied, it would lead the man who once stood on the platform of his own reputation to the foot of the cross, with prostrate eyes, a broken heart, and faith in the Lord Jesus; and place him upon a par with the despised publican, who smote upon his breast, and cried, in the agony of an awakened conscience, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

In applying this subject to ourselves, let me ask, Have you the judgment which the Apostle formed of the Gospel? Are you satisfied as it respects the name of Christian; as it respects the purity of an external church; with the baptism into that church? Or, have you passed beyond these external advantages to the inner region of that Gospel? Have you carried an aching heart to that Saviour who has bound up the wounds of many before you? Have you carried a burdened conscience to that blood of atonement which, sprinkled upon many other consciences, has produced the peace which passeth understanding, save the understanding of him who possesses it? To him it is a sedative to pain: it is hope to despair: it is joy to sorrow. It is to him light shining in the darkness of this world. It is to him a guide through the otherwise trackless paths of this wilderness, leading to that city of habitation whose builder and maker is God. Have you, my fellow sinners, received the Gospel as the Apostle preached it? Is Christ to you—to you individually—the hope of glory? Is he the salvation of your souls? Can you say, in the gratitude of faith for a renewed heart, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I was dead, now I live; and the life I desire henceforth to live, is none other than a life of faith in the Son of God; is none other than Christ living in me; to be united to him as a branch to the vine, partaking of his strength, nourished by his life, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of my Redeemer God?"

## THE HABITUAL CONSIDERATION OF DEATH.

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REV. ANDREW REED,

WYCLIFF CHAPEL, CANNON-STREET-ROAD, DECEMBER 29, 1835.

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“ O that they would consider their latter end ! ” — DEUTERONOMY, xxxii. 29.

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WE have arrived, my dear hearers, at the last service of the last Sabbath of another year. Such a position is calculated to nourish and awaken within us many serious impressions. One can hardly admit oneself to be so circumstanced, without, for an instant, indulging in serious recollections. It is proper, at such a time, for the mind to be thrown backward on the past, to consider the years and the dispensations that have rolled over, and to desire to receive from the recollection just and holy impressions. It is proper to such a position to cherish in our minds a lively sense of the divine mercy. He who feels that he stands thus, and remains altogether insensible to the goodness of God, remains insensible to all just reflections and just apprehensions of his dependency on the divine bounty. It is proper for us to think of the loving-kindness of the Lord, to love and to celebrate his great goodness, to acknowledge that, after all our expressions and after all our thoughts, the greatness of that goodness exceeds expression, and exceeds thought likewise. It must be difficult for us to regard our circumstances, without some increased sense of our imperfection and of our sinfulness. The mind, therefore, may be suitably directed to penitential and renewed confessions of sin. The year that is dying away, brethren—oh! what a witness has it been of our sins before God! And if it were allowed to pass away from us, without seeking the forgiveness of God and life in his favour, what a recording witness would it be against us for our sins, and the remembrance of our sins before him! On this day, then, and at such a time, it is proper to remember our faults, to compare our privileges with our deficiencies, to acknowledge the sin of the heart, and the sin of the life, and to flee once more, and with greater avidity of faith, unto that Fountain which is still open to take away all sin.

But the exercise of mind commended to us in our text is not either of these but it is one entirely congenial with them. It is that of consideration; a consideration as it is meant to bear on our present state before God, and on all the future prospects of an undying life. It is made the more interesting to us, because the address is from the lip of the living Jehovah, as expressive of his tender regard for our real welfare, and as designed to convey to our own minds, naturally inconsiderate, a most suitable source of reflections that may contribute to our present and our future peace. “ O that they would consider their latter end ! ”

There are two things, then, in these words. In the first place, there is the

event to be contemplated; in the second place, there is the consideration which it demands. The event contemplated is our latter end; the consideration which it demands arises from a variety of circumstances—some of the circumstances bearing on our present state, and most of them bearing upon the state which is future and eternal. Let us desire the spirit of wise, and holy, and serious consideration: that the consideration may lead to conviction; that conviction may lead to prayer; that prayer may be the sign of conversion; and that we may be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and have peace in his blood.

In the first place, we are to remark on **THE EVENT THAT IS TO BE CONTEMPLATED**; which is nothing less than what is here emphatically spoken of as our “latter end;” literally our “last end.” There is an allusion here to other ends and periods, rather than to the period contemplated; and which are points in the experience of those periods in life, and of those circumstances connected with life, which may thus be denominated distinctly ends or periods, designed and set apart, marked for ever in our recollection by particular associations, either of happiness or sorrow.

But whatever may be said of these revolving periods in our life and experience, they do not point so immediately to the latter end. And it is eminently the latter end—the last end, that end which closes all change, which winds up the entire occupations, and business, and scenery of this life, and which stands close on the life to come, and is the door opening into that life—it is the latter end which is to fix our attention. We may speak of an end as it belongs to the portions of time of which our life is made up. For instance; there are separate periods of time which mark our years, and which in themselves have an accomplishment, and come to an end. The day opens upon us in brightness, we pass quickly through our occupations, we are employed in a variety of engagements, and we come shortly to its close, and there is an end of that day for ever. The year, a longer period of life, is complete in its time: it also opens upon us smiling in the bounties of Providence: it is varied by greater changes; it introduces us into different scenes; it exposes us to multiplied trials; it is sure to bring with it many mercies: but the year, like the day, after passing over the appointed time, closes upon us, and there is an end of it also for ever.

Sometimes we may speak in this way of the circumstances of life which are united together, which form a part of the whole, the whole itself composing a period—the end, the termination of which, closes the events and engagements. You are conscious, perhaps, of some periods marking your whole lives. You have looked forward, possibly, to some event as associated with the deepest trials; you have trembled in the expectation of its coming; you have connected with it a variety of circumstances which, more or less, would contribute to its pungency and your grief: it has, nevertheless, come. Days have brought it, years have brought it; the affliction, the bereavement, the sorrow, has come to you; and the whole dispensation has come to an end, and it is now marked by a pungency on your memory which you will carry with you to the day of judgment.

So there may be a commencement and an end with regard to our being. You are young, and possibly you are looking forward to large enjoyment: you are proposing all subordinate exercises to be merged into one great enjoyment in relative or worldly life: you are associating all your fears, and all your hopes,

and all your diligence and efforts, to this consummation; and you think that if the consummation should be realized as you desire, that then your happiness for this life would be complete. Possibly, it has been allowed to you that these very events should transpire, that this very end should be realized, that this chain of circumstances should be complete, and that your whole expectation should be accomplished; and there has been, in reference to these circumstances, an appointed end.

It as frequently may be applied to the stages of human life. Our life, though it is brief, is made up of different stages; and these stages come in succession to their appointed end. We enter, for instance, into life in the capacity of *infants*; and there is a period to be passed through, which is denominated our childhood. This is very much the season of imagination; and this is very much the period of weakness, and sometimes of sorrow: this is also, especially, the period of joys peculiar to the time of childhood and of infancy. But the infant passes onwards in his days; the period of childhood closes; he that was a child puts away childish things; he that was indulging all the delights and pleasures of this early period of life, learns to discard them, and to look upwards to something more interesting, something more inviting, and something more manly. There is an end of that period of his being.

There is also a period of *youth*. The child becomes a youth; he is put under tutors and discipline; he passes through a painful course of education; he is to be instructed, and to be prepared for usefulness and consistency in future life. He at present does not apprehend the design of those who appoint him to this course of discipline; and he is unprepared to submit himself to the yoke of such education. This period of life and probation passes away, and the youth rises into the man, and puts off the things of bondage, enters on the whole field of life, commits himself to all its responsibilities, and hopes to feel himself happy in this enlarged period of his liberty. There is an end of youth, and to all the rigours and discipline of youth, in that individual, for ever.

The *man*, entering on life, bears the heat and burden of the day; connects himself in social relationship, trains up his family, discharges the duties of a good citizen, and looks for the appropriate reward of his industry, assiduity, and care. But soon the period of manhood passes also away; there is an end to this. The strength of his years fail; the energies which he once put forth he can put forth no longer. Before he thought it, there is here and there a grey hair appearing on his head; and, before at all he expected it, advanced age comes and reminds him, if he has any disposition to reflect, on his exposure to his certain latter end.

All these periods, then, may contribute to what is here considered the latter end: they do undoubtedly lead to it, but they are not itself the last end of man. The last end is that period which admits of no succession in time; which separates us at once, and for ever, from earth; which places us on a bed of sickness which is mortal; which infixes into our nature the sting of the last adversary; which reduces our body to the corruption of the grave, which dispatches our spirits to an invisible state, and which leaves us, and the place which knew us in the present state, as though they had never been here. This is our latter end; this is the period when man leaves the present state, and leaves all for ever. This is the period when he gives up the ghost, his spirit; and the body descends to corruption. This is the period when he has done with care, and done with



enjoyment, and when every thing here to him is nothing, and when the whole of the visible world is also at an end. This is his last end: no other changes shall happen to him on earth; no more shall he be visible among the children of men; no more shall he be occupied in its business, encumbered by its cares, entangled by its temptations, and fettered by its engagements. It is all gone and past, and gone and past for ever.

The last end of man, therefore, is the period which is here considered; is that period which closes all society, and all connection with the present state. In this, man stands distinct and alone. "There is hope," says the patriarch, "of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again." There is hope, under various circumstances, that if we suffer affliction and trial, the light will come, and joy will return, and peace will visit the breast. But there is no hope of the return of man to this life, this corrupt and carnal estate, when once he is liberated from the body, and passed into an unseen world.

We are to consider, therefore, the event as here described—the event of our death. **THIS EVENT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNDER OUR CONSIDERATION—OUR serious, our repeated, our prayerful consideration.** "O that they would consider their latter end!" This is to be considered; and the very command to consider it indicates to us the bright and glorious doctrine of our immortality. If man had on earth a last end, and if that end was complete in relation to the visible state, as it is complete in relation to this earthly and seen state, then there would be no propriety in urging him to consideration. On the contrary, it would be his wisdom not to consider; it would be his wisdom not to anticipate; it would be his wisdom and his joy, so far as such a creature could have joy, not to look forward to the period when he should cease to be, and when he should pass into a state of annihilation. On the principle of the infidel it is well not to consider, it is well not to look forward; for this would spoil his enjoyment here, would fix his attention on the most unwelcome subject, and dispose him only to look on vacancy and annihilation; which would embitter all his present pursuits, all his present indulgences and expectations. But when we are exhorted here, and when through the whole extent of God's word we are exhorted, to consider the future, we have in the very exhortation implied an announcement of a blessed immortality. Man lives; man lives beyond the grave; man lives beyond the seen state of earthly things; man lives for ever; man must live for ever. He may cast away his inheritance, and lose his joy, but he cannot destroy his being, or annihilate his existence. Hence the propriety of consideration; hence the importance of reflection; hence the suitableness of asking, "What shall I be in that invisible and unknown state? What shall be my portion there? What shall be my destiny there?" And to consider that, whatever happens to him, life is only introductory, and in the nature of education, to blessedness hereafter.

There is, then, in this very statement, a recognition of the doctrine of our immortality. Infidelity is confounded. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." Man has his expectations and thoughts carried out to futurity, and fixed on the invisible state of things; and man is taught to consider this earth not his own, this state not his rest, but the heavenly state as his home, and the heavenly inheritance as his portion for ever.

This is to be, therefore, matter of deep consideration. "O that they would consider their latter end!"—that they would consider how soon that last end

will come ; that they would consider what is the consequence of its arrival ; that they would consider, that beyond this state they must live for ever ; that in that future state they must be for ever blessed as the angels in heaven, or for ever accursed as the reprobate spirits cast down from God. They are to consider these things.

We are to consider that this change must happen to us all. It is to lead unto serious reflection, and to be admitted as a proposition of immutable truth, that we must thus pass through our latter end. You are not to speculate upon chance ; you are not to dream of death as an event at a distance, and to happen certainly to others, but which shall not be realised to yourselves. Consider, I beseech you, seriously, and consider devoutly, that this event, the arrival of your latter end must be realized by yourselves. You must die ; you must pass out of this present world, and the place which knows you must soon know you no more for ever : the dearest relationships you have here must soon be broken up for ever, and all the cares, and all the joys, which you boast or dream of in the present life, will soon be to you as though they never had been. Oh yes, you must soon be stretched upon the hopeless bed of affliction ; you must soon fall under the power of the last adversary, the king of terrors ; you must know what it is to contend with him—your weakness against his strength ; you must know what it is for the spirit to be disembodied and to pass into eternity, and to pass upwards to the God that gave it.

Consider not only that this must happen ; but that this may happen at any time. We have referred you, my hearers, frequently, to the various periods of which time is composed, and to these periods as terminating in our last end—that end which leaves us without change, and fixes our state for ever. But you are not therefore to suppose, that all these changes and resolutions in life must happen before your last end shall arrive. It is possible that this last end may arrive before either of these periods of change shall be known ; it is possible that it may happen at any time, and therefore happen now. It may happen to you in manhood, bringing all the cares and duties of life. It may happen to you in youth : alas, what numbers fall, in that interesting period of life, to rise no more ! It may appear to you in childhood, whilst your thoughts are tremblingly alive to God and his presence, and whilst your child-like prayer is ascending affectionately to his throne. This last end may take the place of all other ends, may close upon you before you shall realize any change, before you shall advance through its several changes. Death waits not for confirmed age and trembling years to realize his triumphs, but smites when and where he will. You are to consider therefore, that this event happens at any time ; that though you are full of health, and full of occupation and business, and schemes and designs for the present life, God may send his messenger to you, and pronounce you to be in a state of folly, and snatch you away in an instant. And you are to know that under all circumstances it becomes needful to enquire for a Saviour and for a mighty one, and to look from yourselves to Him who hath life and immortality to bestow to the guilty and the dying.

We are to consider our latter end, so as to ascertain whether we are prepared to meet it. Consider, for you must die ; and since you may die at any period, and may therefore be called upon to die before this dying year shall itself expire, consider whether you are prepared for so great, so final a change. Are you ready ? Are you ready to renounce the things of the present life ? What, you who idolize them so tenderly ! You who have all your hopes and your thoughts affat

upon them! You who have so many schemes unripened and preparing to realize to yourselves in the present state! Are you prepared for this latter end? Can you be prepared to die, you who never think of dying? Can you be prepared to die, you who are calculating certainly on years to come, can you be prepared to renounce this life, and to renounce the world, attached as you are to it passionately, in all its pursuits, in all its gratifications, and in all its associations?

Then consider, my dear hearers, I beseech you not only whether you are prepared to renounce the things of this life, but whether you are prepared for the events which will immediately follow. Scripture teaches us, that two great events will follow immediately upon this latter end of our life; we must meet God, and we must stand in judgment. O consider, and ask with deepest attention whether you are prepared for such event. Are you prepared to meet God, to look him in the face, to stand before his presence, to answer for the deeds done in the body, to give an account of your occupations and enjoyments here; to have your whole heart, as well as your whole life, no longer a mystery but completely exposed to yourself and to others? Are you prepared for this? A sinful creature, are you prepared to stand before infinite purity? A weak creature, are you prepared to stand before Almighty power? An unhappy creature, are you prepared to plead the divine forgiveness and pardon? A miserable and a dying creature, are you prepared to challenge at the hands of God when you shall see him, the blessings of life and immortality through his beloved Son?

Then consider, that when you are thus called to your latter end, immediately you pass into judgment. The judgment is set, the Judge is upon his throne, the books opened, the whole recorded life, and the motives of action, there distinctly seen, there for ever brought to recollection, there inscribed in undying characters. My brethren, are you prepared for such an issue? Consider, and ask, and prayerfully enquire, whether you are prepared for such an event. Can you stand in judgment? Can you plead with the Judge? Can you enter into that judgment, so just, so holy, so impartial, yet so extreme? Can you answer for one transgression of a thousand? Can you claim impunity before God? Have you a righteousness in which you can stand before him, and find acceptance there? Have you any ground of confidence which you dare to plead, as you dare to plead now to your consciences, for repose and for peace. Consider, then I beseech you, as you are dying creatures; consider, as you are mortal creatures; consider, as you must go into judgment; consider, as you must meet God; consider, whether you are prepared to meet him as your God and as your friend.

We are not only to consider whether we are prepared for the great change, but we are deeply to ponder the consequences of being unprepared to meet it. The mind of the Christian should frequently revert to these subjects to provoke his gratitude, his hope, and his faith, and his ardour: and the mind of the impenitent should constantly bear on these subjects, as by the blessing of God, they may contribute to his conviction, to his conversion, and to his final safety. Consider if you meet your latter end, and if you are unprepared to meet it, what are the fearful consequences of that state. Have you ever considered? Have you ever considered it alone, in solitude, in prayer, and with the light of the Sacred Volume streaming fully upon you? To enter into your latter end, and pass into another world unprepared to meet God in judgment, is to fall into the hands of his wrath, is to fall beneath the sentence of his law, is to fall to rise no

more, is to become the subject of indwelling hopelessness and eternal despair, to have the condemnation of God upon you, the condemnation of your own consciences upon you, the condemnation of all your privileges and lost opportunities upon you, and the condemnation of all that is wise and all that is holy in the entire universe of God.

Have you considered this? Have you considered what it is to dwell with consuming fire; what it is to contend hopelessly with the Judge; what it is to stand in judgment, to flee away from God, self-accused and self-condemned and lost, awaiting the sentence of legal condemnation? Have you considered what it is to lose the soul for ever, though here you should gain the world? Have you considered what it is to give an account in judgment for every act, for every thought, for the thought of folly as well as the thought of sin; for every thing that has estranged you from God, and made you your own adversary? Have you considered the aggravation of all this, which will be self-accusation, that you will have no blame to refer to God, no blame to refer to others, but will bring down at last all the blame and accusation on yourselves? "Yes," you will say, "I am justly left; I justly perish; I refused instruction, I despised reproof; I had line upon line, promise upon promise, and mercy upon mercy; but I turned a deaf ear, exercised a perverse and stubborn mind, and refused to seek the things that belong to my everlasting peace." Consider, I beseech you, frequently and deeply, the consequences of the latter end for which we are unprepared.

Then consider the method by which alone we can be prepared to meet this last end. Happily we are blessed with a revelation from God; happily that revelation contains within itself the grand preparation of redeeming and recovering mercy; and happily this is the only sovereign remedy, whilst all others are excluded from our confidence and our hope. The method, therefore, by which we can expect to meet God in peace is the method of his own device; devised by his infinite wisdom, and accomplished by a power also infinite, becoming the proof of a love also infinite; a love which scrupled not to send its own Son into the world, that we might have life and salvation through him. Consider there is now reconciliation through him; consider that you may live in peace, and die in peace and safety through him. Consider that your hope and security lie in not devising your own method of happiness, but in accepting God's method of happiness, in bowing to God's proposition, and believing in God's dear Son. Here is life to the dead; here is immortality to the condemned; here is the gate of heaven, which was closed against the sinner, thrown wide open for his admission, and the gates of hell, that were gaping to receive him, shut for ever lest he should fall. The method of our salvation, therefore, is a method adequate to all our necessities, to our sinfulness, to our exposure to punishment, to just and everlasting punishment. It rises as large as our crimes; rises as high as our iniquity, blots out all our offences, and turns all our mortality and death into the greater assurance of immortality and eternal life.

Brethren, we are to know then, that in this testimony of the gospel, there is hope, that by faith in this divine Saviour you shall have life, and that by accepting God's mode of mercy and reconciliation we may be at peace with Him—in the Scriptural language, we may be *at one* with him; we may confidently look forward to the meeting of God in judgment, and may be assured we have a sufficient plea in making believing mention of the righteousness and name of his Son. While you consider this as the great method of safety and peace, con-

sider whether you have accepted it—that you are a sinful creature, that you are liable to death by reason of sin, that if you remain in a state of impenitence and unbelief, you will inevitably be involved in that death, involved in it for ever. These are all serious and awful truths; but it is also a delightful truth, that if you have truly received the Lord's Christ, truly and gratefully accepted his gospel, and have believed in the promise of God to your salvation, you shall not see death; the wrath of God which was upon you shall be removed, and life, justification, and happiness shall be yours. Consider, then, have you received this proposition of love? Is this salvation practically and experimentally all your desire and all your confidence? Do you daily admire the provision of God's wisdom for your safety? Do you gratefully receive Jesus Christ into your heart, as your prophet, your priest, and your king? Have you entirely surrendered yourselves to his keeping, and are you looking for the judgment with confidence, while you say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though I shall suffer death and see mortality, I shall live and I shall stand with him, and be glorified with him in that great day." O consider! Have you thus believed on Christ? Have you thus renounced every thing for his sake? Are you thus made a justified man? Has sin broken your heart, as well as your peace? Has the sense of your sin humbled you into contrition, to sorrow before God? Have you looked away from yourself to Him who is the only sufficient Saviour? Are you daily and prayerfully casting yourself on his care, and asking his every blessing?

The substance of the consideration is to fix in our minds the importance of a deep consideration of this subject: it is not merely that the subject during a passing discourse should be impressed on our minds, and we should be for an hour awakened and impressed and affected; but that the consideration should become so much a habit of the individual; should be so continually entertained and cherished by us, as that it should have the nature and power of a principle in us. Consider; that is, habitually consider, uniformly consider, prayerfully consider, this manifestation of the Grace of God. The Christian man will become a considerate man; the real penitent will become also considerate: and the more we are animated by the hopes and joys of eternity, the more we shall be led to consideration of them, as the best companion of earth, and the best introduction to life and joy. Consider, therefore, your latter end: consider it, that you may be wise; consider it in all your occupations, and pursuits, and enjoyments. In your chief joy let this principle of consideration say to you, "Thou must die." In your greatest sorrow, let this principle of consideration and faith in God say to you, "It will pass away, as in an hour, and thou must die, and thou must come and enter into rest." Let it impart to the Christian all its hopes, and let it convey to the sinner all its terrors; that terror shall be salutary by God's blessing; and that hope shall continue to increase, with greater power, until hope is confirmed in joy.

Not only does our subject commend to us consideration, but the very circumstances in which we are placed especially invite us. One other year is dying away from us; another and a new year will open upon us if our frail life shall be spared. We are placed in circumstances which call upon us for prayerful and deep consideration. Consider how time is flying away; consider how certainly you must die; consider how uncertain is the time when you shall be called to die; consider that after death there is judgment; and consider, that it is only as being found in Christ, receiving him, and walking in him, that you

can have any hope of pardon, justification, and peace hereafter. Consider these things.

Let the Christian consider these things with believing enjoyment. Christian, the days are passing, indeed, quickly away from you; but the days which are bringing you nearer to your latter end are bringing you also nearer to an expected end, which end shall be peace. Your prayers would want an answer, your desires would want an accomplishment, your hopes would want a consummation, if you were not to die; if you did not experience, after all other changes, a latter end which admits of no subsequent change. Every change to you shall be the advance of your happiness, the promotion of your character, and your introduction to a nearer fellowship with God; and your last change shall be a complete introduction into the favour and blessedness of God's eternal kingdom. Carry hope with you to the end; let it sustain you in the darkest night of adversity; let it be your comfort and your joy in the midst of life's conflicts; and let it bear you onward, as the hope of salvation and the faith of Christ, to the very gates of hell, and through the final judgment.

O that we were all wise, thus to consider our latter end! But, alas! brethren, how many of us are unwise; how many of us do not consider; how many of us, so far from encouraging consideration, put it far away! You are conscious of refusing to think on these things, trifling with them habitually, and entertaining any worldly enjoyment and arrangement in order to shut eternity and death out of your consideration. O what a death you will die, if you are left in this state! It is not by refusing to think of death, that you can overcome it, and put it away—then it might be wise not to consider. It is not by refusing to consider of judgment, that you can avert it; nor, by refusing to ask how you shall stand there, and with what righteousness you shall stand; for then, if you could forego the judgment, by refusing to think of it, it might be wise and well not to think of it. Think or not think, time is flying: think or not think, the time is coming: willing or unwilling, you must die: your latter end must come, and you must stand in judgment. I put it, then, to your consciences, as rational men, is it wise, is it consistent, to be appointed to such a destiny, and never to consider, never to seek, never to pray! O that ye were wise to consider your latter end! O that by any words of a mortal preacher, it could be impressed upon you! O that, by any persuasions of tenderness and entreaty, I could win you to consider it; and win you to consider it with that evangelical inquiry and prayerful heart, which it demands above all things else! Believing friends are silently, but eloquently, entreating you to consider: prayerful parents are silently offering up prayers to God, that, by his gracious influence, he might dispose you to consideration and to prayer: the dying year, as it passes away, seems solemnly to say to your consciences, “O that you would consider your latter end!” And, in the words of our text, the voice of the Living God himself is heard, heard with the tenderness of a father, saying, “O that they would consider their latter end!” It is no more I that speak to you; it is no more the affectionate parent that addresses you; it is no more the warning and expiring year that calls upon you and demands your attention. It is the voice of God your Maker, God your Judge, God who can kill and make alive, and that God from whose hands none can take away. You are in his hands; you are all in his hands: I leave you there. I pray that, in his hands, you may be conscious you are, that you may feel his power, and tremble for yourselves; turn to him and live, and receive the method of his mercy by his own beloved Son, that you may enjoy life abundantly. May he sanctify his word. Amen.

## THE CHRISTIAN RULE OF CHARITY.

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REV. H. MELVILL, A. M.

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Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."—EPHES. iv. 28.

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THERE are arguments to be adduced both for and against what is styled the expository kind of preaching. It is often said, that a congregation is most advantaged when their minister takes a large portion of Scripture, and delivers as his sermon a running commentary on its verses. We must admit the likely view to be, that in such a discourse there will be more of God's word, and less of man's, than in another which confines itself to the exposition of a solitary verse ; and it is unquestionable, that so far as this result is effected, the one style of preaching must be confessedly superior to the other. But, then, we are persuaded, that there exists no inconsiderable danger, that much which is important in the single verse will be overlooked in the hurry of the endeavour to say something on all. There is ordinarily condensed so much of important and interesting truth into the texts of Scripture, that the most of these texts will by themselves furnish matter enough for a sermon : and of course, in proportion as the single verse contains masses of truth, the risk is greater, that only fragments will be deduced by the rapid, and almost necessarily superficial, inquiry.

The text which we now bring before you, from the Epistle to the Ephesians, is one which would, perhaps, gain few remarks in an exposition of the whole chapter, though when accurately expounded contains more than sufficient for a lengthened and laboured discourse. It would be a vain effort, that of speaking at due length on every topic which might fairly be evolved from this passage ; we shall therefore only summarily mention, what appears to us the truths either asserted or openly implied, and then select, as the special subject of discourse, those which have most of difficulty or interest.

Now you observe, that the Apostle is exhorting men against a sin, which prior to conversion had been probably their besetting sin ; " Let him that stole steal no more." It seems certainly remarkable that such an injunction should have been judged necessary ; but if not necessary we know it would not have been given. One might have thought, that so glaring a violation of the law of God as theft would have been shunned by all renewed men, had no precept warned them back from its commission : but the Apostle did not address himself you see to the whole body of the church, but to those of its members who might afore-time have been guilty of the crime. He therefore supposes a risk—not that there was vast likelihood that the Christian who had stolen before conversion would steal after—but that the man who had been a thief while uncon-

verted, might be seduced to commit acts of dishonesty, though brought into the discipleship of Christ. He thus hints at the probability, that the sins committed by the renewed man would be of the same kind with those which he had been accustomed to commit whilst unrenewed, and that therefore the main of his seekings should be given to the guarding against the form of temptation of whose approach he had been most susceptible in the days of his ignorance.

We gather from such intimation the fearful power of habit; seeing that what a man has accustomed himself to do, he will be in great danger of continuing to do, even when there has passed upon him a moral change, as regards actions which he is now enabled to perform under a new point of view. Once assume a habit, and you form a kind of fixed law of conduct, your obedience to which, as though by a law of nature, becomes soon a thing not of deliberation, but of course. If the great danger of the penitent thief (supposing Christ to have saved him from death, instead of carrying him to Paradise) would have been that of tampering again with the property of others—and that on the principle, that what we have accustomed ourselves to do we can hardly cease to do—you can need scarcely anything to shew you the importance of being watchful as to habits, seeing that even conversion, whatever the mysteriousness of the change, will leave such a tendency to the acting as we have accustomed ourselves to act, that an additional precept is required for the restraining Christians from conduct which is denounced and punished by mere human legislation.

Now we observe, that when the Apostle had thus warned against the seeking subsistence by the dishonest arts which had been once employed, he lays down a rule with regard to the obtaining a livelihood: "Rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." It is a great feature of the natural government of God, and we may add also of his moral, that advantages, which are after all his gifts to men, should be attainable only through their own instrumentality. Labour is one of the grand ordinances of the Almighty, and he hath so constituted our circumstances, in regard both to the present life and the next, that if we sit idly we can look for no blessing. But though employment be thus fastened upon us by the appointment of God, according to the direction of the Apostle, that "if any man will not work, neither shall he eat," it is not, you perceive, every kind of employment which may lawfully be followed. The requisition of our text is, that man should indeed labour, but at the same time he should work with his hands only at "the thing which is good." There is a reference to that great truth with which Christ foiled Satan, when tempting him through the appetite of hunger, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

We are quite aware, that there are various instances in which the discharge of duties towards God will seem to interfere with the obtaining of a livelihood, and in which, if a man stand forth consistently, and act like a Christian, he must, to all human appearance, put away from him the means of subsistence: the tradesman, for example, who if he closes his shop on the Sunday must expect to lose many customers; the servant, who unless he will agree to do something which his conscience tells him is wrong, must quit the service of his master; the child, (for there are families in which religion is treated as rebellion) he must give up what is called his *methodism*, or else be disinherited. These parties are all so circumstanced, that they can be faithful to God only by exposing themselves to the probability, if not the certainty, of destitution. We are far enough from



counting lightly of the trials which may be put on the faith of Christian men and Christian women. We do not suppose it possible to find within the circle of solicitation to the doing wrong, a case which more demands all the sympathies of believers, than that of the small shopkeeper whose profits are chiefly made on the Sabbath, and who therefore feels that in putting up, as his conscience tells him he should do, his shutters, and closing his doors on the day of sacred rest, he is to all appearance directly accessory to the bringing starvation on himself and his little ones. It is easy and it is right, to tell a man what duty requires, and to press it home, that if he values his well-being, both here and hereafter, he will "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." But we will not conceal, that the faith which shuts up the shop must be akin to that which braves the fearfulness of martyrdom; and we are persuaded, that those who move in the better classes of society, and whose means of subsistence are fixed rather than precarious, know experimentally but little of the conflict of which that man's breast is the scene, who must either walk in the course which conscience, touched by divine grace, denounces as wrong, or bring in all probability, the fiend of hunger into the very heart of his household. Yet with every confession of the greatness of the required effort, the scriptural rule is clear and decisive, making no exception as to the character of the labour, but that we work only "the thing which is good." And we tell any of you, whether the servant, or the tradesman, or the child, who to all appearance can dare to be religious only by daring to be destitute, we tell such an individual, in the words of Christ, that "The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment," and that therefore to disobey the Lord of Life, and the Creator of the body, in the hope of thereby securing a maintenance, is just that poor and short-sighted policy which places the second cause for the primary, and thinks it safer to confide in the instrument than in the agent by whom that instrument is wielded. When once you have determined, that such and such a course is opposed to God's law, to follow that course because it seems to lead to a livelihood, is to declare practically your belief, that though the Almighty give us breath, he has nothing to do with giving us food: and if, according to the text already quoted, man lives not "by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," there can be nothing easier of demonstration, than that to ask the bread and despise the word is the exact way to cause failure in the means of subsistence; it is literally to destroy life on pretence of preserving it.

Now we would not attempt to apply the precept to particular cases. We would commend to every individual in this assembly this precept, beseeching him to examine carefully his employment, and to see whether, in nature or intenseness, there be any thing in it inconsistent with the high calling of religion. The direction, that we work the "thing that is good," cannot be applicable to the members of a single profession. An occupation, lawful in itself, may be unlawful in the manner and in the degree in which it is prosecuted: and it behoves all to take care for the soul, and to take heed that they be not sacrificing the soul to the body; seeking with so much eagerness "the bread which perisheth," that "the bread which came down from heaven," is laid out of sight in their plans and calculations. It is quite amazing how prone people are to apply precepts to others, and never to suspect that they are just as applicable to themselves. You would offend numbers by the supposition that seems conveyed in the admonition that they work only what is good. They allow at once, that the dishonest man works not what is good; but though so immersed in secular business,

that they have no time in which to seek after God, they discover no want of goodness in that moral dishonesty, which robs the Creator of what is his due. Nay, we are far enough from being sure that even such a precept as that which forbids stealing, is out of place with many who would start indignantly at the appellation of thief. We hold frankly, for our part, that we can see no moral difference between the highwayman, who strips the traveller of his purse, and the tradesman who in any sense imposes on his customers. We quite agree with those who maintain, that he who passes off as worth a shilling an article which he knows is worth only sixpence, is a thief to the amount of sixpence, seeing that of so much he defrauded the buyer. It is the remark of a staunch writer, "He that is stronger than another may rob him by violence; he that is more subtle may do it by cunning: but if the injury in both cases be the same, must not the guilt be so too?" And just to illustrate the general by the particular, we should not hesitate to class with the criminals whose deeds have sent them before a jury, the shopkeeper whose goods weigh more in his books than in his scales, and who uses a scant measure or a false balance, or uses a full measure and a just balance, but then, as if by accident or oversight, puts on a few ounces or a few drams when he enters the charge in his ledger.

Now we wish you to learn from these remarks, suggested naturally by the precept under review, that there may be a great deal of what human laws scarcely take cognizance, which is as inconsistent as open profligacy with the high-toned morality of the gospel. A mean action, an underhand dealing, a taking advantage of the ignorance of another—these might be distinguished, from theft at a human tribunal, but not we believe at the bar of Christianity. And without presuming to insinuate, that there are any in this congregation whose honesty need shrink from the application of so rigid a test, we feel we only do what, as a preacher of God's word, we are required to do, when we press on your attention, as possibly not out of place, this precept, "Let him that stole steal no more;" knowing that all whose consciences acquit them will see that we transgress not the just bounds of our office, and that if there were one present whom our remarks tend to condemn, his feelings are not to be spared at the expence of his salvation.

But we proceed to our commentary on our text. The Apostle next requires that if man be not content with obtaining just so much as may support himself, but that he labour at that which is good, "that he may have to give to him that needeth." It is on this part of the verse that we desire to turn the main of your attention.

You observe, that the power of relieving the necessities of those who may be less able than ourselves to toil for subsistence, is given as the object which the labourer, as he works out his livelihood, is to have steadily in view. There are degrees in the requisition of the Apostle; each succeeding line of the text demanding something over and above what the foregoing had asked. The man who had subsisted by stealing must steal no more: and thus, the ceasing to do evil is the first thing required. But he is not to live on charity: to beg is to rob, so long as it is possible to gain a maintenance by energy and industry. There is no greater thief than one who, able to work for his bread, gets it by begging; he plunders the sick and the houseless, and the infirm, who having no means and no power of providing for themselves must starve if not supported by the charity of others; and thus a man, unless disabled for the active duties of life, is no more to subsist by the dishonesty of indolence than by the dis-

honesty of rapine, but, by devoting himself to any honest calling for which his powers of mind or body may best fit him, must earn his bread by labour, and thus conform himself to the grand ordinance of the Almighty. But now, as a Christian man, there is more required of him, than that he violate not the rights of property nor make himself a burden on wealthier professors. He has passed into a community, one of whose fixed maxims it is, that we are "members one of another," and which, if its own principles were faithfully acted out, all who have been gathered into its circle would present an image of that brotherhood in which the human race would have been linked, had not rebellion against God broken up the harmony of its families. Hence the well-being of others must become an object of interest as well as his own. He must toil, first of all, undoubtedly, that he may provide food for himself and his household, but nevertheless with a hope and desire that his labours may produce something of overplus; so that when his personal necessities, and those of his dependants are satisfied there shall remain, if it be only a trifle, a sum applicable to the relief of those unable by their own energies to ward off destitution.

You must admit, that in thus stating more at length the things demanded in our text, we are guilty of no exaggeration; we do but exhibit the requisitions put forth by the Apostle, and we add nothing, either to their number or their extent. It is indeed possible, that the peculiar circumstances of the practice adduced had to do with the injunction of alms-giving. If an individual had robbed others, it would be unquestionably his duty, supposing it in his power, to make restitution: and there would be strong ground for doubting the genuineness of repentance, if no desire were entertained, and no effort made, to repair the injury done by his lawlessness. Thus when Zaccheus the publican drew the saying from Christ, "This day is salvation come to this house," it was in answer to the declaration, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." We must believe that St. Paul intended not to exclude restitution from the fruits and evidences of repentance. It is a truth which has passed into a proverb, that "We must be just before we are generous;" and that is unsound Christianity, which will offer to give alms, when it had not paid debts. Hence we cannot well doubt, that when St. Paul enjoined on the man who had stolen that he should labour with the hope of being able to be charitable, he assumes that where restitution was possible it would be made, and then, that not content with having done what Christian justice demanded, he should strive to act out the principle of Christian philanthropy. So that we think it contrary to the bearing of the passage, if we hold that alms-giving were to be in place of restitution; and that therefore the demand on the poor man, that he toil to be charitable, would not have been made, had he not in other days spoiled some of their substance. The requisition seems to us simple and straightforward, intended for every class of Christians, whatever their character previous to conversion. No man must be content with labouring just as much as will provide supplies for his own wants: when this has been done, he must, if it be possible, labour yet more, in order "that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Such appears to be the drift of the latter clause of our text, and we wish to shew you what a high and peculiar character is thereby ascribed to the charity demanded of us as Christians.

Now it would almost sound as a new and hard doctrine if we should maintain that the poorer classes of society must work for the absolutely destitute, and

administer out of their scanty pittance to the sick and to the suffering. We never think of alms-giving without imagining the richer of our population going down with a liberal heart, and an open hand, to that great mass of our fellow-men, whose means of subsistence are small and precarious, and distributing certain of the overflows of their wealth amongst those who are reduced to the grappling with want. We divide society into two great departments, those who have the ability to give, and those who can do nothing but receive; and we draw our line of separation just where men have exactly enough for the necessities, though they pretend to no share of the luxuries of life. And we admit such division to be in the main accurate; for there can be no plainer principle than that a man is not required to labour for others, unless he has secured a due maintenance for himself. But then one must see that in thus dividing society into givers and receivers, the former being the better classes, and the latter all the poorer, you exclude the vast bulk of mankind from the possibility of being charitable, and admit not the thousands, and the tens of thousands of a christianized population, into a share of the greatest privilege proposed to them by Christianity. It is undoubted, that throughout Scripture it is ministering to the necessities of others, which is represented as one grand evidence of the genuineness of faith, and that the allotments of eternity are exhibited as in the main decided by the registered deeds of godly benevolence. You will all remember, that in that great drama of judgment, which was sketched by Christ shortly before his crucifixion, the character of the whole operation is made dependant on nothing but having fed the hungry and clothed the naked; those who have thus ministered to Christ in his members going away into life eternal, and those who have not thus ministered, being on that very account given over to everlasting punishment. And it becomes a great question in theology how the poor, who have nothing to bestow, can pass a trial whose criterion thus seems to pre-suppose an inability to bestow; and how that large bulk of the community who appear necessitated to be in the class of receivers can by any, the most unremitting strivings, bring themselves into the condition laid down for the obtaining of blessedness and immortality. The having relieved the necessitous is made indispensable to the escaping the fire and reaching the glory; whereas, to all appearance nine out of ten are disqualified, and that too through no fault of their own, from lessening the pressure of other people's trials, and thus (if the sentence be according to the criterion) for securing to ourselves the blessedness of the coming judgment.

If, to recur to our text, the man who labours with his hands, can find in making such an overplus to his labour, that he has something to give to the destitute, it is clearly possible for him to satisfy that trial which is furnished by Christ's sketch of his assize on the nations. But if this case is of constant recurrence, that though he toil with unwearied industry he can never gain a fraction more than a bare sufficiency, and thus never has the power of assisting poorer brethren, it may be hard for him to see how he can stand in the position of acceptance when the Judge shall be making inquisition as to the feeding and the clothing which has been dealt out to the needy.

We wish, if possible, to elucidate this point. We are wholly against the opinion, that the power of being charitable is limited to the richer classes of society, and that none but those who have at least something more than sufficiency can administer to the wants of the sick and the necessitous. We contend, that the making such a limitation would be tantamount to ascribing the greatest

privileges to the possession of wealth, seeing that it would represent the rich man as enabled by his riches to prepare himself for the enquiries of the last judgment, and at an absolute and scarcely measurable advantage, over the poor man whose labour just secures him a livelihood. If it be true, as we learn from the Bible, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," are we to conclude, that, by the disposition of external advantages, God has shut out the great body of Christians from all ability of reaching the superior blessedness of the giver, and fastened them irremediably down to the inferior blessings of the receivers? We are quite sure, that if such were an accurate conclusion, wealth might be sought after on the highest principles of religion, and the striving to be rich be as much recommended from our pulpits as it is practised in our cities. Money might be said to do the work of grace; if you could once establish the fact, that its possessor stands on vantage ground with respect to its non-possessor, when both are regarded as candidates for immortality.

But we shall not hesitate to say, that the poor man may be the giver, just as well as the rich man; yea, though his every farthing be required to the keeping off starvation from his household, so that the produce of his labour is never such as to allow of his giving to his neighbour one jot of assistance. We know, that if asked to point out a very charitable individual, you would name not necessarily a very rich one (though many judge a man's charity by the amount which he gives; but we have just the opposite rule—we always judge it by the amount which he keeps); but if you did not point out a very rich, in pointing out a very charitable, individual, you would, at least, select some one whose income is superior to his expenditure, and who is large-handed in scattering gifts among the destitute. We are far enough from denying, that such an individual may be most charitable; but we will not allow that the fact of the income exceeding the necessary expenditure is at all requisite in order to a man's reaching this high point of beneficence. We take the case of a peasant or a mechanic, who rises early and late takes rest, and who, by the most strenuous exertions, and submitting to constant privations, just contrives to support his young family without applying to the parish, or even appealing to private bounty. It is quite possible that hundreds, who have no greater difficulties to struggle with, will not be content to wear themselves out by the same toil, and undergo the same hardships; and will, therefore, degrade themselves into paupers, and go to the parish board, or solicit aid from the wealthy. But, then, the high-minded man (and there are yet many of this class, though, unhappily, that feeling of independence, which is essential to the constitution of a staunch and solid peasantry, has in a great degree been exiled from the cottages of our land)—the high-minded man, to whom we have referred, determines, and acts out the determination, that, unless sickness incapacitate him from labour or the means of gaining a virtuous sufficiency, he will neither burden the poor-rates, nor take help from the charitable.

Now, what we ask of you is this, Does this man give away nothing in charity? Is he shut out from being liberal and benevolent by the circumstance that the sum total of the proceeds of his labour is but just equal, and, perhaps, not that, to the sum total of the demand of his household? In short, is this bold grappler with penury, this determined worker out of his means of subsistence, incapacitated from obeying to the full the direction of the Apostle, "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth?" We will

never admit this: you may say, the man wants the use of every farthing of the money which his labour produces, and therefore it is clear he can give nothing: it is an erroneous conclusion, worthy of nothing but that ignorance of the first principles of political economy, which will estimate the wealth of a country by the quantity of precious metals it may possess. The peasant, indeed, may say, "Silver and gold I have none, and therefore of silver and gold I can give none;" but if he gives not *gold* and *silver*, he gives *bone* and *sinew*. He pays to the poor-rate exactly that amount which, had he been a little less industrious, and a little less noble-spirited, he might himself have drawn from the poor-rate: he throws into the field of private benevolence precisely that sum which, had he chosen to accept the bounty of the wealthy, he might have extracted for himself and obtained for his own family. The rich merchant contributes to the support of our destitute population, by paying so much out of his superfluities to the poor-rate; but the hard labourer, who struggles unremittingly that he may not be a burden on that poor-rate, is no less a contributor to the support of the destitute, and that too by paying the tax with the sweat of his brow and the stretch of his muscle. The opulent lawyer lightens much of the affliction of his neighbourhood by carrying or sending relief to the sick and the starving; but he is rivalled in his benevolent work by the pale and almost worn-down mechanic, who never applies to him for help, and who, therefore, leaves him at liberty to transmit to other objects of charity exactly that amount of assistance which his own toil and hardship would have won for himself. You may say of the sum thus transmitted, that it is the gift of the wealthy lawyer; but we are disposed to hold it for the gift of the worn-down mechanic: you may look on the money as the product of the talent of the rich individual from whose purse it seems to flow; but we regard it as coined out of the flesh and the blood of the poor individual, who has fought against the necessity of seeking it for himself. We will not give our assent to the cold and unwarranted theory, that beneficence can have no home except amongst the opulent, and that only from the mansions of the land, and that never from the cottages and the hovels, can there be the outgoings of a liberal charity.

We think it to be as clear as though established with the rigour of geometric demonstration, that the man who will not receive what his distresses and his hardships entitle him to receive from the funds, whether of public or private benevolence, is a giver to those funds of precisely the sum which, had he chosen, he might have been the receiver. What he refuses to intercept from the stream of relief must, in all fairness, be considered as flowing from himself; and if, by labouring only up to a certain point, and that a high point, he would have left a deficiency which charity must have supplied; and if, by pushing labour beyond this point, though many a stauncher industry would have stopped there, he makes up that deficiency, and thus leaves charity at liberty to go forth to the succour of others; is it not undeniable, that he literally sends to the sick bed of the utterly destitute just that quantity of relief which, as a less high-minded being, he might have appropriated for himself: and, forasmuch, as in the strictest sense the relief thus imparted is the product of his labour, wherein does he fail of obeying the direction that he work "with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth?" Can we think, that when at the judgment there shall be going forward an investigation of the deeds of benevolence by which Christians have proved the sincerity of their faith, none but the better classes of society, whose purses have outrun their own wants, will be able

to submit themselves to the appointed criterion; so that, while nobles may appeal to hospitals furnished, founded, and sustained, by their ancestral revenues, and merchants show how their purses, big with the gains of commerce, were always open at the cry of the needy—think you that *thea uie va*rious peasant, who has wrestled with the giant of poverty, and scorned, while there was sight in his eye and strength in his limb, to touch a stiver of the funds which belong to the destitute—think you he will shrink back as one able to reply only in the negative to the question, “Hast thou given bread to the hungry, or covering to the naked?”

We are quite clear, and we hold it for a truth which ought to be a comfort to the poor man as he struggles to keep his family from all dependance on charity, that the superior blessedness of the giver as compared with the receiver is within reach of those who can only earn a bare sufficiency. And therefore do we feel, that in striving to raise the character of a population, and to restore that healthy tone which exists wherever charitable aid in place of being coveted, is not received until absolute starvation is the only alternative, we make an effort which, if successful, would lift this population into a higher moral, as well as a higher physical position. If I can prevail on a man by working an additional hour, though he already work many, or by undertaking an additional task, though he has already much on his hands, just to keep himself off the parish book, or to prevent the necessity of seeking aid from the wealthy—why I do that man a vast spiritual benefit: I detain him within the class of givers when he may actually be on the point of passing over to the class of receivers, and thus I arrest him in his intention of throwing away that power which he possesses of ministering to the necessities of others, if not in as abundant manner, as though he ranked amongst the wealthy of the land, and could make his name figure in every list of subscribers.

Now it should not be inferred from any of our foregoing remarks, that we cast any slur on those of the poor whose necessities compel them to subsist either in whole or part on charity. We do not necessarily exclude even these from the class of givers, from those who may work so as to “give to him that needeth.” One man may do extra labour in order that he may avoid asking any help; and thus he is a giver to the amount of that assistance which he must have solicited had his industry been less intense. Another, who in spite of every exertion cannot earn enough, may take pains to do with the least possible help; and thus he is a giver to the amount of that assistance, which with a less unflinching economy his wants might have demanded. He who by the toil of limb keeps himself altogether from the list of paupers contributes just so much to the relief of the poor, as without that toil of limb must have been bestowed on himself: and in like manner, he for whose wants the toil of limb cannot bring sufficiency, but who by the toil of carefulness makes shift to do with the smallest quantity of help, contributes just so much to the relief of the poor, as without this toil of carefulness must have been abstracted on his own account from the revenues of charity. So that we consider none as shut out from the asserted blessedness of givers, but those who are deficient either in the labour of industry, or the labour of economy: and unhappily our lanes and our alleys swarm with both classes, who would sooner beg than work, or who never think that enough has been given so long as they think that more may be had.

We have thus striven to shew you, and we consider the point most worthy of

examination, that the lower ranks of society are no more excluded than the higher from the power and opportunity of being charitable; and that those who seem to you to have nothing to give may as well abide, at the last, a scrutiny into the ministering to the necessitous, as others who have large incomes at their disposal, and can take the lead in all the bustle of philanthropy. And we reckon it a beautiful truth, that from the fields and work-shops of our country may be sent to the platform of judgment the most active and the most self-denying of the benevolent; and that, however in this world the praise of liberality is awarded only to those who can draw out their purse and scatter their gold, our peasants and our artisans may be accounted hereafter the largest contributors to the relief of the afflicted, and the donations which they have wrung out with overtaxed limb weigh vastly down in the balance of trial the more showy gifts which the wealthy dispense from their superfluities, without trenching it may be on their luxuries. The man who endows an alms-house out of a well-stocked purse has a formidable rival in alms-giving in the labourer who struggles night and day to keep out of that alms-house: and when charity is estimated, as at least it shall be, by the proportion which the gift bears to the purse, we can believe, that he who reared the asylum and put over it his coat of arms, may be a hundred lower down in the scale of the charitable, than one who rather than claim the succours of that asylum wears away an old age in constant toil and on scanty allowance.

Now you may all see, that the view thus given of the power possessed by the poor of acting out to the letter the precept of our text, is fairly introductory to an appeal on behalf of a District Visiting Society. You know the grand proposed object to be, that of withstanding that march of pauperism beneath which our country already groans to the very centre. Independence has been drained out of our lower population, and that too (especially in our agricultural districts) by the misapplication and mal-administration of poor laws; and now our peasantry, who ought to be the sinews of the kingdom, lies like a dead weight on its energies, and threatens, by its ever-increasing pressure on all the property of the state, to do what is far beyond the power of foreign invaders—reduce England into a wrecked and paralysed thing, crippled by her children, though she could not be crushed by her enemies. And in proportion therefore as you can lead the poor to habits of industry and forethought, and thus keep them from applying (as such habits would have kept nine-tenths of the existing paupers) from applying to the parish, you deserve to be classed with the best benefactors of your country; there being no patriot who in these days could work such deliverance for an oppressed land, as he who should devise means for introducing amongst the lower orders a firm resolve to eat not the bread of charity till they must eat it or starve. We shall not presume to say, that our district society has been such a machinery as we could wish for giving a healthful tone to the poor population of this neighbourhood; but nevertheless we believe, that in many instances, our machinery has been made instrumental in teaching the labouring classes (and this is the great point after all) to develop their own resources, whilst in other instances by well-timed assistance they have prevented that application to the parish which, though destitution renders it inevitable, can hardly be made, even once, without a fracture in the spirit of independence—without, that is, a moral injury to the individual, which through long-after ages may never be repaired. Of course, in numerous cases, our society has done nothing, as to temporal matters, but relieve existing distress.



If our field of operation were a district of peasants who had never been helped on by charity, we might, under God's blessing, by encouraging them and directing them to be industrious and provident, cause that none of that number ever degenerate into paupers. But when we enter on ground already tenanted by pauperism, it were something too harsh to tax our society with failure, if in a variety of instances the amount of its success be the giving aid to the suffering. We have therefore the same confidence as in former years in commending this institution to your liberal support, as one every way worthy your support by the excellence of its design and the effectiveness of its operations. The funds of our society depend much on this annual appeal, and if you respond not to it with your accustomed liberality, we must be crippled in our energies through the on-coming year.

We are persuaded that in saying this we say enough. We would only add, that the words of our text when applied to the better classes of society, give a standard of benevolence which few of us can pretend to have approached. A man is to bestow what he has procured by his labour, or he is to labour for the very purpose of gaining something which he may give. What is this but saying, that in being charitable a man must make a sacrifice? It is not said, "Give our superfluities," but "Give our toil:" "Work, that you may have to give to him that needeth." And who is there comparatively amongst the most liberal Christians who can be said to *feel* what he parts with? What labour does it cost him? The labour of working an extra hour? The labour of foregoing the gratification of a single article of luxury? Let each man answer for himself whether it is any labour to him to be charitable. He may give his guineas, but does he in any manner want those guineas? Does he deny himself any thing in order that he may have these guineas to give? We only state what appears implied in our text, when we declare that the charity required by the gospel is the charity which costs us something. Some purses are so large that a great deal may be taken out, and never be missed; but surely the giver of this great deal ought not to be canonised as a prodigy of Christian beneficence, seeing that he foregoes nothing for Christ which he has the least use of for himself. We commend this to your earnest consideration. Would to God that all of us might regard ourselves as only the stewards of our Maker, so that whether we possess money, or talent, or influence, we might have constantly before us that strict and solemn account which we must one day render of the advantages deputed to our keeping. The possession of these advantages involves an awful responsibility, and the man of large wealth, oh how easy for him to be just paving hell with his gold: the man of mighty intellect, (and he who envies distinguished talent envies distinguished danger) it were better he had been born an idiot, than misapply his intellect; a misapplied intellect is a furnace seven times heated: and the man of influence, let him use that influence except in the service of Christ, and its every lota gives new severity to the torments which are hereafter to be let loose upon the ungodly. May these truths be laid deeply upon your hearts. We cannot possess an advantage which may not be turned into the worst of curses. God demands the right use of wealth, and God will exact punishment for the wrong use. Apply now these considerations to the particular case of wealth, and our plates shall be a witness to your resolve, that you will "labour, working with your hands the thing which is good, that you may have to give to him that needeth."

## FOLLOWING CHRIST AFAR OFF.

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REV. J. SHERMAN,

CLAREMONT CHAPEL, PENTONVILLE, JUNE 9, 1831

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“ But Peter followed him afar off.—MATTHEW, xxvi. 58.”

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O STRANGE alteration within a few short hours! Is this the courageous Peter that said, “ I will go with thee to prison and to death? Is this the man, who is now a coward, and afraid to be seen with his Master? Is this the man who brandished his sword over the head of the high priest’s servant, now ashamed to be known as the friend of his Master, and to be seen with him? “ Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?”

How beautiful an illustration of the love of Jesus does this history give to us. How pathetically did our Lord inform the disciples of their defection: “ All of you shall be ashamed of me this night.” And though Peter, who was generally speaker for the rest, said it was quite impossible such thing could ever take place—likewise also said they all—yet the event proved the truth of our Lord’s prediction. “ Then”—when they arrested him—“ the disciples forsook him and fled.”

But there is something peculiar in the statement which commends itself to us. Peter followed his Master, but he followed him *afar off*. He loved his Master, and therefore he followed him; but fear for his own safety prevailed above the love of his Master, and therefore he followed him afar off. But mark why on this occasion he followed him afar off. He had arrived from some considerable distance, near the court; and he went in, and sat with the servants. He should have gone into the court to speak for his Master; he wanted a friend then, and there was no one to lift up a voice for him; and there was this man who had said so much how he would befriend him, how impossible it was to leave him—there was this man going and sitting with idle, ignorant people—not to reprove them for their wickedness, but because there was a warm fire there on a cold day. And what was his motive? It was to see the end. This is expressly told us; he went in to see the end. Curiosity, not conscience, prompted him to go and seek his Master. He followed him, but he followed him as a stranger, little interested about it. He followed him, but not as an intimate friend, to whom he had professed himself attached. He followed him, therefore, *afar off*.

How does this draw the portrait of some that hear me to-night? Oh, beloved, you love Christ; there is the testimony of your conscience that you love him; but you follow him afar off. The same simple sentence that describes Peter’s condition would just finish your own portrait: you follow Christ, but you follow him at a distance, and at a very *great* distance. Love prompts you to go forward, but the fear of shame, connected, perhaps, with worldly associations, tempts you to follow him at a great distance. Now if this be the case, hear with

me while I attempt to draw your minds into a little nearer allegiance with the Friend of sinners, a little closer communion with your precious souls, and a little more delight in his presence. For this purpose, favour me with your devout attention and prayers while we attempt to show three things. *First*, the symptoms of following Christ afar off. *Secondly*, the consequences of following Christ afar off. *Thirdly*, the remedy for following Christ afar off.

Let us observe THE SYMPTOMS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST AFAR OFF.

One of the first symptoms is a *gradual departure from him*. Although Peter's following Christ afar off was rather sudden, it had its gradations; it had its depths; it did not take place all at once. There were many steps before he began to follow Christ at this sad distance: and the first step was *self-confidence*. "I will go with thee to prison and to death," said Peter. Jesus answered him—"Thou knowest not what thou sayest. Wilt thou go with me to prison and to death? I tell thee, before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice." "I deny thee!" said Peter. What, deny my Lord and Saviour! Impossible: "though I should die with thee, I will never deny thee."

The second step was an *ignorant zeal for Christ, and the use of carnal weapons in his cause*. When the band approached, the disciples asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" But before our Lord could give an answer, Peter's sword was lifted up, and the ear of the high priest's servant was cut off. He waited not for an answer; he waited not for directions from his Lord, but took the weapons in his own hands, and directly executed that for which he should have waited directions, that he might do it in a proper manner, at a proper season, or not at all. Our Lord, you perceive, checked this ignorant zeal: "Put up thy sword again into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." "And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." Suffer ye thus far—pity my servant; he did it in ignorance; I will heal the man: and he healed him.

The next step was an *abandonment of the cause he had espoused*. "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." And Peter, among the rest, forsook him; and forsook him when the Lord most needed him—forsook him when his presence might have been some service to him in the court. He should have gone there and spoken for him; but when the test of his discipleship was about to be proved, then he forsook him and fled. And, beloved, our following Christ at a distance generally commences in private, in a vain conceit of our own importance. The humble soul walks with God in humble dependence upon him; and because it feels its own weakness, cleaves the closer to him for strength. But the moment our confidence and conceit begin to arise in the mind, then we begin to follow him afar off. This has been proved in the experience of hundreds. There are some of us who say, when a brother sees something in our character which will be injurious to us, which is drawing us off from the Son of God, and tells us what shall befall us in the last days—like Hazael, we say, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"—it is impossible that this can happen. But let only a few temptations come, suitable to draw us away; let only a few parallel circumstances to those of Peter come in our way; and, instead of following Christ closely, we shall follow him afar off.

Another symptom of following Christ afar off is a *disinclination to commune with him*. How precious should these few moments have been to Peter, especially when our Lord had told him he was about to leave the world. But, instead of cleaving to him to gain all the instruction he needed, he followed him afar off

Prayer is the Christian's privilege, the happy element in which he ought always to live. And when he does, the graces of the Spirit triumph, Jesus Christ is precious, the word of God is prized, the ordinances of his house are delightful, and every thing is to him like the garden of the Lord. I need only to refer you to those moments when the first glances of heavenly light beamed on your mind, and showed you your sins were forgiven. How precious was the closet then! How sweet were the moments you spent in communion with the Son of God! What fervency, what happiness, what constancy in prayer—what delight in communion you then felt! Is this the case now? Are these the symptoms when you follow Christ afar off? No; the case is, indeed, very much altered. It is true, there is the bended knee; you follow him, perhaps, externally, and to all appearance; but then it is afar off. There is the bended knee, but where is the broken heart? There is the sacrifice, but where is the fire? There is the altar, but where is the victim? Oh, it is another man, it is a different being; the temper and conduct are altogether different: he is a stranger to that impassioned eloquence in prayer, and that fervour with God, which he once happily felt. To have a dumb, cold, careless, lifeless heart in prayer, is a sad symptom of our being at a distance from Christ; for who can be near the fire, and not be warmed? Who can live in the beams of the sun, and not feel its enlivening heat? Who can live in the light, and not see the way in which he is walking? But when the contrary is the case, how sad is our state: we follow him afar off.

Another symptom of following Christ at a distance is *an indifference to meet him at public ordinances*. In the earlier stages of Christian experience, or in the after stages of it, when it is sweetly illuminated by the Spirit of God, how delightful is the sanctuary! The man thirsts, and pants, and longs to be in the house of God, and among the children of God. "One thing," says the Psalmist, "have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." But when he follows him afar off, there is a different feeling. You will see the seat occupied, as it was formerly; but, perhaps, the individual comes late to time, (for one of the first effects is a disinclination to observe those more private parts of worship in which worship really consists.) But you will observe, that though the same individual occupies the pew, yet he is indeed a different man; he does not bring the same heart with him; he is a different person in his feelings and anxieties; he is a man altogether different from what he was. He comes now not as he did formerly. *Formerly* he came as a hungry man, to receive food—*now* with a critical taste. *Formerly* the heavenly manna, the simple doctrines of the cross, Jesus Christ, and him crucified, were the very joy of his heart—*now* he must have the quails from the wilderness, something which is suited to his polluted taste, something which is not quite according to the spirituality of mind he formerly enjoyed. Then you see what sad effects these produce on the mind, if the appetite for divine food is gone, if that hungering and thirsting after righteousness is lost. What can be the state of mind when this is the case? Perhaps, some of you say, I have not arrived so far as this yet. Bless God, if you have not. But let me ask you, Is the word of God as precious—is Christ as precious—are the ordinances of God's house as precious—is the Bible as precious—as they were formerly? If they are not, beware; you are following Christ at a distance; and the distance is likely to increase.

Another sad symptom of following Christ afar off is, *an attempt to stretch Christian liberty to the utmost*. Decision of character is the blessed criterion of young followers of the Lamb: the change from darkness to light is so con-

spicuous, that they avow themselves instantly on the Lord's side. If, when the flame of divine love first kindles, they are asked, "Will ye also go away?" the answer seems inspired by the same love which first brought them.—*I go away!* Whither can I go? What! go away from Christ, my happiness, my life, my comfort. To creatures, to myself—wherever I go, I have nothing there. Whither can I go? "Thou hast the words of eternal life." They cleave to him, and look to him, and keep close to him *now*; but when this following Christ afar off takes place, there is a very great difference, as there was a distinct separation from the world. The individual very rightly judged, that holiness and sin never could agree; therefore he never attempted to unite them, and gloried in the thought that he was at a distance from them, and strove as far as he could to get at a greater distance from them. Now, mark the differences. No sooner does an individual follow Christ afar off, than he appears to be a different person. If a portrait were taken of an individual in his vigour, and health, and strength; and if another portrait be taken of the individual when illness and sickness have debilitated his frame; you may recognize the features, see something of the same individual; but you would say there was such a contrast in appearance as that the man was hardly to be discerned. So it is with the individual following Christ afar off. He will furnish gaieties for the gay, and will tell you he does it not for himself, but to please his friends; that is, he does it not to pleasure Christ, but those who are opposers of Christ. He tells you he likes to go into company, and to mingle with fashionable parties, because he hopes to do some good. Alas! what a different being is this man. Had you asked this same individual to mingle in such scenes aforesaid, he would have fled away, conceiving himself injured by the very proposal; but now, he, seeing how many fall off, and attempt to amalgamate the church and the world, goes as far as he can, so that a *complete* amalgamation does not take place.

Now, have I drawn your portrait this evening? Are you thus following Christ at this great distance, and beginning to mingle with the world, to associate with individuals you once thought far from God, by mixing with their pleasures, seeking after their pursuits, and indulging in their practices? Then you are the man; you are this very Peter who is following Christ afar off.

But if you have gone with me thus far, go a step further, and see **THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF FOLLOWING CHRIST AFAR OFF.**

Such a course you will perceive, in the first place, *grows worse and worse.* Peter did not stop here: he followed Christ afar off; and it had been well if he had stopt there: but he did not, because such a state as this induces a man to go further and further from the Saviour. He left the Good Shepherd; and he must needs wander that leaves the Good Shepherd. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." But he left Christ, and walked in darkness. He chose another guide; and that guide whispered all the arguments of shame, and persecution, and injuries, and a thousand other things which he should meet with; and the argument prevailed, and led him deeper and deeper and deeper into sin and sorrow.

Observe this man: he goes and sits in the hall with the servants; and the servants say to him, "Why, thou belongest to Jesus of Nazareth; thou art one of his disciples." O dreadful guilt! O horrid impiety, to belong to Jesus of Nazareth! One would have thought that Peter would instantly have said, "Yes, I do belong to him: blessed be his name, he called me, a poor fisherman, and made me a partaker of his grace; he called me, a poor fisherman, and made me a

minister of his glorious Gospel: and if you did but know my Saviour as I know him, you would love him as much too, and would follow him any where.' Strange he did not say so: but he would have said so, if he had not been following Christ afar off in spirit. What does he say to this accusation? "*I know not the man.*" "Well, but," said the man whose ear Peter had cut off, "did I not see thee in the garden with him? What, Peter, canst thou look at my ear, and not recollect that thou belongest to Jesus of Nazareth? Wilt thou deny that?" And does he still deny it? Oh, yes; he followed Christ afar off, and he said, "I know not what thou sayest." "Well, but," said another, "thou art a Galilean; thou hast the dialect of Galilee; thou hast the very accent of the country; and if there were nothing else to show us that thou didst belong to Jesus of Nazareth, thy very speech bewrayeth thee; there is enough in that to show us thou didst belong to him." Still—wonder, O heavens, and he astonished, O earth—this same man, who said, "I will go with thee to prison and to death," now curses and swears; and, with oaths and blasphemies, denies that he ever knew the man. O! my dear hearers, you stand on the brink of danger, near the edge of a precipice, if you are following Christ afar off. Awake to your condition! Do you think it no danger, that you should be risking the salvation of your soul—that your family should be distressed—that the church should be in anguish—that Christ should frown? Awake, I say, to your danger; and think what it is to follow Christ afar off.

There is another sad consequence; such a state *brings its own punishment*. Is it not so? Are you as happy as you were formerly? Is it as well with you now as it was formerly? Is there as much peace within as there was formerly? No; your conscience necessarily says no. Compare now for a moment—and a moment will be quite sufficient—compare your present with your former feelings; and then we shall see, I think, that your own state brings its own punishment. The great difficulty in all cases, when a man has wandered from God, is to get him *to think*. At night he just says his prayers, but forgets to pray as he once did, wrestling with Christ; and he gets into his bed, draws the curtains around him, makes a sort of artificial night to himself, and lulls himself to repose as quickly as possible; lest conscience should accuse him, and summon him to the bar of his Maker. Now, are you not, sometimes, when you suffer your mind to think—are you not alarmed at your distance from God? Are you not distressed to see the garden which once flourished so beautifully, and was as a field which the Lord hath blessed—are you not distressed to see that garden now, the hedges pulled down, the wild beasts invading it, and its beauty defiled? The waters of the sanctuary do not flow upon it as they formerly did; the dews of heaven do not rest upon it; the blossoms are blasted; and as for the fruit—where can the fruit be found, when the Sun of Righteousness, which was once the glory of the garden, seems quite eclipsed? Is this no cause of anxiety to you? Does not your coldness in duty, and your neglect of duty, sometimes render you very irascible, spoil even your temper, so that your wife, or your husband, or your children, or your servants, are the worse for your following Christ afar off? you cannot even treat them as you did formerly. Does it not clog your tongue, which does not go so swiftly as it formerly did, when you were talking of Jesus? You could once sit down by your fire-side, and tell of his love to those around: but now when the conversation is introduced, how seldom do you engage in it as you did formerly. Does it not cramp your usefulness? You cannot do what you did because your energies are confined. You have not the holy vigour you once had in those different religious societies which

others are now engaged in. How happy were your walks amongst the poor—amongst those who did not know God, and those who loved him. And now by your distance, how few and how cold are your visits—how different from what they were before you began to follow Christ afar off. Suppose you get to heaven—and to heaven you will get if you are the Lord's child, unquestionably, though it be with many stripes—suppose you get to heaven in this state of mind, is not such a carping, dejected, miserable, half-famished state as that in which your soul now is, punishment enough if you had no more than this, to shew you the awful consequences of following Christ afar off?

Another consequence is, that such a course *is unspeakably offensive to Jesus Christ*. Is it any pleasure to see a frown on thy Lord's countenance? to see a rod in that hand which has held out to thee the hope of salvation? And knowest thou not that thy Lord is 'grieved, excessively grieved, with thy distance from him? Let me read you his own words, that you mistake not. "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." These are his own words, his own declarations. If the cause of Christ is true, it requires all our earnestness, and we are to pursue it with all our might. There is no neutrality here; an open enemy shall have more quarter than a perfidious neutral. And I tell you, you are a neutral, if you are doing nothing for him; and that the cause of this is your own backwardness, your lukewarmness, and distance from the Son of God. Do you believe this, and does it show you your own state? Consider whom you have grieved, and the sad consequences already resulting from your following Christ afar off.

Now favour me with your attention while I show you **SOME OF THE REMEDIES FOR THIS STATE OF MIND**. I have endeavoured to tell you your awful state, and to point out the sad consequences of this state of mind. Happy that the Saviour does not leave us here—happy that his word does not leave us here. Come, and let us examine what will reduce our hearts to obedience, what will bring us to a holy enjoyment of his favour and his presence. To sum all up in one word, you must go back again; you must go to the stepping-stone of your Christian path. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For he hath delivered thy soul from death, thine eyes from tears, and thy feet from falling." Has he done this for you? Then you must go back again—you must return. But, say you, it is so difficult to get back again into those holy enjoyments which I have lost. True, it is exceedingly difficult; we do not attempt to hide the difficulty. Let me beseech you to try. Think of that word—let me *try*; let me put forth all my strength of soul to get back to my Master. Suppose your dear child was lost—the child that you loved, and that is attached to you; and that that child, finding it was without its parent, cried to get back to its father and its mother: so must you cry to your heavenly Father, and you must say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;" and he will receive you. You may recollect the story which is given of the Prodigal. He had been a sad young man. He had gone from his father's house, having, although he was the younger son, demanded the portion of goods that fell to his lot; and then went and spent his living in riot and disorder. And though he had been in a sad condition ever since he went away, yet he never sent a letter to tell his father where he was. Once a beam of heavenly light beamed on his mind, and he began to think of his condition. "I am feeding swine: why,

there is not a servant in my father's house that is not better off than I am. Oh I will arise and go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." And the moment he formed his determination he put it into execution. Away he went to his father's house; and the father, who had been often looking out for his dear child (for you know, if any of us have dear children who have departed from our counsels and the way of God, yet we love them; we pray for them though they be prodigals, and we seek their welfare)—still the father was looking out for him. And one day when he looked over the gate by the path where his poor lad had gone, he saw a ragged, dirty, sickly-looking young man coming along the path: and he looked again and again, and he saw—yes, he recognized in this individual, his own son; though he was altered he saw his features: and away he threw the gate open, and ran along the path. And when they met, the son said, "O father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me"—yes, he was going to say, "make me as one of thy hired servants." But his father stopped him, and said, Hold, my child; it is enough: thou art come home, which was all I wanted—to see thee brought to my house and my society. Go, said he, to one servant, and fetch the best robe. Go, said he, to another, and fetch the ring. Bring hither the fatted calf, said he to another. Call the musicians; and let us eat, and drink, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

This is your encouragement. But that I may press this truth upon you with a few arguments, suffer me to lay before you some considerations to induce you to come home again to your Lord and Master, and no longer to follow him afar off.

The first consideration is, *whom you follow*. Who is the individual? Is it a man like yourselves? Is it an individual in whom you have an interest? Is it one concerning whom it is of no importance whether you follow him or not? O no; it is He who left his dazzling throne of glory, and came down to earth for you. It is He who shrouded himself in your flesh, and wept among men for you. It is He who saw you condemned by God's law, and became your surety, put the load of your curse on his own shoulders, and bore it away to the land of everlasting forgetfulness. He it is whom you are called to follow. Dwell a little on this love, and consider what it is. It is high as heaven to which he is about to raise you. It is as deep as the misery into which he was plunged for you. It is as broad as our lives, it is as long as eternity. Many waters could not quench it; neither could all the waters drown it. It is love which sent a minister, a man of God, to call you and gather you to Christ. It is love which is sounded in your ears to-night, to bring you back to your precious Saviour, and to quicken your heart in the ways of God. What think you, then, of this master whom you serve? If you had ten thousand hearts, and each heart appeared ten thousand times more lovely than the one you now have, he is worthy of them all. Consider Him, then, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.

Consider *the obligations you are under to follow the Lord closely*. Did you not, when you first entered the path of the divine life, say, "I take thee as my Saviour, witness, O ye angels, I take thee as my Saviour, for life and for death, for richer and for poorer, for better and for worse, for time and for eternity. I take Christ and his reproach, Christ and his cross, Christ and his shame—what is attached to my Saviour that I take." You have taken his very *name*. "The



disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch." When you became awakened to a sense of your danger, you enlisted under his banner; you became a soldier of Jesus Christ to endeavour to establish his kingdom. And now are you a deserter? What! ashamed of him? What dost thou say, "I know not the man?" Not in words, but in *conduct*. Isaiah says, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." You did, as it were, on the sacramental occasions which you attended, put your hand to a certain deed; and in the face of God, and angels, and the church, and sinners, and Satan, you did say, I am the Lord's—I am his—I am his only—I am his minister. Is this the case? Then consider under what obligations you are to follow the Lord, and to cleave to him with full purpose of heart.

Consider *what advantages you derive from following him closely*. When are afflictions light—when are temptations resisted—when is the world despised—when is Christ precious—when is the company of the people of God desirable—when are Christ and eternal things most prized by you? When? Why, when you follow Christ fully—when you keep near to him in holy ordinances, both public and private—and when your soul is as a well-watered garden. How sweet were the moments which a close walk with God has brought you! Do you not set your seal to this truth—

" 'Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live;  
'Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die."

How many of you, my dear young friends, have been sent to this highly favoured city, by your anxious and revered parents, with the humble hope that you may be caught in the gospel net! And you *were* caught, and *were* brought to Christ; but perhaps some solicitation of the enemy—some evils unforeseen by them, have drawn you aside; and now you are, like Peter, following him afar off; not denying him with oaths and curses, but verging towards it, approaching nearer and nearer every day, and every sabbath-day. Now, look back to the time when your dear mother looked at the door, just to catch the last glance, as she says, God bless thee, my child! the Lord have mercy on thee, and give thee grace in early life! And think what a grief it would be to their hearts who have poured out so many prayers for you, to see you going away from heaven, and happiness, and joy, and peace. Awake to-night to your danger; and think of the blessed advantages which result from following the Lord fully and closely. Come back again—all of you come back again—do not one stay away; and enjoy this heavenly friendship, this holy communion, which will yield you present peace, and give you a happy prospect of glory.

Consider above all things, *who has promised to help you to follow him*. Did Peter follow Christ afar off? Did he deny his Master? One look—one single look brought him back again. I have been told by a friend, that West once said to him, I have a desire to paint one picture more. He asked him what it was. He said, It is Christ's look to Peter; but I can never paint that look. It was such a look as penetrated Peter's heart—it was such a look as melted Peter's soul—it was such a look as brought Peter back to his Master. Water does not flow more freely from a fountain—light descends not more plentifully

from the sun—rain does not come more abundantly from the store-houses of the clouds, than divine influences are imparted to bring you back to the Son of God. None of you shall cry, “Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not,” and not experience that you have an omnipotent Saviour. Therefore, come back, all of you. Let your families be the better for your piety. Come down amongst them in the morning, and walk with them during the day, with your face shining with heavenly communion; and let them see that your walk with God is constant and delightful, shedding its influence on all around you. I fear that many of us are very forgetful that the Christian life is a life of warfare; and that, if ever we maintain much communion with God, 't must be by industry, by perseverance, by diligent attention to divine things. I know the grace of God is free, and I know that his love is sovereign; and I glory in the delightful truth: but I know, at the same time, that we are called to fight. We have to fight with indolence and sloth. Instead of being up in the morning, and diligently reading our Bibles, how many hours are squandered in injurious sleep. Let me press upon you to steal an hour from your beds, before your business carries you into yonder bustling city. If you can, steal a few moments in the day; let your conversation be in heaven, and let your thoughts be God-ward, all the day long, and you shall find it brings the happiest possible results, and spiritual prosperity shall be your favoured portion.

In conclusion, I would remind you that *if the consequences of following Christ afar off be so dreadful, what must be the consequences of not following him at all.* My hearer, dost thou not follow the Son of God? What! an enemy to love personified? an enemy to the Friend of sinners? Is it possible a human being in this assembly can be of this description? Why, Satan never has, and never can, commit so awful a sin: a Saviour never was provided for him; he never was an unbeliever in the Son of God; he never rejected the cup of salvation, for the cup of salvation was never offered him. Oh, what a sin is yours! Why, if a beautiful individual in whom all accomplishments dwelt, could not attract your attention, nor excite your admiration, every one would think you had no feeling, no taste. And is the Son of God brighter than ten thousand worlds—is he who made the heavens with his own hands, worthy of no love? Oh, I beg of you, if you have any soul to be saved—and you have one, and a precious and immortal one it is—let me beg you as you value that soul, that you begin to-night to walk in the way of life. I charge you not to spend another day away from the Son of God. Go, and cry to him, “I have been following one person, and I have been following another; but, alas, they are vain persons.” How often are parents anxious to see their children who are just commencing their studies, following this bright individual, or that bright individual. One is in the army, and the instructions are, Follow Wellington: another is in the law, and the instructions are, Follow Brougham: another is in the profession of medicine, and the instructions are, Follow the man whose talents and abilities will raise you to honour in the world. But oh, how few charges are there to follow Christ! And yet, be assured of this, if ever you would follow one in whom happiness dwells, it is Christ; and he will repay your love, and make you happy here and through all eternity. If you will make the experiment, and try how happy the Son of God can make you, you will not be long miserable. God grant you grace to make the effort to-night; and then you will prove it is not a vain thing to draw nigh to God.

## ADVANTAGES OF EARLY PIETY.

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REV. J. H. EVANS,

JOHN STREET CHAPEL, DOUGHTY STREET, JANUARY 5, 1834.

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“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.”—PSALM lxxxix. 15.

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THE immediate object that is laid, I trust, upon many of our hearts this morning is more particularly an address to the younger part of my congregation. I know we are reproved, and rightly so, that in our addresses to our people we too frequently overlook the younger part of our hearers, who sometimes may come, week after week and month after month, and hear nothing that especially concerns them; nothing, at least, that is immediately directed and addressed to them. I am far from thinking that a sermon of the present kind is any sort of substitute for such omission; but yet it lays it more upon one's conscience, and a sense of the omission seems to render it a more imperative duty; and not merely so, but it forms a most delightful obligation not to overlook those to whom a word spoken is oftentimes found, after many days, a word in season, applied to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, never more to be entirely forgotten by them.

But although the immediate and more especial object of this sermon will be in reference to them, yet will it not be exclusively so; for, surely, it bears upon us as parents as well as upon them as children. Nay, if I mistake not, the master of a servant is but an inferior parent to that servant; and, therefore, it bears upon all, not merely those that have children, but those that have, as dependants on them, the younger part of the rising generation. It bears, too, upon those who were themselves called in early life: neither must those be overlooked, who are partakers of this high and holy calling, though called it may be in middle life, and at the eleventh hour: so that all shall have cause to say this day, as many whose hearts the Lord shall touch, “It is good for me to hear this word that cometh out from the mouth of my God.”

The words of the text have an especial reference to the jubilee trumpet, which we read of in Leviticus, xxv. 8, 9, “And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.” When that trumpet sounded, the prisoner was brought out from the prison-house, the debtor had his debt cancelled for ever, and he who had sold his land from poverty had his land restored unto him. It was a day of jubilee, it was a day of trumpet, it was a day of joy, it was a day of gladness, throughout the land of Israel. But on that subject, this morning, it would be impossible for me to

enter at length; therefore I shall, first of all, give a brief outline of the text itself, and in the following order. First of all, consider the joyful sound, or rather that which is the substance of that blessed liberty which the Gospel trumpet sets forth. Observe, secondly, what it is to know that joyful sound. Thirdly, the blessedness of the people that know it; and, I would add, the especial blessedness of those who know it in their early life.

With regard to our first point—**THE JOYFUL SOUND**—it is the very character of our Gospel; it is the very meaning of the word Gospel. No wonder, therefore, the trumpet of the jubilee proclaimed a joyful message; because the very name “Gospel,” that is, the unfolding of the believer’s jubilee, is “glad tidings.” If you turn to Luke, ii. 8, you perceive that, in the first proclamation, this was the very way in which it was introduced upon earth: “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” The very term Gospel signifies glad tidings. The first preachers of that Gospel are described as ambassadors of peace—2 Corinthians, v. 19, 20, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ—in the place of Christ—“as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The first proclaimers of this blessed Gospel had the name of ambassadors of peace, they came as substitutes for Christ; they came from the God of peace; they came and proclaimed peace by his peace-speaking blood: and the ministry that was committed unto them was a ministry of reconciliation. So we find in the Acts of the Apostles, that they went every where preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, and peace by him: and into whatever house they entered, they first of all said, “Peace be to this house.” If we look at the message that they delivered, it still bears the blessed aspect of peace, glad tidings of great joy; unfolding this as the great truth of the Gospel, that by the precious blood-shedding of the Son of God, God has opened a way for poor, wretched, undone sinners to approach him: so that, by that peace-speaking blood, the vilest sinners, led to believe in Jesus, shall have a free and a broad welcome, no one sending them away. Consequently, we find, from Acts, x. 34, that this was the apostolic mode of preaching: “Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” It is no more now the family of Israel only; it is no more the Jews as a nation only: but now the middle wall of partition is broken down for ever; now we go out into the world and proclaim salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ; for “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (he is Lord of all.) that word, I say, ye know.” “To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sin.” So in Acts, xiii. 32: “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is

preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Here we find how the Apostles preached; and I believe, if we preached more as the Apostles preached, and preached to our churches more as the Apostles wrote, we should see greater ingatherings of God's people. They set forth the Gospel as a message of joy; they placed no bar between the sinner and God. This was a message of glad tidings, and it was so to every one made conscious by the Holy Ghost of his real want of it. A full Christ for an empty sinner; a great salvation for a great sinner; a glorious atonement to a poor needy soul, made to feel his own want of it by the power of the Holy Ghost: this is glad tidings of great joy. And no small part of it is this, that the way in which it is conveyed to the soul is simply in the way of believing: "Whosoever believeth;" all that believe are "justified from all things." And why is so great a stress laid on it? Because the Holy Ghost would teach us this truth—the poor burdened conscience is ever ready to write hard and bitter things against itself: "Is there hope for such an one as I am? Is there a welcome to such a poor wretched being as I am? What I, in my febleness, in my nothingness, my poverty, my worthlessness?" "Yes," answers the word of Him that cannot lie, "all that believe:" "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." These messengers of peace, these proclaimers of reconciliation, these unfolders of Christ through the peace of the Gospel, placed no bar between the burdened conscience and the cross of Christ. They did not mark out a certain line of experience, unless you go through which you never can approach the Living God: they placed no hindrance. And while it is an undeniable truth, that no man can ever know the value of Christ but as he sees his own worthlessness, and no man will ever come to Christ that does not come to Christ as a poor sinner, having no hope in himself—yet we never find in the apostolical preaching, in the way they set forth the gospel of peace, that they ever placed a certain degree of conviction as a bar between that poor soul and the cross of Christ. There was a free unfolding of a free Gospel; there was a free setting forth of the gospel of salvation to the very uttermost, of the blood that cleansed from all sin, of redemption through his precious blood, and that to the chiefest of sinners: and this forms the very glory of the Gospel. It is sweet and pleasant to see how the faithful and blessed Spirit brings back the child of God to that first truth; and how he feeds him with no other food than that to the last; how he still keeps him hungering after the blood, and righteousness, and finished work of the Son of God: and however he may desire, and if he be a child of God he will desire and have longing desires after conformity to the blessed will and image of his God; yet how, after all this, has he said his flesh is meat, and his blood is drink indeed.

Observe, secondly, here is a description of **KNOWING THIS JOYFUL SOUND**: "Blessed are the people that *know* the joyful sound." It is not said "who *hear* the joyful sound;" but it is "who *know* the joyful sound." Many there are that hear it, know it not; and many know it in head-knowledge who never know it by the power and teaching of the Holy Ghost. They can think of it, and write of it, and argue about it, and dispute about it, and yet never have known it. This has always been one of the most painful things exhibited amongst those that profess Jesus, and will ever be, so long as the church remains in its militant

state upon earth. It was that which made the Apostle weep, as he wrote his letter; for he tells us, "There are many of whom I tell you, even weeping, that they are not of the cross of Christ:" yet they were those who professed to know him, professed to love him, but in their hearts they denied him.

But this implies far more than head-knowledge; it is that knowledge that is real. The difference between true wisdom and empty knowledge is this; in wisdom there is a practical and a real acquaintance with the thing itself. In that sense in which I only know honey by tasting it, I only know bread by eating it, I only know water by drinking it, I only know what rest is by experiencing it, I only know what deliverance from pain is by being delivered from pain. Now, just such knowledge is that knowledge that is here spoken of, with this difference only—this refers to things spiritual, and that to things natural. But there is in the people who are blessed a *real* knowledge of this joyful sound.

If you ask in what it especially consists, we reply, in the experience thereof. "He that eateth me, he shall live by me:" "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:" "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In that beautiful description of the church of God coming up out of the wilderness, we consider it was something more than notion when she "leaned upon her beloved." Feeling, as she felt, her own weakness; conscious, as she was conscious, of her own nothingness; aware, as she was aware, of the straitness of the strait way; experiencing, as she did, the power of indwelling corruption; finding the power of Satan to be no small power; finding the roughness of the path to be no contemptible roughness—she "leaned upon her beloved." And this is the knowledge that is here spoken of; it is a knowledge that embraces experience. And let not the weakest of God's children that hears me be discouraged; for the moment there is real life in the soul, and the moment there is the least discovery of Christ to the conscience, there is an experience of what Christ is which all the powers of nature can never teach. From the first to the last, there is a reality of knowledge; there is a reality of spiritual perception in that soul that is the subject of real grace, which puts it as far as the east is from the west from the highest attainment of unregenerate nature. Oh, yes, he has an inward experience of sin's sinfulness; he has an inward experience of his own nothingness; and so he has an inward experience of the preciousness and value of the joyful sound: there is a reality in it, because there is a real experience of it.

It is that knowledge that involves in it approbation. The word "know" frequently has this signification in God's sacred word. I might quote many instances; but the first Psalm is quite to the point, which speaks of the Lord knowing the path of his people. In one sense, the Lord knows the path of his people no more than he knows the path of the ungodly; for he knows every thought of every soul; and there is not one ungodly soul, not one careless sinner here, not one lover of the world, not one lover of pleasure, not one dead in sin, whose path God does not know from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. But when I read, that "the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous," I understand it to mean that he approveth of it. It is a knowledge of love, it is a knowledge of approbation; it is a knowledge in which he delights.

This is the knowledge here spoken of. God's people are brought to approve of the way of acceptance in the Beloved. If any of you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; if any of you have been called of God in time, because loved

in eternity; if any of you have been brought down to the dust, to feel and to know your own nothingness before God, and have been led as poor sinners to Christ; you not only go to him for salvation, but you approve of him for salvation; and you would not, if you could, have a salvation in which the merit and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ should be diminished. That which the Lord declares in his word, he causes you to approve of; and though it is not a mere approbation, arising from intuitive perception of the excellence of the thing, but arising rather from a sense of our need, our want, our poverty, our nothingness, yet is it a real knowledge, the work of God's blessed Spirit, whereby he leads us to approve of the justification that is without a work, in order that He whose justification it is may have all the glory. And I might say, that so sweet is the sound, and so joyful to the soul that is made to know it, that, with regard to the holiness of the Gospel, there is not a child of God who is not concerned to say, "Would I have thy Gospel less holy? God forbid. Would I have thy precepts less pure? God forbid. I want Jesus for my justification; I want him for my sanctification; I want him to rule in me, as well as to rule for me; I want his blood, and I want the application of it to my heart and conscience, that I may love God, serve God, and delight in God with all the delights of my soul."

Now, thirdly, IN WHAT DOES THIS BLESSEDNESS CONSIST? These are the people that the Lord has blessed. He loved them in eternity, he has blessed them in time, and he will bless them and love them when time shall be known no more. Their *present state* is blessed. What is there like it? The world is a poor world; and when you have lived as long in it as some that are in God's presence, when you have had as many lessons as he has taught them, you will acknowledge, as they are constrained to acknowledge, in the midst of all their various inconsistencies, and turnings to the right and turnings to the left, that, in the deliberate judgment of their souls, the world is a poor world. We would not turn our back upon the mercies of our God; we would desire to taste the sweetness of his love in all; and happy is that man whose spirit is so raised up above himself, and above his circumstances, that he can taste the sweet in the midst of the world's bitter, feel the power of God's love in the darkest dispensations, and, living by faith, realize God as his Father when all things seem against him. I do from my heart believe, that in proportion as we live in Jesus, and live in the realizing possession of him, in his atoning blood, in his perfect righteousness, in the fulness and freeness of his grace, and in the tenderness of his heart, we shall be able to rise above circumstances, and to say, "Some of thy bitterest dispensations have been amongst my sweetest mercies."

The Lord will love and bless his people *in glory*. He is training them up for glory, and in order to wean them from the world he gives them the bitters of life; and for this object:—to lessen the attractions of the creature, to lead them and win them to Jesus, to make them more acquainted with the efficacy of prayer, and thus to train them up for a glorious immortality. But whatever their case may be externally, they are the people that the Lord has blessed.

You have heard of remedies for every disease: you have heard of the philosopher's stone; and are convinced that it is a mere idea, a fancy: but so the world has been dreaming for its thousands of years, and the people of the world have imagined, that they can turn every base metal into gold. *We* have that philosopher's stone; we have it in reality, in substance; for he that lives upon

Christ, lives upon his fulness, lives upon his strength, leans upon his arm, draws out of that fulness ; and just so far as he does it he is raised above circumstances, and under the discipline of the Eternal Spirit, there is nothing, however base, but what becomes precious, not even our temptations. My dear friends, on retracing the past year, while cause for deeper humiliation than ever you and I have known ought to have been experienced by us at the close of it, yet I believe that even the trials, the temptations, the difficulties, the straitnesses of the past year, should have this tendency—to brace up the chords of our souls, that we might give one full Hallelujah to the praise of a Triune God in time and in eternity. What a mercy to have a rest in trouble, to have a hiding-place from the storm, to have a covert in the wind, to have a God to go to, to have a Father of mercies ; and, when the poor burdened soul cannot unfold its secret to any earthly friend, to have one that stoopeth and inclineth his ear, and listeneth to the feeble cry : and such have all they that having Jesus for their portion, have God for their Father. And this people are blessed, too, because their's is a saving faith ; their's is that which shall terminate in glory ; their's is that state, the consummation of which shall be the kingdom that never endeth, and in the glory that never dieth.

And now my dear friends, if this is the mercy and the blessedness of all that know the joyful sound, I would say *especially and peculiarly is it their blessedness who are called in early life to attest that the Lord is gracious, and seek the Lord with the full purpose of their hearts.* It is negatively an immense blessing, because they are saved from so many follies, from so many mistakes, from so much ignorance, from so many retracings of their way, from so many broken bones. It prevents that painful remembrance which many of God's people have had on their dying beds—"The Lord makes me to possess the iniquities of my youth." My dear friends, the peace-speaking blood of Jesus has a wondrous tendency to heal the wounded conscience of man, and as that blood is sprinkled on our hearts, it will give us a peace that the world knows nothing of : and I believe from my heart, that in proportion as we feel that experience in our souls we shall feel a deeper pungency in sin ; and the more we are assured God forgives our sins, the more we shall say, "I never can forgive my own." Many of God's people knowing the way to heaven, having the inward witness that they are going there, have yet cause to look back upon past years and say, "How I led that man astray ; how I was the means of deadening his soul ; how I led him to break the day of the Lord ; how I led him to trample upon all that is holy !" I believe many of you who now hear me have some inward witness that what I say is a truth. It is *negatively*, then, no small blessing to taste in early life that the Lord is gracious, and to be called, savingly called, by his effectual grace.

But *positively* it is our unutterable blessing. "They that seek me early shall find me." The Lord loveth the first fruits. To give him just the sweepings of time, the dregs of existence, and after one has worn one's-self out in the service of the world, then to give him the little wretched residue, is something painful to the heart of one renewed by grace ; there is something deeply abasing in the thought before God. Those who thus seek God early are made great blessings to those around them : the young have great influence upon the young ; their conversation has an especial blessing upon the young. The conversation of a young man, wise, meek, lowly, subdued, weaned from the world, has a weight upon his fellows ; it has a weight that an old man's conversation in one sense



cannot have; for thus they reason: "The world is before him, but the world has no charms for him: how light must that world be when it is unable to weigh his Spirit down; how thin must be the veil when his eye pierces through it; how little must that world be when it seems to have no charms for him, having tasted that the Lord is gracious." I think I see something of this truth in Psalm lxxi. 17, where the Psalmist thus reasons, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works;" set forth to those around me thy wondrous dealings; the wonders of thy providence, and the greater wonders of thy grace. O my dear hearers, to see the flower of life, the bloom of existence, the first ray of intellect, surrendered to the Lord, the soul laid prostrate before God, is a trophy of the Redeemer's love, a wondrous monument of the Redeemer's power. And shall I not say, that a youth of holiness is a blessed preparation for stability in manhood, and for a flourishing old age! I read that chapter about Josiah that you might see how the grace of God pervaded him. He was not merely a religious man in the church: I see him in the temple, I see him on the walls, I see him in the city, in his palace, in the world, with the saints of God; and I see Josiah a man of God, a child of the Most High God. The blessing then is immense, inconceivable, unutterable, when the soul begins to taste in early life, the true grace of God.

Now, in this part of my sermon I must address myself to the parents that hear me. Head knowledge, I would remark, is a great blessing when that head knowledge is sanctified by the Lord the Spirit. Timothy first knew the Scriptures, then he was converted by the Holy Ghost. Let me then, in humility and love, exhort my dear brethren and sisters to whom the Lord has given children, to this as their most obvious duty—lay the Scriptures freely before your children, and unfold to them the scheme of divine truth. I fear many parents are blame-worthy here: other books they have in abundance; a multitude of human writings they place in the hands of their children, but *scraps* of the Bible, and *small portions* of "Thus saith the Lord." Now Timothy knew the Scriptures, before he was converted he knew the Scriptures; and therefore I would say, lay the Scriptures before your children; unfold unto them the scheme of truth. You know not how that in the hands of the Eternal Spirit may be made an immense blessing to them in the days to come. Pray much more for them than you have done. We are most of us ready at times to give this up. I will mention a case which illustrates this: it struck me, and it strikes me still. A parent said to his friend, "I ceased last Monday to pray for my child; I have prayed for him year after year, and as I prayed he seemed only to go the further from the Lord; there was no sweet taste of the great things of the gospel, but rather a turning away from them. I ceased on Monday: on Tuesday he entered a place of worship; God the Spirit laid the truth on his conscience, brought him down to the dust, levelled him, brought him to his own nothingness: as much as if the Lord said to me, 'Though you his father forsook him, and though his mother left him, I the Lord took him up.'" Therefore I would say, not only lay the Scriptures before them, but pray more for them than you have ever prayed before. And hope, too. There is a spirit of hope that ought to mark the child of God in his addresses to his heavenly Father on behalf of his children. That grace that has had compassion upon the father, who shall not say it may have compassion on the Son? That grace that has plucked the mother from the burning, who shall say that it shall not pluck the daughter also?

One word more to parents. Live that gospel that you speak of to others.

Unsanctified tempers, unholy spirits, artful speeches, will in one hour speak more against your gospel than all your long talking about it for years that are past will ever speak for it. Children are keen observers; and therefore I would say, remember the weight of character, the weight of a holy example. If when you come from a place of worship your children see you unsanctified, lofty, unsubdued, what is the consequence of it? The child will conclude within himself, "My father may speak about the gospel, but he cannot believe it." May God give you and me wisdom here, and grace to help us in time of need.

I would address myself to masters of families. Many of these have under their influence those for whom I think they are accountable. Our servants are but lesser children; and, if we have influence over any, God has not given us that influence for nought. Lawyers, men in business, remember, something else than mere articles binds you to those under your roof. Remember man signs the one, but I will declare, God signs the other; and therefore I would say, remember that these are placed under your influence by that God who mistaketh not. May the Lord enable you ever to bear in mind, they are but lower children—inferior children: and may the spirit of love lead you to commend yourselves to the God of Love in your conduct towards them!

I am addressing some, in whose hearts the Lord has in great grace commenced a work that never never shall be disappointed. It is but a feeble work, a little work, just the opening of the dawn. It is but the commencement of what shall be; first the thought, then the desire, then the prayer; an inward misgiving, a secret fear, an inward inquiry, not daring (it may be) to open itself to the dearest object of affection; just able to cry out to the Lord for mercy, no more; just able to say, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner," and no more. Are there such here? Perhaps I may come up to such who never yet may have spoken to father nor mother, nor sister, nor brother, and yet the Lord just enables me to speak my heart to them. My dear young brethren and sisters in Christ, there is One that heareth, there is One that despiseth not, there is One that never quenches the smoking flax, nor breaks the bruised reed; and those who are now the pure spirits in glory were once as you now are; there was the first opening of the dawn in their spirits; but it was the dawn of the perfect day, that all the powers of darkness were never able to destroy.

Walk *softly*, and then you shall walk *safely*. Walk before you run. Put no confidence in yourself. You have little light, but less strength; therefore rest not in yourself; look to Jesus, his person, his work, his grace, his promise, his example, his humility. Humility is that grace, that fruit of God's Spirit in our souls, which he brings out into active exercise by a practical acquaintance with our own nothingness. You know but little of yourselves, because you have made but little trial of yourselves: they who have tried themselves the most are ever kept the lowest in the dust before God. Therefore I would say, keep your eye fixed upon Jesus, look at his humility, and pray that the Holy Ghost may give you that precious grace—the grace of a humble contrite spirit.

Beware my dear young friends of that fuel of pride's fire, the love of new opinions. It is the fuel of pride's fire. Take good heed, therefore, how you give ear to specious seductive opinions. Remember there must be always something specious in error, something always seductive, or it never would seduce. The barbed hook must be covered over, or it would never catch silly fish. Be prepared, then, to expect that it is no small part of Satan's malice and Satan's cunning, to dress up error in the garb of holiness, and that some of

his greatest achievements should have been gained by those who are really in their root and principles persons that love and fear God. To place direct ungodliness before a holy child of God is too gross a bait to catch the silliest bird. Value a holy experienced friend; the value is unutterable: it will be the means in God's hands of keeping you from many a fall, when you listen to their discovery of sin and self; when you see their escapes, their safeguards, their caution, and their need of prayer. Be very cautious and careful as to the friends that you form; one unwise, injudicious, light, and flippant talker about the gospel will do you more harm than if he were a downright worldling. I repeat it—one unwise, injudicious, light, and flippant talker about the gospel, will do you more harm than if he were a downright worldling. Beware of such; never count such among your intimates: they can do you no good, but, unless prevented, must do you incalculable harm. Remember my dear young friends, the Bible is the nutriment of the new creature: "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" you never can grow in any other way. And as you read it, pray: pray before you read it, while you read it, and after you have read it; for it is only as the Holy Spirit indites those truths that you read there in your heart, that it ever profits you: those truths that you read, the Holy Ghost must engrave on your spirit, or they never can profit your souls. Read it freely—doctrine, promise, precept. Always be sure there is a snake in the grass when you wish the one to overlay the other: it is truth in its proportions. There is not a godly man on earth that will say, "Leave out the promises;" there is not one that loves Christ that will ever desire to slight the precepts; but many a child of God does not value them as he ought to value them, because he is for a time misled, and darkened in his judgment, and seeth not. Thus we see the path of liberty, of happiness, and of peace. Read the Bible fairly, read it laboriously, read it prayerfully; again I say *prayerfully*: read it as God's word—holy, that you may be holy.

My dear young friends, two points more, and I will detain you no longer. I have said before, keep your eye fixed upon Jesus; it is a proper maxim for all the varieties of life. Look at his blood, look at his grace, look at his tenderness, look at his willingness, look at his example. Are you in company, and do you find your souls damped? Do you find a danger? Just ask the question—"Is the Lord with me? No: then I will not be here." My dear friends, it were our mercy if that were our touch-stone through life—that "Where my Lord goes not I will not go: where I have no sense of his presence, where he withdraws the brightness of his grace I will not be; and if I have done iniquity, by his mercy, I will do so no more."

Be careful in your conduct; most careful; you never can be too careful: words speak loud, but actions louder than words. Men judge of what you are, not by what you say, but by what you do. In your families, to your friends, to your acquaintances, exhibit the meekness, and tenderness, and gentleness, and faithfulness, and honesty of the disciple of Christ. Reverence age. It is one of the abominations of the present day that every man thinks himself a teacher, and the younger always instructs the elder. There can be no more decided proof of the work of Satan, and of the low state to which we are brought in the church of Christ, than that we see this perpetually. Reverence age; especially spiritual age, spiritual experience. Reverence your parents. O, my dear friends, many a child of God has in after days to mourn—"Ah, that I had been more as I ought to have been to my dear parents in the early part of my Christian course!"

Thus, my dear friends, shall you give blessed evidence, that you have heard the joyful sound, and that you know it. I would earnestly hope and pray, by God's tender mercy and goodness, that you may be led seriously to lay these things to heart, and may the Lord the Spirit so bring in the witness of the gospel into your hearts, and so lay the precious blood of Jesus upon your consciences, that under the drawings of his love you may be able to say, "Here I am for this year, and all the years of my life, to be thine, and thine for ever."

## DECISION FOR GOD IN YOUTH.

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REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D.

STEPNEY CHAPEL, JANUARY 12, 1834.

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My young friends, if your feelings on this solemn occasion are in any measure in accordance with the language of the song in which you have been uniting—if you are prepared to sympathise with that choice that led the lawgiver of Israel to despise all the honours of Pharaoh's court, and to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—if you are on the Lord's side, and are disposed, under the influence of solemn impressions and believing convictions to act with decision and steadfastness in your Christian course—then you will at once be prepared to enter into the consideration of the subject that I shall this evening bring under your serious notice:—

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.”—1 KINGS xviii. 21.

We have in this passage, and its connecting history, a spectacle, singular and unparalleled, presented to our notice. We behold two forces arrayed against each other, engaged in a contest of pre-eminent importance; a contest on the decision of which depended results of the highest moment to the people, and the national welfare of the thousands and tens of thousands assembled upon that occasion. The parties engaged were, as to their physical strength and political power, most unequal. On the one side there was Ahab, King of Israel—Jezebel, the idolatrous queen of Ahab—four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, the god served and adored by the court of Ahab—four hundred prophets of the groves, the idolatrous worshippers of other divinities; for however idolaters could oppose the true God, they could form coalitions and unions with each other. On the same side there was the power of the court—there were the men of rank, and dignity, and office, and there was the multitude, usually disposed at all times, more or less, to follow in the train of authority, and power, and custom. Such were the forces on the one side in this unequal contest. On the other side was one man, a lone man, faithful amongst the faithless, unseduced, unterrified, a prophet of the Most High God; a man of singular courage, high daring, unexampled fidelity, and unshrinking decision; possessing in himself the true spirit of the martyr and the reformer; distinguished by his profound patriotism, but still more distinguished by his eminent devotion.

The great controversy, then, was, who was the true God—Baal or Jehovah—the God worshipped by Ahab, and Jezebel, and the court, and the prophets, and the multitude, or the Living God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. This was the question; this was the important point at issue; and the prophet of the Most High felt himself shielded by an invisible protection, strong in the Lord

and in the power of his might, possessing moral courage preparing him for the great conflict, and supported by the presence and the consolation which Jehovah imparted to his spirit, proposed an experiment, on the issue of which he leaves the great question to be determined. Baal was a name given to various idolatrous divinities; hence their worshippers are called, in various parts of the Old Testament, Baalites. The word Baal signifies ruler or lord: hence we read of Baalmeon, and Baal-zebub, and Baal-zephon: all these were the different, yet united, objects of idolatrous adoration at that period; and there is little doubt that there was a close identity and affinity between the Baal of the Ammonites, and Phœnicians, and the Moabites, and the Saturn and Jupiter of the Greeks and Romans, and the objects of idolatrous worship amongst our British ancestors in the times of the ancient Druids. Some have supposed that Baal was a personification of the sun or the solar light. Other gods under this name were doubtless embodied types of the powers of nature, or supposed spirits of departed heroes. Whatever they were, they were in character, in principle, directly opposed to the claims and prerogatives of the true God: they were models of cruelty and lust, they were patterns of impurity and revenge. It might well be said that the people sacrificed to devils, and not to God.

Now the prophet proposed an experiment that decided the question. The worshippers of the solar fire might be expected to attach the highest importance to the decision of the question by fire. Elijah adopts that very principle of their idolatrous worship: arrangements are made; bullocks are prepared; and the priests and the prophets of Baal, as you have heard in the instructive narrative read this night in your hearing, employed their arts, and their howlings, and their incantations, and their self-inflicted tortures, for the very purpose of bringing down fire, for the very purpose of consuming the sacrifice they had thus prepared. In vain their entreaties, in vain their prayers, in vain their self-inflicted cruelties; there were none that answered. The appeal was then made on another altar (for there can be no communion between God and Baal;) on another altar the bullock was offered by the prophet of the true God. And to prevent all possibility of collusion, all supposition of design by any of those private and sinister arts that the craft of men, the wicked craft of men, have employed in all ages to delude the unwary and the unenquiring—you find water surrounding the sacrifice, the trenches filled with water, even at the very time when there was a singular and unparalleled drought of water in all parts of the land. (Some infidel wits have asked, "Where did the water come from, if at this very period, for three years, there had been no water in the land of Israel?" forgetting, as they generally do when they offer sceptical objections, that Mount Carmel stood close to the sea-shore, where they found plenty of water for the purpose.) They supplied with water the trenches that surrounded the sacrifice prepared by Elijah, for the purpose of giving a more signal and decisive confirmation to the claims of the true God. You know the result: the appeal was made to Him who has all power in heaven and earth, and who never departs from the ordinary established course of nature in the general laws and arrangements he has appointed, but for the purpose of confirming his own authority, and accrediting, by miraculous agency, his own revelation, and indorsing the commission of his own inspired servants, and thus present a worthy object of confidence to the faith and love and adoration of his people. He who has all the resources of the universe, and all the laws and elements of nature, fire and storm and tempest, at his command caused that fire to descend which consumed

the sacrifice, and presented a visible and decisive confirmation in the view of the assembled thousands, that "Jehovah he was the God, Jehovah he was the God."

My friends, it was with peculiar fitness, therefore, that Elijah made the appeal to the people in the words of the text, when he reproved their pusillanimity, and their wavering, and their neutrality: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him; if Baal, then follow him." I am anxious to apply the whole of this important argument; whatever of reason or appeal is involved in this question, to you my young friends. Let us therefore reflect first, on the alternative proposed, and secondly, on the decision required.

I beg your attention first, to **THE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED.**

This implies, in the first place, *opposition of claims*. "If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him." Why, you say, and say justly, "There can be no doubt who was the true God; here we have decisive evidence, that the God of the Hebrews, the God of Elijah, the Lord God of the holy prophets, was the true God. This was the God that answered by fire; this was the God that gave visible signs of his presence, and his majesty, and his power: and therefore Baal we at once reject." Do you reject Baal? There are deities enthroned in the heart, as well as idols embodied to the eye. Every man in his natural estate is an idolater: whatever takes away the heart and the affections from God is an idol, whether carved by the cunning skill of the workman, or presented only in fantasy to the imagination; whether it be the object of desire in the heart, or the object of pursuit in the life, if it interfere with the true God, with the God of the Bible, with the claims and requirements of the true God, it is an idol: and you know, my young friends, that there are rival claims here. The alternative, then, applies as much to you, and applies as much to the thousands and myriads of nominal Christians in Britain as it did to those who lived in the land of Israel. At this particular period there are Baals still. Whatever rules in the heart, whatever is lord of the affections, is an object of idolatry, if it interfere with God and his supreme claims.

There is the Baal of *sensual indulgence and unhallowed gratification*, before the shrine of which, thousands and millions bend the knee of senseless homage, to which genius consecrates her powers, and on which splendour, and taste, and opulence, lavish out their profuse and endless stores. And if the worship of the vilest objects of lust that Greece, or Rome, or Chaldea, or Babylon, or the ancient Moabites, ever embodied in their temples, were now again to be presented, there are amongst the rich, and the poor, and amongst all classes in nominal Christendom, and in nominal Britain, foul idolatries, idolatries of lust and sensuality, as gross as ever dishonoured the days of ancient paganism, and the impurities of ancient times.

There are the gods of Baal, *of worldly acquisition*, as well as of sensual indulgence; those who live for the purposes of accumulation, and worship at the shrine of Mammon, and think of nothing but the acquisition of this world's good, as the great object of their devotion.

There is the Baal of *infidel speculation*; men worshipping the powers of their own puny reason, and rejecting the truth of God's Holy Word; saying, "We will think for ourselves;" and maintaining the pride of their own little shallow intellect, and setting this in proud defiance against the authority of the Oracles of God.

There is the Baal of *human authority in religion*. If men like not the religion of the Bible they try and make themselves a religion, and the very question they ask is, "Have the rulers of Baal believed?" and they take the religion which has upon it the image and superscription of Cæsar, and there they rest the question; and that is the Baal of their heart.

And there is the Baal of *self-righteous dependence*, under the power and government of which thousands attend on the Sabbath to religious ordinances, and think that because they hear a sermon, and worship God once a week, and pay some external respect to the institutions of religion, they have a ground of hope, and a right to peace, and composure, and confidence; matters are settled for eternity; they think themselves good Christians, they regard themselves as possessed of all that can fit them for the enjoyment of immortality.

Now, these are all objects of idolatrous trust, idolatrous dependence, idolatrous adoration. You, my young friends, have these very objects, in one form or another, presented to you. Go where you will you are surrounded by the fascinations of idolatry; idolatry in the form of sensual indulgences; idolatry in the form of worldly acquisition; idolatry in the form of infidel speculation; idolatry in the form of human authority; idolatry in the form of self-righteous dependence; all opposing the God of the Bible, the religion of the gospel, the pure, and the simple, and the self-denying testimony that God has revealed to you in his Holy Word.

Now, this is the alternative, of which I have said it implies opposing claims. In the second place *the alternative admits of no compromise*. There were some in the times of Elijah who would have had no objection to have paid some respect to Jehovah, if, at the same time they could have connected this respect and regard with the religion of the court, and the worship of Baal, and paid some homage at least to the claims and requirements of this idol god. To such the prophet says, "How long halt ye between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him."

My friends, the religion of the Gospel has in all ages been an exclusive religion; it admits of no compromise. You are not the disciples of Jesus Christ, you are not the worshippers of the God of the Bible, you are not rendering Jesus Christ a supreme homage if you are trying to unite the world and its interests; so far as those interests are hostile to the claims of the true God, you are endeavouring to effect a reconciliation between opposite elements. You cannot serve two masters; our Lord has laid it down as a clear and decided principle, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." There must be a supreme regard to the Bible, to the claims of the true God, to the revelation he has announced, to the claims he has unfolded, to the law he has enjoined, to the truth of the gospel he has revealed; and you cannot mix the one with the other, you must, therefore, in relation to every thing opposed or inconsistent with the claims of the true Jehovah, listen to that voice which says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

I remark of this alternative, which thus implies an opposition of claims, and admits of no compromise, that *it allows of no delay*. You are not, therefore, to imagine, that for a while you can serve the world, and its pleasures, and its forbidden interests, and by and bye, at a "convenient season," take up the true God and his religion. There are many of this class, I am fully persuaded, at all times, and in all ages. They think true religion, the religion of the Bible, the



religion of the gospel, the faith and hope of the gospel, all that is essential to vital Christianity, most important and desirable; but, they are not prepared now to seek it, not prepared now to part with whatever is opposed to it, not prepared to act on the principles of this alternative, and to be decided for God. They have yet this interest to secure, that possession to obtain, that connexion to form, that engagement to profit by; by and bye, more leisure, more opportunity, more convenience, for the attention of their minds to religion and its great concerns, will be afforded. And, when they do sometimes think of the hour of sickness, and the approach of death, they are compelled to acknowledge, that there is a majesty and a might about religion that nothing else can give to the character. They see the calm composure, the holy confidence, the serenity of aspect, the "peace that passeth understanding," the "joy unspeakable and full of glory," when the mind has heaven and peace within, when there is the "hope that maketh not ashamed," when there is the enjoyment of God's presence, and the light of his countenance irradiating even the valley of the shadow of death, taking away the fear of the last conflict, enabling even those physically weak, to exhibit the greatest spiritual courage and decision; and they are compelled to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." Oh, yes, my friends, how many are there who have borne this testimony to the value of religion when they have approached the borders of eternity, and the eye of the mind has opened to the contemplation of its invisible and awful realities. How often, have even men of infidel speculation and licentious habits, rendered homage to Christianity, and its power, and its value, and its preciousness, at the period most critical and important in their history.

I well recollect at this moment a striking illustration of the sentiment I have now stated on the part of an infidel philosopher, whose daughter, under the care and government of a pious mother, had been led to seek the law of the true God, and in some measure to feel the value, and the power, and the impressions of vital religion. That daughter was the object of fond idolatrous attachment to her infidel father; but his object in social intercourse was, too often, the indulgence of that ribaldry and wit which directly tended to undermine all the reasonings, all the appeals, all the impressions, of a mother's piety and a mother's prayers. That beloved child was smitten by the providence of God with a disease that terminated fatally. At length the critical period arrived when the medical attendant pronounced the case to be hopeless, and the crisis at hand. "Now," said the faithful medical adviser to this infidel philosopher, "shall your daughter trust her father's atheism or her mother's God?" "Her mother's God," exclaimed the man; "tell her her mother's God; let him be the object of her devotion and her trust now: let her believe and confide in what her mother has taught her." Ah, my friends, when you bring the principles of infidel speculation, of worldly-mindedness, of sensual indulgence, and of every thing unholy to the test of actual experience, you will then find it is only "the God that answers by fire" that is the true God; and there will be no hope, no peace, no joy, no solace to the spirit but that which is derived from the presence and the promise of the God of the Bible. There is therefore no delay. The alternative implies opposing claims, admits of no compromise, and allows of no delay; "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

You will recollect, my friends, that when I last addressed you on a Sabbath evening, I stated from this pulpit, that some were then present who would never

listen to a sermon on the last Sabbath of another year again: two of those individuals who heard that appeal delivered from this sacred desk, are now in eternity; by a sudden visitation of Providence both have been called unexpectedly from the scenes, the connexions, and the responsibilities of time, to the account and the decisions of eternity. And you, my young friends, whatever may be the vigour of your constitution, however the bloom of health may sparkle on your countenances, however the joys and imaginations of hope may allure and attract your minds, you know not what a day or an hour may bring forth; and from the secret place of the Most High, the decree may have gone forth in relation to some of you; "This year thou shalt die." "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: if Baal, then follow him." If the world satisfies you, if the world approves itself to your reason, if the world will support you in your bed of sickness, and in the prospect of death—if any thing short of an interest in the true God, the God of the Bible, will do to die with, then live for the world, then reject the Bible, then trample on the dictates of conscience, then resist the authority of heaven, then wrap yourselves in the garment of your delusion and your indifference. Dare you say this? can you embody in so many words, and propositions, and thoughts, the suggestion, and say deliberately, in the face of heaven and before the presence of the Eternal, "There is no God; there is no hereafter; there is no retribution; there is no responsibility; there is no conscience; there is no immortal destiny?" You feel that you cannot; you know that all the conceptions of your minds, all the dictates of your heart, all the feelings your understanding and your conscience (in spite even at times of forbidden indulgences and of forbidden gratifications) suggest, that you could not say these things; and you know that the period will arrive when you yourselves must be brought to the solemn test, to the last crisis, and then you will know who is the true God.

Let me, then, direct your attention to the second subject for your contemplation. We have regarded the alternative proposed. I now call on you briefly to reflect ON THE DECISION REQUIRED.

Now, my dear young friends, it is delightful to feel, when we think of any matter that is disputed and controverted, that we have good reason for our choice, for our decision; that we can feel our minds justified in that choice; that we can rest in all the confidence which the understanding is warranted to feel in relation to its decisions. A mind at all capable of reflection, knows the value of the certainty and the satisfaction which this gives to the mind.

Now, in reference to the kind of decision to which this appeal invites you, I remark, first, that it is demanded *by the most solemn and satisfactory evidence*. If you had been present at Mount Carmel, when the prophets of Baal uttered their invocations to obtain fire to consume their sacrifice, and if you had seen the vanity of that result, and, on the other hand, had witnessed the success of the experiment which the venerable prophet and reformer of Israel adopted, would you not have joined in the noble and the just conclusion expressed by the assembled thousands, "The Lord he is God, The Lord he is God?"

My young friends, you have all this evidence, and ten thousand times still greater evidence, to confirm your decision, if you are on the Lord's side. Why, you have every thing which this Sacred Oracle announces, with all the evidence around you in the history of ages, in the antiquity of past times, in the church of God, as witnesses from period to period; you have the evidence of its miracles

indubitably performed, of its prophecies as indubitably accomplished; you have the evidence derived from an examination of its history, its doctrines, its precepts; and the wisest and the best of men have declared that in this Book, independent of its divinity, there is sublimer philosophy, there is purer morality, there are higher strains of thought and eloquence, than can be found in any other volume which the history of the world has presented to your notice. You have the evidence derived from the character and the conduct, from the life and the death, of the thousands and the millions who have believed the truth, who have obeyed the Author of salvation, who have fled to the refuge of mercy, and who have rejoiced in the Gospel as all their salvation and all their desire.

Let me ask you one question: Did you ever hear of a man repenting on his death-bed that he had been a Christian? Never since Jesus Christ died on Calvary, and the first messengers of his doctrine proclaimed pardon and remission of sins to the nations in his name, has there been found one instance of an individual on his death-bed saying, "I repent I have believed in Jesus Christ." There are thousands who have repented, when too late, that they have not believed him, who have repented of their infidel speculations, of their licentious habits, of their criminal procrastination, of their impious idolatry; but when did you hear of a man repenting of being a Christian? There is not one fact of the kind on record in the history of the world. Lay this deeply, then, on your hearts, as a maxim never to be forgotten, that that religion alone is worth living for that is worth dying with; and what will support you on the bed of death, deserves your supreme regard in the period of life. There is every thing in the Gospel, in its truths, in its evidences, in its results, to prove it worthy your confidence; and, therefore, the decision is demanded by the most solemn and satisfactory proof.

I remark, in the second place, that *this decision is deserved by the supreme excellency of its object*, as well as by the satisfactory nature of its evidence. Compare Jehovah with Baal, with the God of the Moabites, the Amorites, the Phœnicians, of ancient times, with the Jupiter of the Romans, and the Greeks, with the objects of idolatrous homage in the present day, the objects of your idolatrous homage whose hearts tell you that you are loving pleasure, seeking after riches, concerned about honours, forgetting your souls, following after lying vanities, and despising your own mercies; compare these things with the God of the Bible, and you will see the excellency of the object. Your reason tells you that the character of the idol worship in ancient times was such as to prove at once that they were false gods, that they were devils. Read the history of such, read the mythology of ancient times; read the account of their transformations and changes; and you will see that they are nothing but exhibitions of cruelty and impurity; your understanding at once revolts at the thought, that such monsters of lust and revenge could be the true objects of worship; you have illumination enough to perceive that these cannot be the objects of your confidence.

I ask you, whether the objects, which your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, your imagination, your reason, now present to you as objects for which you are to labour, and tug and strive, and rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, are worthy of your regard. I have often thought how much more pains people take to damn their souls, than ever people take to save their souls. You see people all earnestness, all occupation, all business, from morning to night, full of solicitude, full of eager anxiety, full of deep and intense musings, often denying themselves sufficient repose—for

what purpose? To accumulate this world's possessions, when, perhaps, before another hour passes over them, they will be paralyzed by disease, deranged by excessive exertion, and rendered altogether incapable of deriving a moment's gratification from the object of their supreme admiration.

Look at the men before you, around you, whom you are disposed to regard as most worthy your imitation; look at the successful men, the ambitious men, those who arrive at influence, and elevation, and honour, and distinction, and who make the acquirement of these objects the great end of life, and sacrifice to it everything. You will hear from day to day of their dropping into eternity, and you see that death levels all distinctions, pays no regard to crowns and sceptres, but buries in one common dust statesmen and the herd of the millions around them. And what have they been living for? Now, suppose any one of you should be allowed to become as rich as Cræsus, as valiant, as ambitious, as successful, as the Alexanders or Cæsars of ancient times; suppose you could accumulate within the narrow space of your own little brief history all that this world could impart a love for, and leave a name on the page of past history which would be read, and admired, and wondered at by succeeding generations; and what have you gained? What have you secured? Why, with all this you have lost your soul, lost eternal happiness, and the presence, and the favour, and the enjoyment of God; you have bartered immortality for time. Is not this madness? Is not this folly?

On the other hand, look at the excellency of the object for which your decision is here required. It is worthy of your thought, sufficient for your happiness, what you can grasp and cling to in the very hour of dissolution. Yes, and amidst the ashes of a burning universe, you could exclaim, "We have lost nothing: this God is our God for ever and ever." Is not this, then, an object worthy of your confidence? And the more you look at the perfection of God as revealed in the gospel, and the more you have the grace of God revealed to you in that gospel, the more you will see the truth of the holy Psalmist's declaration—"He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, and this is all my salvation and all my desire."

I observe, thirdly, that this decision is justified by the *uniform experience of its beneficial results*. I might advert to its results to individuals, its results to families, its results to communities, the peace of conscience enjoyed, the government over sin and the world which it secured, the serenity and tranquil feeling in the prospect of death, provision for immortality, a good hope through grace, everlasting consolation—oh, what is not secured by decision for God? What is not lost by indecision, procrastination, and delay, on this great and momentous subject!

Finally, I would remark that there are peculiar claims enforcing this decision on the part of the young. My dear young friends, you are now at the period of life when it is of the utmost consequence that your principles should be fixed, that the elements of your character should be decided. It has often been remarked, that the great majority of the true disciples of God become so before they are five and twenty; and I firmly believe it. I limit not the power of God's Holy Spirit, but I believe the great majority of those who are decided for God are those who became so before that period, and that every succeeding period of delay and procrastination only increases the indisposition of the mind for thought, binds the chain of depravity more firmly round the character; every day adds another and another link to that chain, increases procrastination and

unwillingness, and the moral incapacity of the mind for serious thought: for conscience has been resisted, impressions have been stifled, convictions have been disregarded, appeals have been brought again and again to the mind; judicial hardness of heart may be apprehended; God may say, "He is joined to his idols, let him alone." "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." We often hear most fearful instances of those who have heard the Gospel, its invitations, its warnings, its appeals, and have said, "To-morrow I will think on the subject; to-morrow I will pay attention to the great concerns of my soul." To-morrow has found them in eternity, with all their sins unpardoned, their guilt uncanceled, their hearts unrenewed, and the last link in the chain has bound them to the bottomless pit for ever. Oh, my dear young friends, if there be one feeling more than another I am anxious this night to guard you against, it is the feeling of delay, the feeling of procrastination, the putting off to a more convenient season the great concerns of eternity!

There are two classes before me; there are *decided enemies to God*. I know there are in this assembly to-night decided enemies: and you will go this night from the house of God, and you will ridicule what you have heard, and you will try to fortify your own minds, and the minds of your deluded companions and associates in your hardness, in your indifference, in your infidelity; and you will call it priestcraft, and a cunningly-devised fable. And you are approving your decision. Yes; I know you are approving your decision, by your indifference, by your sensuality, by your disregard to all the dictates of conscience, by your contempt of the word of God, by your profanation of his Sabbaths, by the obduracy of your minds, by the profaneness of your speech, by the licentiousness of your thoughts, by the criminality of your indulgences. You are on the side of Baal; you are against God—doubting his power, despising his word, perhaps, brought to the dreadful, impious hardihood of denying his existence. And yet, if you have not arrived at that awful and fatal obduracy, you may profess that you know God, while in works you are denying him. Oh, this is awful! There can be no doubt about your characters, about your impiety, about your irreligion. You may come now and then to the sanctuary as a matter of occasional compliance with old customs, because some neighbours or friends have persuaded you to come, and pass an hour of the wearisome Sabbath, when you are forbidden to pursue your customary business, or to enjoy your customary indulgences. You may come, perhaps, impelled by curiosity, and some may have come from worse motives still, which I will not pretend to describe. But, remember, there is a day of reckoning; there is a period of solemn inspection which you cannot pass by, which you cannot avoid: there is a scrutiny to which you must submit. You must contend with the last enemy; you must meet the King of Terrors; you must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. You may try to forget it, but you cannot escape it. Now, will your principles stand that test? Will your indifference bear that scrutiny? Will your decision against God support you then? Oh! suffer, I beseech you, one word of inquiry, one word of appeal; it may be to some of you the very last you shall ever have. "How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation?" If we neglect so great salvation, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

But I am addressing *decided friends*, as well as decided enemies. I know there are those before me who are prepared to avow themselves on the side of

God, and who rejoice in every opportunity of evincing their decision ; who glory in the cross of Christ, who account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. You have fled to the refuge of mercy ; you have received the truth in the love of it : the Bible is your chosen guide, prayer your highest privilege, the Sabbath the best day of all the seven : working for God in the communication of religious instruction to the young, in visits of mercy to the afflicted, is a source of enjoyment to you. You have felt the value of your own souls, and therefore can feel for the souls of others : you have felt the preciousness of Christ yourselves, and therefore have recommended the salvation of the gospel to others. You were once ignorant, but the gospel has been your wisdom ; you were once guilty, but in Christ you have found salvation ; you were once unholy, but in him you have found sanctification, in him you have found righteousness, in him you have found acceptance with God ; and you dare not exchange the hope of the gospel, and the consolations of that hope, for ten thousand worlds. You feel happy in the service of God ; you rejoice in the presence of God ; and you are saying, “ We yield ourselves to thee : to whom can we go, Divine Redeemer, but to thee ? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

My dear friends ; I congratulate you on the choice which grace has enabled you to make. I call upon you to walk humbly with God ; to walk humbly before him, like Joshua and Caleb, of whom it is said, “ They followed the Lord fully.” Make the Bible your constant guide : seek the direction of its sacred pages ; obey the Spirit’s holy impulses : you are not to grieve that Divine Agent, by which alone you can be sealed to the day of redemption. Be concerned to preserve the sensibilities of your consciences unimpaired. Guard against the fascinations of error and the corruptions of the world. Remember the importance of closet devotion, retired religion, private communion with heaven. Be concerned to regard continually the voice of conscience, and to obey the truth of God in his own word ; and thus be on the Lord’s side. Be afraid of sinful companionships ; form no sinful engagements and connexions ; none in which you cannot ask and expect the blessing of God. Abstain from all appearance of evil ; not only the reality, but even the semblance of it ; abstain from the scenes of forbidden amusements and unholy gratification : and be decided for God, though fools may deride your choice, and though the world may condemn you. Thus approve the reality, and thus illustrate the excellency, of pure and undefiled religion.

Are there any still undecided, halting, neutral, hesitating ? My young friends, look at the objects I have contrasted ; contrast the principles I have endeavoured to illustrate and apply. Go, I beseech you, this night, from the sanctuary to the scene of private retirement : bow at the footstool of divine mercy and implore the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Oh, if there is one young person before me to-night, who has never yet, for one single hour in his life, retired for the very purpose of thought and examination and prayer, I beseech you let this night witness it. Look at the consequences which may follow this night’s decision. Are you prepared to say to the world “ Thou art my portion ;” to pleasure, “ Thou art my god ;” to wealth, “ Thou art the object of my trust ;” to the authority of the world “ In that I will rest ?” Or are you prepared to say, “ Thou art my God, and I will praise thee ; thou art my God, and I will exalt thee. Other lords have had dominion over me ; but henceforth I will be called by thy name ?” “ Seek the Lord while he is to be found ; call upon him while he is near.”—Amen.

## APOSTACY FROM GOD.

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“ From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”  
JOHN, vi. 66.

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To go back from Christ, and to walk no more with him, are departures from God which amount to final apostacy. But all declensions and decays in religion are departures from God; therefore there are departures from God which are not apostacy. We read in the Scriptures, in reference to the people of God, of many of their departures from God: their decays in religion, yea, and their falls, were great, sufficient to read out to us the importance of that scriptural admonition, “ Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” For great and excellent as were those men whose history is thus recorded, their departures were great; they went to great lengths; but, nevertheless, we find that their souls were restored, they returned back to God, because it was utterly impossible that they could perish. They belonged to the church of Christ; and we read in the Scriptures, that the church is the body of Christ; and there is no part or member of his body that can see corruption. Hence our Lord says, in the tenth chapter of this same gospel, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

When, therefore, we speak of apostacy, we do not intend the departures or declensions of the people of God; but when we read, as we do in the chapter before us, of a people who call themselves, and who also fancied themselves, to be the people of God, of whom it is testified that they ultimately became apostates, does it not stir up a spirit of jealousy in the breast of every one who is among the real people of God, to look well to his evidences, to search and to try (especially on some dark and gloomy day when his backslidings may be reproving him,) to examine and see whether his spots be the spots of God’s children; that in the midst of his sorrow he may not be destitute of strong consolation; that he may not sorrow as those without hope; that he may not be driven in his darkness to despair. For while nothing is more to be deprecated than decays in religion, nothing more to be lamented than the departures of the people of God from a close and a holy walk with him, yet, nevertheless, nothing is more unscriptural than for a brother to condemn such; nothing more contrary to the mind and the spirit of Christ, than for a brother to turn away from such. It is rather his duty to strive to heal the breach, and to bring him back, in order that the soul of such an one may be raised again to the

favour of God. In this the instruction of the Apostle St. Paul is clear. Galatians, vi. 1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Here is a word of instruction, together with a caution. The Apostle exhorts all spiritual men to restore a brother who may have been overtaken in a fault, and to do it in the spirit of meekness; adding to that a caution, which is calculated to stimulate them to a faithful discharge of their duty: "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." If then your brother has been tempted, if he has, through surprise and temptation been guilty of a fault, your duty is to restore such an one, to pray for him, to pray with him, to counsel him, to comfort and encourage him to return, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." For it is "by faith we stand;" and it is by the mighty power of God's grace in that faith, that we are upheld. But if you give way to an unchristian spirit in reference to those who have fallen, take heed lest the hand that upheld thee be withdrawn for a time, and thou be tempted and fall likewise; considering that thou art exposed to the same temptations and the same dangers, "Bear ye one another's burdens," being assured of this, that his fall is a burden to him; bear with him, "and so fulfil the law of Christ," which is the law of love. Remember what Christ has done for thee, and what he is daily working in thee, and doing by thee: fulfil the law of love.

But the subject that we have in hand does not bear upon the people of God, or upon their declensions or decays in religion; it comes before us in a most solemn character, pointing out those who fancied that they were the people of God, they who to all appearance were the people of God, and who yet became apostates from God. Does not this subject therefore awaken within us an anxious enquiry, if peradventure we may ascertain what it is that designates those who may be apparently disciples, and yet after all fall away and perish? For it is worthy of remark, that the persons mentioned in the text were disciples, as contra-distinguished from the unbelieving Jews; they were the disciples of Christ: "From that time many of his *disciples* went back:" and they went back not for a time or a season, but they renounced the faith of Christ altogether, "and walked no more with him."

Now it is in no way surprising, beloved brethren, that the worldly-minded man, or the sensualist, or the sons and daughters of pride and dissipation and of a vain mind, should refuse to receive the testimony of God's truth, and affect to disbelieve it; it is no wonder that they should become infidels, or sceptics, or Socinians: there is in this no matter of surprise; because, if they once admit the truth of God's word, and if they give the length and the breadth that it occupies to the volume of inspiration, they are shut up to this alternative—they must either condemn themselves in the things which they allow, or else they must cast away their idols to the moles and to the bats, which idols they love better than they love God himself. Yes, it is a fact, that they barter the favour of God to the love of their idols; the sensualist for his appetites, the worldling for worldly pleasure, the vain and the gay for vanity and pleasure. It is no wonder, therefore, that such attempt to put aside the truth and affect to neglect and despise it. For instance, we are not surprised when we hear, as it is recorded in this chapter, of unbelieving Jews gainsaying and contradicting, calling on Christ for a sign, and at times threatening to stone him: it is no matter of surprise that the Scribes and Pharisees should set their faces against Christ,



because he denounced their principles, and exposed them as hypocrites: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites:" it is no wonder that those should have rejected Christ; but that there should be among them some who became his disciples, braving the Jewish hierarchy, and even hazarding the being turned out of the synagogue, that they should join themselves unto Christ, that they should be taught by him, and that they should profess his faith, and yet, after all, that they should go back and walk no more with him—this is a point of solemn consideration; and to reconcile this with the grace of God the Father, and to understand the fact, is important to every reflecting mind. For here it appears to a demonstration, that a man may be a disciple of Christ, may be taught of Christ, may be so divinely taught that he may be taught of God, (inasmuch as all his knowledge and all his faith is derived from the word of God,) he may be a disciple, and yet not a believing disciple.

Now as we before observed, it is utterly impossible that a true believer, who is also a disciple of Christ, can ever fall away, and ultimately perish. If the word of God be true, (which it is,) the eternally perishing of any one true believer is a matter of impossibility; and yet mention is made here, you perceive, of disciples who heard, and were taught, and walked with Christ, and yet a time came when they went back and walked no more with him.

Now, in order to clear up this point, let us examine some of the characteristic marks of such disciples. This will be calculated to read out a lesson of warning to the worldly and the careless, the superficial and the inconsistent; whilst it will also lead the true believer to a source of unutterable consolation. In order that we may come at this fact, let us here, in the first place, enquire what are the causes of going back in those who are reputed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then, in the second place, endeavour to trace some of the marks and evidences which characterize those who are his.

In the first place, then, **WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF GOING BACK IN THOSE WHO ARE REPUTED DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.** This you may glean from the discourse which Jesus Christ has just now been holding forth to his disciples who surrounded him. In the words of the text, the Apostle John observes, "From that time"—from the time that Christ broached those sentiments, from the time he opened to them those truths, and let them a little more into the nature of his kingdom—"from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." In the former part of this chapter you will find, that a question had been submitted to Christ by the unbelieving Jews to this effect: "What shall we do to work the works of God?" This was the cause of the subsequent discourse, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Or, in other words, "What shall we do that we might inherit eternal life?" In answer to this Jesus Christ sets before them the very first principles of his salvation; he leads them to the very first principles of life, to the avenue to the way, to the very door of access, through which man alone can find his way to the Father; that principle without which every thing else is nothing worth. Every prayer that is offered up, the communion that we hold with God in public or private, every action, every word, every deed, will all take its character from that principle; for if we be not actuated by that pure principle, which lies at the very foundation of the Christian fabric, then, beloved brethren, according to one of the articles of our church, "Lust hath of itself the nature of sin." Christ cleared up that point, in the next verse: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Now, in order to give a plausibility to their system of proceeding, the Jews said to him, "Shew us something that will justify us; shew us something that will convince us of the absolute necessity of thus believing: give us a sign." "They said, therefore, unto him, what sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Then Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Having asked our blessed Lord to give them a sign, he forthwith gives them a sign. "They said, Moses gave us a sign by which we knew he was sent of God; for he fed us in the wilderness with manna from heaven." Now our Lord corrects this mistake, and says, "No: Moses gave you not that bread; but my Father in heaven giveth you true bread: therefore, if you believe Moses, why not believe me? Having corrected this, he proceeds to give them a sign; he gives them the same sign. It is the same emblem of bread from heaven; emblematical of the spiritual truth which was set out in the type of the manna in the wilderness, and that was, God's gift of his Son for the life of the world. He says, "I am the bread of life;" and here is the sign, that which was typified by the manna, God's gift to the world. But they believed not the sign. We read, "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven."

But our Lord did not conclude here. It was his design on this occasion to set before them some of the deep things of God, to lead them into the mysteries of his grace and his kingdom, in order that thereby he might glorify his Father's name before them in his testimony of the truth, and, at the same time, speak words which should be for the edification of his body the church. Therefore, you will find, he proceeds to amplify, and still further illustrate and enforce, the principle of it. "Jesus, therefore, answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life." Here, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the first place, vindicates the sovereignty of his Father's prerogative; here he broadly states before them, and before us, that the very first step a sinner takes to Christ, yea, the very first desire that he feels in his heart after Christ, yea, the very first thought that leads him to Christ, is wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, and flows from the love of the Father. "Murmur not among yourselves; this is the truth, no man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

To hide this truth, which lies at the foundation of all truth, from the minds of his disciples and all men, our Lord felt would be dishonouring his Father, and therefore without a parable he declares it. He felt it would be cruel to

those whom he came to save, to leave them for one moment in the dark as to what were the feelings of his Father's mind towards them: and, therefore, here he sets out before them—"It is the love of the Father that my disciples have in their souls; therefore they come unto me. It is his will, and it is his testimony: my Father's love is the fountain-head of all the salvation that shall be made known in the earth: it flows from the love of God the Father: and therefore my people must learn how much they are indebted to him, or else how will they know how to glorify him? And how shall they know that they may come to him, unless they are persuaded that the love of his heart is towards them? And how shall they know they are to be brought to me, unless I tell them the Father does it? It is the Father that will bring them to me; it is my Father that will set before them the necessity of applying to me. Shall I, therefore, leave them in ignorance as to the feeling of my Father's mind? No; murmur not among yourselves. In vain do you lay down for yourselves creeds and systems of your own devising; it is to no purpose that you are thus arguing, that you are thus talking among yourselves, in order that you may ascertain how much goodness, or holiness, or wisdom, may be in you: it is to no purpose; you can do nothing; nothing can redeem you but my blood; nothing can bring you to my blood but the love of the Father. And shall you not know it? Yes; no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

Most unequivocally, beloved brethren, you see here is the declaration of the Son of God. Now, I ask you one question—Is it the duty of the minister of God to hide it, because some murmur against it, and because some go back from it, and will no more walk with it? What! a statement of the truth, which lies at the basis of your everlasting hopes of salvation, to be concealed from you, because the mind of man is so dark, the pride of his heart so great, that he is unwilling to surrender himself to the sovereign prerogative of God in this respect, whilst he yields to it in every other matter, is glad to depend upon it in the works of his providence, and relies upon it for his health and strength and food? He is willing to ascribe all to God, in reference to the body; but come to the principle of that salvation which involves his soul, and tell him that the God who commands the sun to shine, and the corn to grow, and the rain to fall, that that same God must give the dew of his Spirit, that it must be his doing, he must move first, and without that no man can come to Christ: I say, are we to hide this? God forbid, my fellow mortals, that it should be concealed from your view in this house of prayer. Much comfort, and much advantage will you derive from discoursing of it. May you receive the truth in simplicity as it is revealed, and not be so much afraid of these "*deep doctrines*," as superficial Christians call them. The deeper you strike your roots, the more luxuriant you will grow; and you cannot strike your roots deep in Christ, unless it be by the deep doctrines which he himself has been pleased to reveal.

Now here Christ first commenced his work: and in order that he might try and prove the principles of them that followed him, (and perhaps in order that he might purify the faith of them whose faith yet was pure,) he goes on to open out to them some more of the mysteries of godliness, setting before them the wonderful display of the power of Jesus in his work, as well as the love of God; and teaching them that if they really believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, if they really have the light of Christ in their souls, if they have eternal life, it is the work of the Father. They have the principle of a new life. He calls it "eternal

life," for this reason—because the Holy Ghost, which is the efficient cause of that life (I mean by the efficient cause, the power that produces it,) inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of that life, he is also the earnest and the foretaste of it; and therefore those who have the faith of Christ, have the principle of eternal life given them. And he shewed them besides this, how wonderful is the display of the goodness of God; for a new union is effected between him and his people; and as this new union is maintained it is a life, and the life is supported by constant communion and fellowship with him. And then in a moment changing the metaphor, or rather blending them together, making use of one that would more forcibly illustrate the truth that he had in hand, he says, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world, The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"

Now mark you, when Christ said, "I am the bread that came from heaven," it was only the unbelieving Jews that went back; the disciples received that: but when it comes to this point, when now Jesus led them, as it were, into the inner chamber of the temple, or into the sanctuary of his Father, within the veil, where the secret of the Lord is spiritually revealed unto them, in the opening of his covenant; I say, when Jesus Christ began to introduce the probe of his testimony into their hearts and consciences, searching for the spiritual feelings and the inward actings, and workings, and operations of his Father's Spirit in their souls, which characterize every true believer, in the soundness of his faith, and the feelings of his heart—then they were offended, then they "went back and walked no more with him."

Here then we come to the test; here we come to the grounds, and discover what are the causes of offence in those who have called themselves disciples, when they turn back. As far as I can judge, many and various as may be the motives of the unbelieving and corrupt heart for man to turn away from the ways of God and the word of truth, yet they appear from the context to be simply contained in the three following. Here is first of all the freeness and the sovereignty of the grace of God, as displayed in the whole process of man's salvation; that they cannot bear. Then, secondly, which comes still more closely home, there is this loud appeal of our Blessed Lord to an inward experience of that grace in their own souls. And, thirdly, the spiritual living evidences that every disciple of his exhibits, by which he approves himself to be a true disciple. When they heard that demanded of them which they had not,

when they heard the appeal made to a something living in the soul which they felt not, then they went back.

For you will find that these three evidences meet in the heart of every true disciple of Christ, and testify to him of the grace of God that is in him; and when these three meet not, when they are not found in the heart, and when they are urged on the heart and conscience as necessary evidences of salvation, and when, after the manner of Christ in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, they are brought home to the spirit of a man with that one word, "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood," unless there be all the spiritual experience and the inward exhibition of the truth that is set before you in that emblem, "Ye have no life in you;" then it is they take offence: they say, "It is a hard saying," and "go back and walk no more with him."

But, examine and observe how this truth is brought out by Christ in the whole subject which he illustrates. He first of all states, "I am the bread of life," and "I am come to give life to the world." Now, it follows, as a very necessary inference, that if Christ is "bread" and "life," and if he is "the life of the world," before we can have life we must have Christ, because out of him there is no life: that is clear to a demonstration. Well, then, there must be a union with him. He goes on and says, "It is true that, except it be thus, you never can be saved: unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, there is no life in you." Then, after that he goes on to say, "And, what is more than this, this life is a life that is sustained, and nourished, and supported, that is exhibited, and set forth in all its vigour, in all its spirituality, by the operations of the Holy Ghost." This is manifest, for it is stated, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; and as the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, even those who eat me shall live by me." There is an exhibition of the life of Christ in the life of man, as the outflowing and the source of the living spring that is within. And when there is coupled with all this experimental faith, this practical influence, remember it is all the Father's doing; and you must surrender yourselves to the Father, and must ascribe all the praise and glory to him, being content to receive it freely, without merit at his hands. "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him—except it be given to him of God." This system of soul-emptying, and of self-humbling, this laying the sinner low in the dust of humiliation, and leading him to be content to receive it all as a pensioner on the bounty of the Eternal God, this was the cause of the offence to those who went away.

Now, to conclude, what lesson did that providence of the manna read out to the Israelites? The manna did not grow in the wilderness; they did not plant it, they did not sow the seed thereof; it was not given to other nations, but it was given to them, and it was given to them from heaven; sent down from heaven by the God of heaven. What ought they to have learned from this? Every day they had it, a memorial of God's unmerited goodness towards them; the provision was abundant, and the food was nutrimental. Do we not see that Christ is exhibited in that manna? The gift of God is eternal life, and that life is in his Son. God gives us it. Now, we must begin with first principles. Did God give us his Son? Let us go no further back than the present generation, is there any individual in the present generation can say that, eighteen hundred years ago, God gave his Son to be the life of the world, because he saw any thing

meritorious or deserving in him? Did he see any thing meritorious in the individual, why he should make him to differ from another? No: you would spurn the idea that he did. Well, then, wherefore did he bestow his grace? There must be a cause somewhere; a motive for this must be found; and where is it to be found but in the breast of God? Therefore it is the operation of the love of God, of the will of God: "Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." God the Father is the prime source of our light and our salvation, and, in giving his Son for us he proved the fact. And whereas Christ himself emphatically declares, "No man can come to me except it be given him of my Father," he does it in order that all his disciples in all future ages, who may have the faith of Christ within them, and experience that they have the life of Christ within them, may know for a certainty that they have the testimony of the Father's love that gave it them, that they may have confidence towards God, that they may be supported and strengthened in the wilderness and in the warfare, and rest on his eternal arm.

Now, why should we not urge this upon the attention of all, especially on the people of God? What is there that is fearful in it? Is it not a matter of consolation to know what is the disposition of the mind of God the Father? And this is not a cause of offence to those only who are merely nominal disciples, but there are not a few of the true people of God who are afraid of this truth. But nevertheless, as it is the truth, it is our business to declare it; and as it is a comforting truth, it must be maintained; as it involves your interest and your good it ought to be pressed upon you. I know not why it is that men should be disposed to give their assent to a full and free grace salvation, and yet hold it encumbered with so many terms and conditions which render it a contradiction. They acknowledge the doctrine, but they do not give a full assent to the whole: they cannot deny that it is revealed, but they are very unwilling to receive it in its full latitude; and therefore they say it ought to be very delicately handled and sparingly dealt out. But it is the truth of God, and it must be fully stated as the ground-work of all salvation. If it is to be gently maintained—if that which involves the strength of a believer's standing is to be but sparingly dealt out, what will be the consequence? Why we see that many of the people of God are still left in their weakness, because they do not look forward to the springs from whence the streams proceed; and therefore they are always unsettled, and in every emergency and temptation they are thrown back on themselves, because they are in the habit of beginning there. Thus you shall see in some, that if their hearts have been led out in prayer, and they have found it to be a solemn season, they fancy they are going to obtain a great good; on the other hand, there has been coldness and deadness in their spirits, while they have been striving to hold communion with God, and they suppose they obtain no blessing: so they are making that the medium. But we are not to make use of these as the purchased price of the blessings of heaven. No; if you have enlargements of soul to God you will value them, and if you view the truth, according to the analogy of faith, you will bless God for it; it will fill your hearts with love to God, and it will be the testimony of that love which heretofore you expected to purchase. Faith, we know, is subject to perpetual variations, strong to-day, weak to-morrow—light one day, almost darkness another. The firmness of believers' standing, and the strength of their hope, therefore, depend upon these things. If they once seek after the experience of the love of Christ in their own souls, look to the source, and see that it flows from

Him that loved them ; then, come whatever may, being firmly fixed on a rock, they will be animated to all holiness and all devotedness unto God.

Bear this only in mind, then, that the cause which gave offence to those who were only nominally disciples was the statement which Jesus Christ gave of his Father ; the freeness of the grace of the Father and the appeal that he made to their personal experience.

Now, beloved brethren, permit me to ask, What think you of these things? What think you of the love of the Father being the fountain-head of your salvation? Are you acknowledging that and renouncing every other hope? I speak to the unconverted and say, What think you of these representations? If you deny it, you deny not the word and the truth of man, but you deny God's word and God's truth. If God be right, then you must be wrong; and if you have not that which you have heard herein stated on the part of Christ, there can be no life in you. Now let me earnestly entreat you to give up your own sentiments and your own feelings, and your own apprehensions of truth, to the truth as it is stated in the word of God ; and let me earnestly implore you to remember that God is love ; the fountain-head of love is the Father ; none can bring you to Christ for salvation but the Father. Come, therefore, to the Father ; through Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life ; make mention of his name ; and earnestly intreat the Father that you may be taught of God : for it is written, "And they shall be all taught of God:" therefore all that are taught come to him. Trifle not with these things.

Now are you offended? Do you say, "It is a hard saying?" It is the saying of God: it is not the truth of man, it is God's truth, and if you are offended, you are offended with God's statement. And will you go back? And will you turn your back from that truth? Will you turn your back on the gospel of God because it does not comport with your ideas? Beware how you turn your back on the light. Consider these things ; meditate upon them, and pray over them ; and may the blessing of God rest upon all your investigations, and lead you to the possession of that truth which is the pearl of great price, and your everlasting salvation.

## GOD'S TESTIMONY TO THE FAITH OF ENOCH

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REV. JAMES PARSONS,

TOTTENHAM COURT CHAPEL, JANUARY 19, 1834.

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“ For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”— HEB. xi. 5.

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THE methods, my brethren, by which the children of men have become partakers of the spiritual blessings of salvation have in all periods of the world been precisely and exactly the same. The dispensations and economies of divine mercy have indeed sometimes presented to us not inconsiderable varieties; but those varieties refer to the manner and the extent of those communications, and not to the essential principles of them; nor should we observe them without discovering, that they uniformly exhibit one foundation, as being that on which the hopes of men must always repose. It is delightful to remember, that there is “ one Lord and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”

The perfect uniformity of the method of obtaining redeeming mercy, is very powerfully displayed in the important epistle, from a portion of which we have now to address you; the main object, you observe, being, to shew that the preceding economies of religion, both patriarchal and levitical, were only shadows and fleeting types of the gospel; intended to set forth, and finally to be resolved into the same principles of truth. Without adverting to many examples of this fact, you cannot read the contents of this important chapter without perceiving how distinctly and remarkably it is displayed, exhibiting all the heirs of salvation in different ages of the world, as being governed by one impulse, and as being guided in one path to heaven. It is thus, my brethren, that we who live in the last days, have a deep and profound interest in their history, deriving hence no small portion of that instruction and excitement, by which we are to be urged yet more and more in our march towards glory, honour, and immortality.

The verse, my brethren, from which we are now to address you, is a record concerning Enoch, a saint who lived previous to the visitation of the general deluge, whose piety, in that age of darkness and corruption, was eminent and enduring, and who was especially summoned to his reward by some mitigated and mysterious change, with which the King of Terrors had no concern, and which was a peculiar testimony of the approbation of his God.

The history of this remarkable and eminent individual is recorded with extreme brevity in the book of Genesis: “ Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Here, you remark, it is more fully stated, although still with brevity: “ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death;



and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." In the discourse which is now to be delivered, it is not my design to employ your attention upon the individual case of the Patriarch himself, though his character must of course be referred to in the illustration we are about to render; our grand object will be to state the general attributes of the character he sustained as one that is equally sustained by all who are true saints of the living God, and which must be sustained by all men if they are to receive the eternal happiness of heaven. "He had this testimony, that he pleased God."

We propose to examine, by what agency this state of existence is secured; in what characteristics this state of existence consists; and by what advantages this state of existence is commended.

First, we propose to consider, BY WHAT AGENCY THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS SECURED. It must always be regarded as of the first consequence, to ascertain the sources of human characters and human habits; and to find out, as far as we possibly can, from what sources they originate, and to what supports they are indebted for their continuance, their permanence, and their stability. For many purposes it is important to ascertain, and to acquire information, with respect to what we may call the secondary virtues of man; that is, those virtues which do not affect his relation towards God, and his interests for eternity: but, infinitely more important respecting those dispositions of mind which tend towards futurity, and which are intended to seal the state of the human soul in happiness or misery for ever.

It is then above all things important to know, how men are led to please God. And here, my brethren, it must be observed, that men never attain to the state of existence which is now to be described, whilst they are left to the ordinary operation of their own faculties, and governed by the ordinary impulses of their own passions and desires. While men remain in their original condition, under the government of the primitive tendencies of their nature, they are in fact the uniform and positive objects of divine disapprobation and displeasure. God, we are informed, is a being of pure and spotless holiness; a being of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look at iniquity: man, on the contrary, is a polluted being, having a depraved heart, a heart that is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and practically indulging in those things which correspond with his heart, and which in all things are hostile to the character of the Creator, and the holiness and spirituality of his law.

This view, my brethren, of the relation existing between man and God is not a theory announced as the result of reasoning; it is a doctrine resting on the truth of the inspired record, which having been dictated by God himself, cannot by possibility err or deceive. Now the Sacred Writings uniformly describe our species as being in a state of hostility to God, resting beneath his displeasure and his frown. We read that men are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them," that they are enemies in their minds by wicked works: and we are informed in one statement, which describes the general condition of man, that "to be carnally minded"—that carnal mindedness being nothing more than the government of the heart by the fleshly lusts and passions of unconverted nature—"to be carnally minded is death"—that death being at once the punishment, the proof, and the result of the reality of the displeasure of God: and then it is added, (many of you I hope will

remember that solemn statement in the eighth chapter of the **Romans**, it is added in connexion with the words of our text, as the solemn and conclusive reason—"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The plain testimony of inspiration, my brethren, both that which is derived from express declaration, and that which is derived from the general import and influence of its principles, all combine to ratify this solemn assertion, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." No, and let the men who advocate the original purity and dignity of human nature, the men who are accustomed to assert, that nothing more is demanded than the influence of the human will for the purpose of bringing man into such a state as shall secure the approbation of Jehovah, and the final salvation of his soul know—"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." No; that God looks down with perfect disgust and abhorrence on the perversion of the life and the impurity of the heart, and he has already pronounced that tremendous curse of judicial equity which, if it be finally fulfilled, banishes man from his presence, and blasts him with misery for ever. We cannot permit too deep an impression of this fact on our hearts, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

This fact, then, my brethren, that men in their own light never can arrive at a state which is pleasing to God, having been scripturally established, we are prepared to advert to a corresponding fact, which may also be scripturally established, namely, that men are brought into a state of existence that is pleasing to God, they are placed in it, and continued in it, solely and entirely by the exertion of the power of the Spirit of God himself. This doctrine cannot but be made to constitute a paramount and prominent part of the Christian ministry; no apology can at any time be needful for the repetition and reiteration of it; because it furnishes the only correct explanation as to the source and origin of that character on which there rests the light of heavenly love, and because the recognition of it is absolutely essential to escape the terrors of an overwhelming judgment.

Adverting, then, to the scriptural truth to which we now refer, you will remember what David acknowledges, when he ascribes to the Almighty the regeneration of the will and character, from whence alone he could expect to derive the immortal salvation of his soul, when he exclaims, for instance, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." We find that God himself announces the same fact, in the promise which he made with regard to the advent of the new covenant: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." And again: "I will give them a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." And we find again, that our Lord Jesus Christ expresses the same fact when he announces "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, also, the inspired Apostle has informed us, that "it is the law of the Spirit of life which makes us free from the law of sin and death;" that

we are saved, "not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy, he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." And, in one word, they secure by the Holy Spirit the regeneration of all those virtues, and all those graces, by which the new creation is alone moulded and matured.

The time, my friends, does not allow us to remark at length on the evidence which we have afforded us on this most momentous matter; on the source of it we would just observe, that all persons from the beginning, and in the very earliest ages, who have pleased God, that all persons who please God now, and that all persons who shall please God in the generations yet to come, must stand indebted for their character, and prospects, and hopes, entirely to the blessed influence of the Spirit of God on their souls.

Now I lead you up through all inferior processes, to the footstool of His majesty, and solemnly commit, and solemnly leave you there; beseeching you not to depart until you have breathed your fervent and importunate supplications, that He who is the life and source of all that is good and excellent and holy, may come down and establish his temple in your hearts; and without also presenting to him your tribute of humble, lowly adoration, renouncing yourselves, and ascribing to him the glory. Man is led to a state in which he pleases God, only by the sovereign agency of the Eternal Spirit of Jehovah.

We must now pass forward to consider more at length the second enquiry which was proposed; **BY WHAT CHARACTERISTICS THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS DISTINGUISHED.** This, you will observe, is an enquiry which properly and really arises from the consideration of the former.

You will observe in the first place, that this state of existence comprehends faith in the divine testimony; secondly, obedience to the divine commands; and thirdly, gratitude for the divine goodness.

First, it comprehends *faith in the divine testimony.*

It is to be judged, my brethren, that God having revealed to man a testimony, or in other words, having announced to him, by an unerring record, certain spiritual principles, as the unchangeable verities of truth, places us under obligation to believe that testimony, and those truths. And it is to be judged further, that as, on the one hand, unbelief excites his disapprobation, so, on the other hand, faith is connected with his pleasure. You will remark, that in describing the case of Enoch, the apostle states the exercise of faith as being that which peculiarly brought him into that state of existence which was pleasing to God. "By faith," that is through the power and exercise of faith in divine truth as at that time it was revealed—"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." That is, he pleased God by his faith. In the subsequent verse there is a statement of a more general nature as to the absolute necessity of faith for bringing men into that state which is pleasing to Jehovah: for "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God" (in order to please him) "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If there were no other testimony within the whole limits of Scripture, you cannot but perceive that this declaration conclusively states the matter—that man in order to be a possessor of the divine favour, must first be a believer in divine truth.

Faith has a peculiar connexion with the approbation or pleasure of God, in consequence of its being the ordained means of imputing to man the merit of a justifying righteousness, that in itself is sufficient to secure his final acceptance before God as the Judge of the universe. You are perfectly aware, that the principal operation of the divine testimony relates to the provision of an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, accomplished by God in the fulness of time by the death of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this testimony, to a certain extent, was declared from the very beginning. The institution of animal sacrifices, which we have reason to believe took place immediately on the fall of man, was intended to foreshadow and prefigure the great atonement to be offered on the summit of Calvary; and the offering of those animal sacrifices by enlightened and pious men from the beginning must be regarded as an act of faith in the atonement of Christ, to which they refer, and from which alone their efficacy and value were derived.

Without entering at large on this subject, you will perceive, if you refer to the preceding verse, that Abel is mentioned as exercising faith in connexion with the propitiatory sacrifice: "By faith"—that is, in the promise of the coming Messiah—"Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Cain offered to God a sacrifice which could have no connexion with the propitiation for sin; it being merely the flowers and the fruits of the ground. Abel offered unto God a sacrifice which could have connexion with the coming propitiation for sin, being the lambs of the flock, as typical of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world: "by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh:" or, the faith of Abel, under the influence of which he offered an annual sacrifice, in typical reference to the great fulfilment of the propitiation of Calvary, is an example which speaks instruction to men for their guidance through all ages and all periods of the world. And, my brethren, as this was the faith of Abel, we cannot but conclude that this was also the faith of Enoch, the faith of Noah, the faith of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the faith of all those who in early times were numbered among the servants of God. And now that the shadows and the allegories of early times have all passed away, and that atonement of the cross, which was "the end of the law for righteousness," is exhibited to us in all the plenitude and lustre of clear and unveiled and unrivalled majesty, it becomes men to regard that as the object of augmenting faith and confidence, while the generations of time shall last.

I have already referred to the imputed righteousness of Christ, as essential to the acceptance of man in the presence of God, and now would state more distinctly, that that righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, arising from the meritorious death which he suffered as the propitiation for sin; and by faith is it that that righteousness is imputed, so that we are accepted by the Father. And if I speak to any persons who have had low and inadequate ideas of this doctrine, let me refer them to the two memorable passages which are contained in the 3d and 4th chapters of the Romans: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight"—("justified," you observe, is the state which is pleasing to God)—"for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God" (or the way of righteousness) "without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:

being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." So in the fourth chapter, the fifth and following verses: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Then follows the example of Abraham, to whom righteousness was imputed; and at the close of the chapter, follows these delightful statements—for delightful they must be to every Christian heart: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I trust, my friends, I have now succeeded in establishing the principle with regard to the connexion of faith with the pleasing of God, by the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let no person now retire from the house of God, saying that he is in ignorance of the mode of connexion between faith and the acceptance which we receive through the Beloved; and let every one who regards that connexion aright, make it his earnest determination, that he will embrace to the full extent the testimony which God has given of Him who died and rose again; that in this manner God may be pleased in life, and in death, and in judgment, and for ever.

Now, secondly, it is to be observed, that this state of existence also comprehends *obedience to the divine commandments*.

It cannot be justly questioned by any one, that the pleasure of God in man, is connected with the conformity of man in heart and in life to the laws and to the commandments of God. The Being who, by the necessity of his moral nature, abhors iniquity, by the same necessity of his moral nature, must delight in holiness. Now although the *faith* of Enoch is especially and significantly set forth as being that which connects him with the approbation or pleasure of his God, we must contend from general principles, that *holiness*, which was the evidence and the *only sure testimony* of his faith, was connected with the same state of existence by which he became so eminent and so distinguished amongst men. Thus the writer of the book of Genesis, in describing the character of Enoch, refers to his practical piety; "Enoch *walked* with God;" and his walking with God we cannot but believe was an object of gratulation to the Almighty, in an age of dark and universal corruption, when we are told on account of that corruption, "it grieved him and repented him to the heart that he had made man upon the earth."

The connexion between practical holiness and the pleasing of God is set forth in several distinct and important passages of Scripture, of which it may be proper for us now to remind you. If I am speaking to any among you who are fond of doctrine and careless of practice, and are sometimes disposed to exalt the claims of the one to the exclusion of the other, let that person seriously consider the statements we would now refer to, when God is describing the character of

those persons who would have an interest in his covenant: "Thus saith the Lord to those who choose the things that please me and take hold of my sabbaths, even to them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." Observe the language of the apostle Paul in Colossians, i. 9: "For this cause we also, since the day that we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Then again in 1 Thessalonians, iv. 1, 2: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." See also the language of the Apostle John, iii. 22: " whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight." Thus distinctly is the connexion between holiness and the pleasing of God settled and established.

But one thing must be remarked by the way of caution. God is not pleased with man's holiness because there is in man's holiness any thing of original or independent merit which so commends it to God; he is pleased with it because he contemplates in it his own work; just as he was pleased when, after the creation had been accomplished, when it came from the hand of his omnipotence, he is said to have looked on it, and pronounced that it was all "very good:" he is pleased with it, because it sheds his own lustre, and reflects back the clearness and the beauty of his own perfections: he is pleased with it because it advances the revenue of his glory: he is pleased with it because it advances and secures the happiness of those in whom it dwells. My Christian brethren who are anxious to please God, and to bind man to man, what a solemn call is there on your part to the cultivation of those practical graces which are so intimately connected with the approbation and the delight of the Eternal Father; with what anxiety should you resolve to pursue " whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" and be determined that you will be "filled with all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

Again, further remark, that *this state of existence comprehends gratitude* for the divine goodness. In some respects, it might be proper to consider gratitude as forming a part of obedience; but, for several reasons, it seems proper and prudent to refer to it separately.

Now, all persons, who have an interest in the work of the Saviour by faith, and who, by the Spirit of God, are enabled to follow in a course of obedience to his commandments, are justly expected, as the legitimate concomitants of this faith and obedience, to render thanksgiving and prayer to the Father for the goodness and kindness he has bestowed. The offering of praise, my brethren, by believing men to God, cannot but be pleasing in his sight; it is so with the gratitude which is offered in heaven, and it cannot but be so with the gratitude offered on earth. Amongst modern Christians there is far too much forgetfulness of the propriety of offering praise as connected with the pleasure and approbation of God. We receive our mercies almost as matters of course, both our mercies of providence and our mercies of grace; and when we look forward

even to the high and splendid consummation of eternity, where all present mercy is to be immortalized in perfect and immaculate glory, there is scarcely a stirring of the heart, and it is but a whisper of thanksgiving that issues and emanates from the lips. To show you that I have not been guilty of introducing any thing arbitrarily and without reason, I will refer you, as under the preceding part of our subject, to a class of passages showing that the exercise of gratitude for divine goodness is especially and most importantly associated with the divine pleasure. In Psalm, l. 14, David gives an exhortation: "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High:" and in the last verse, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." In Psalm, lxxxix. 30, 31, is the following conclusive passage: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. this also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." Turn again to the language of the Apostle in Ephes. v. 19, 20: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:" and this must be connected with the tenth verse, in which he speaks of what is "pleasing and acceptable to the Lord." And, again, in Heb. xiii. 15, 16: "By Christ, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

My brethren, we must therefore believe, with regard to the honoured individual whose history is now before us, that in an age of universal corruption his prayers ascended loudly and sincerely to his God; and although no record of the manner in which those prayers were offered has descended to us in these distant dregs of time, we cannot but believe that his primitive melodies were such as issued from the harp of the son of Jesse, and such as were sung in the words of the prophecies of Isaiah, to that God who remembered men in their low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever.

My Christian brethren, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, your prayers especially must ascend to the Almighty. Never can God witness in your bosoms the delight of gratitude; never can he listen to the expressions of that gratitude from any lips, especially as proved by the practical holiness of life, without a mysterious and divine pleasure being at once produced in his mind. And when, my brethren, you connect this with faith, that your gratitude is pleasing to Him who made you, who has preserved you, and has renovated you, and will at last redeem you, will you not take shame to yourselves for the past inadequacy of your emotions, and determine that you will continue in thanksgivings and praise, until you shall praise him worthily in those anthems whose music shall endure for ever? O, my brethren, let us take the language of the Psalmist of Israel as it is sung in modern poetry—

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath;  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my noblest powers:  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
And immortality endures."

It is thus that we arrive at the consummation of character, and obtain a testimony that we please God.

We now advance, after this exhibition of the characteristics of this state of existence, to consider, as we proposed, **BY WHAT ADVANTAGES THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS COMMENDED.**

I speak to none so dull of apprehension as not to be prepared for the announcement now to be made, that those who please God are placed in a state of privilege the highest that man as a being can enjoy. Grant me your attention whilst those privileges are summed up in a few particulars.

First: *those who exist in a state that is pleasing to God are privileged with near and intimate communion with God.* We recur to the individual, the patriarch, on whose history we found our present address: it is clear that he held the enjoyment, to which we now refer, in a signal and remarkable manner: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him;" not merely signifies his practical conformity to the rule appointed and laid down by God, but it signifies the fact, that he walked with God as a friend, and that God walked with him as a friend: they are figuratively described as being companions on a delightful journey.

My brethren, the privilege which was possessed by him is possessed by all; nor is there one who by the influence of the Holy Ghost has exercised faith in the divine testimony, obedience to the divine commands, and gratitude for the divine goodness, to whom God does not come down in his spiritual tenderness as well as his spiritual majesty, and makes himself known, so that we say, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked with us by the way." In Ephesians, ii. 18, for instance, after presenting the great doctrine of the reconciliation, he says, "Through him we both" (Jews and Gentiles) "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." And then, for the purpose of shewing the connexion between holiness and communion, he looks for a moment, as it were, upon the splendid Temple of Diana at Ephesus, whose beauty and splendour caused it to be reckoned as one of the wonders of the world, and whose compactness of parts is mentioned as being but a faint representation of the union and communion of the saints of the living God. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." And again, in the following chapter he says, that by the eternal purpose he purposed in Christ Jesus, "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." In Hebrews, x. 19, there is another of these conclusive and delightful statements: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," (here the reference is to the acts of the priesthood in the Jewish temple)—"by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And to close these quotations, the Apostle John, in the first chapter of his first epistle, speaks in this manner from minister to people: "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."



Let the worldling, the man of ungodliness, or pollution, or lust, scoff and scorn at the enthusiasm and fanatical heat of the Christian, when he speaks of the fact, that pleasing God he has the enjoyment of spiritual communion and fellowship with God. My brethren, we have the witness within ourselves, of the treasure which we possess in this world of that spiritual communion, which others may deride and scorn, a treasure which we would not part with for worlds. No, my brethren, we regard it as a cluster of the grapes of Eschol which have been brought into the wilderness; we regard it as a draught that is taken from the river of the water of life; we regard it as a flower that is plucked from the amaranthine bowers of Paradise; we regard it as the dawning of the very day of glory, the beginning of heaven below: and while we look at the toilsome pursuits of others over things which perish in the using, who shall refuse to pronounce—

Let others stretch their arms like seas,  
And grasp in all the shore;  
Grant me the visits of thy grace,  
And I desire no more."

Secondly; those who exist in this state, besides the enjoyments to which we have now adverted, *possess also the consolations and supports of God in all times of difficulty and of danger.* My brethren, we have times of affliction. That we please God does not exempt us from sorrow; "Many are the afflictions of the righteous:" "They that will live godly must suffer persecution." Often have tears fallen from your eyes; often has the darkness gathered over your steps; often has the bitterness swelled as gall in your own hearts; and yet pleasing God, my brethren, we have the confidence of adequate support, by which even those afflictions are rendered blessings in disguise. The promise was made by the Almighty to his ancient church, and it is repeated to us, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Jesus tells us, that "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and we know "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But, my brethren, there is one time of difficulty and danger beyond the afflictions of our temporal lives, which awaits us; I mean, the hour of death. Enoch so pleased God, that as a miracle and a marvel he did not die. He was so eminent, so firm, so signally pure and elevated in that age of corruption and darkness, that he was exempted from the ordinary allotment of mortality; he did not see death: "He was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." We cannot, my brethren, form any remote conjecture as to the manner of the departure of that great and that eminent saint; we can only imagine, from the analogy of the cases, that his translation was similar to the departure of the prophet Elijah, who, after cleaving the waters of Jordan, in the presence of his son in the work of prophecy, ascended into heaven in a chariot with horses of fire, anticipating and typifying the ascension of the Redeemer, his body undergoing a change from what was natural to what was spiritual in its passage, so that he at once entered into the fulness of the beatific vision of God.

My brethren, "we must needs die, and be like water spilt upon the ground,

which cannot be gathered up again." We are all tending thither; many steps, my brethren, have we taken since we entered into the house of God this morning. Every beating of your heart, every thrill of your pulse, is but another, and another, and yet another, advance towards death. Since I began the sentence we are nearer to it, and so forward. In the prospect of this departure, it becomes us to remember how delightful are those exhibitions of comfort which God has provided. "This God," we are told—"This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." If you turn to Hebrews, ii. 14, you will there perceive this, that the work of the Saviour is connected with the conquest of death and the removal of its terrors, by which it has been in former times surrounded. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." And now look forward: the darkness of death is dispelled; the sting of death is extracted; the terrors of death are crushed; the waters of death are dried; and we have but to pass, as in a secure channel, under the guidance of Him who is the priest of the new covenant, to "an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away."

And thus are we brought to the last particular to which we would now refer you, that those who exist in the state which is now described, *have the security of eternal and perfect happiness in heaven*. Pleasing God has an especial connexion with the joy of God. The righteousness of Christ is to exhibit this especial feature in the great day, when the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened, and when we who have been accepted in the Beloved are there to stand before his throne, to be welcomed as faithful servants, who shall enter into the joy of their Lord. And mark, my brethren, what then follows: they shall be "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All who have pleased God in this world shall meet in the glory of God in another. Sin, sorrow, sickness, fatigue, all the elements of anxiety and woe that gather so thickly around the sphere of time, shall be extinguished and destroyed, and in the fulness of joy, and the pleasures which are for evermore, shall they be for ever with the Lord. This we affirm, is the result, of having the testimony that we have pleased God.

And now, my hearers, let me remind you of the general outlines of the important subject to which we have referred you. The pleasing of God is not a state of existence attained by any man in a state of unrenewed and unregenerate nature; it arises only from the renovation and sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit of the Father. The character which is formed by this high state of existence comprehends faith in the divine testimony, that testimony having an especial respect to the sacrifice for sin; it comprehends obedience to the divine commands, and gratitude for the divine goodness: and all who are elevated to it have the enjoyment of nearer and intimate communion with God, possess his consolations and supports in times of difficulty and danger, and are finally to receive the perfection of happiness amidst the immortal enjoyments of heaven. "For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

There is but one remark to which I would call your attention in concluding this address, and it is simply this—the importance, the vast and the unspeakable importance, of pleasing God. You have heard with, at least, I trust, ordinary attention the development with which Scripture has now presented you: and is not the improvement already formed in your minds, that *nothing is so momentous for you as to be numbered among those who please God?* This assembly is divided into two compartments—those who please God, and those who displease him. There is no neutral ground, no territory to which appertains neither one character nor the other. A great gulf spiritually separates the two, those who possess his approbation, and those who inherit his displeasure. My Christian brethren and sisters, it needs not, after the statement that has been made, that an application of a more formal nature should be made to you. But those of you who have entered within these walls in the character of careless and unconverted persons, must be called, for a single moment, to contemplate your position alike for time and for eternity. You are estranged from the attributes which are essential to acceptance with God. You do not please God. Is this nothing, my brethren? From what privileges are you excluded! You have no intercourse with him, no protection in seasons of difficulty and danger, no prospect of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It is enough—you please not God; and you, therefore, have pronounced on you the sentence of banishment and exclusion from the Lord. And, oh, my brethren, when the day shall arrive, to which we have adverted, when you must stand before God for judgment, can you be content that then it shall be your character that you do not please God? What would it matter, if popular applause had wreathed around you its powerful incense? What would it matter, if poetry had told of your fame in its flowing numbers, and if music had chaunted it in its very sweetest and most harmonious song? What would it matter, if history had inscribed your exploits upon its well-nigh imperishable pages; and if monuments of brass, or adamant, or marble, had been reared to perpetuate your memory? Pleasing not God, my brethren, all these heaped together, would be but like fuel, for the flame of the final conflagration. Then, bare and naked, without a decoration, and without an ornament, and without a plea, would you stand before the bar of the Eternal, with this one sad and fatal consciousness—*God is angry! God is angry!* Then thunders will roar, then lightnings will flash, then storms and tempests will rend and resound, and then the universe will be but one scene of dark and fearful convulsion; amid the agonizings of which, fiends will grasp and remove you from the presence of God, and from the glory of his Father, into realms where he has forgotten to be gracious.

My friends, whether after that development of character which has been rendered, whether after the prospects of judgment which have been appointed, it can be the resolution of any to depart from this house of God, yet beneath the frown of his displeasure I know not. I do trust that a mightier spirit than the instrumentality which has come from the lips of the preacher, is breathing and working among you; and that not a few of those who entered, having around them the darkness of the curse, shall depart having around them the dawn of light, the favour of immortal day. Brethren, one and all, let this be our ambition: not to please the rich or the great, or the mighty—not to please the multiplied forms of human society in any form of combination or existence whatsoever; but to please God. And let us aspire, that when our spirits shall have departed to those worlds, where we shall know the reality of their hap-

piness who have held this character, devout men shall carry our dust to the tomb, making great lamentations over us, and then wiping away the tears of nature's sorrow, exult in the memory of the excellence and the piety which we have left, and departing to chisel on the monument that covers our remains—“*Before*”—not he was translated—“*Before he died, he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*” And oh, my brethren, may that God grant, that when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised to judgment, as those who have pleased him we shall stand at his right hand, to be welcomed, and to be blessed for ever and ever.

## CHARACTER OF SAUL OF TARSUS CONFIRMATORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

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THE history of Saul of Tarsus has often been cited with nappy success in confirmation of Christianity. Part of the evidence which it supplies is common to other narratives of conversion; but a greater part is of a character quite distinct. As, in all, it is competent to set over against each other *mistake* and *deception*, so we might in this show the impossibility of such a mind being seduced into error or tempted to imposture. If the *first*, then the most masculine mind, the most powerful counter-impression, a judgment most cautious in its use of evidence, a sobriety most jealous over each exercise of imagination, proofs always abundant and always augmenting, sign and suasion, are no presumptions of truth, no means of certainty. The Gospel is either unsusceptible of support from reasoning, or our intellect is unfitted to weigh that reasoning. If the *second*, we must transform the human being, and conceive of selfishness covetous of sacrifice, ambition intent upon dishonour, pleasure wrapt in austerity, hypocrisy sighing for death.

His accession to the Christian side derives much of its singularity from his hostility—hostility neither ordinary nor in the least degree controlled. It could only, at any time, have been exasperated into fiercer fury by the suggestion that he should soon be won to the number of the proselytes and defenders already enlisted. Had augur or soothsayer hazarded the prediction, no improbabilities could have occurred to the hearer more blind and excessive.

If any name sounded dreadful in the ear of the first Christian, it was that of "the young man who kept the raiment of the first martyr, Stephen." That name was a brand of cruelty, it was a voice of blood. It passed forth as an omen, as when nations have beheld the meteor-sword flashing above them. In vain do we search for any redeeming virtue, any exculpating circumstance, in his character and history. The ordinary palliatives of youth, temperament, inexperience, supply the actual aggravation. A rank maturity of evil contrasts itself to his youth, a phlegmatic steadiness of malignity does violence to his temperament, and an inventive redundance of aggressions more than makes up for the disadvantages of inexperience. He settles into a cool and gloating ferocity, he revolves new and more dire schemes of persecution. He can revel in the carnage of a promiscuous massacre with an unshrinking eye and unrelenting heart. He never seems warmed by a generous enthusiasm. There is none of that fine sentiment, that moral poetry, which sometimes has retrieved the sallies of an extravagant zeal. His acquittal of dishonesty is the condemnation of his cruelty.

And if any conversion appeared placed beyond the limit of hope and all reasonable expectation, if any could be termed "too hard for God," or lying within those moral impossibilities which he allows because they establish his perfection of nature and rule of will, who would have wavered to pronounce that it was this? Sooner might it have been surmised that Caiphas would have

“looked on him whom he had pierced,” and, in bitter compunction, would have rent his ephod, and cast his tiara into the dust. Sooner might it have been anticipated that Pilate would have worshipped that king whom neither the zeal, nor cohort, nor death itself, could imprison in the tomb. And even when the thousands of the populace, which had insulted him in every form, spit on him in the hall, and jested with him on the cross, are “pricked to the heart,” it does not impress us as so strange, nor does its announcements strike us as so unlikely, as that this stern foe should pause, that this fell monster should soften.

His earliest prepossessions would render the contingency of such an event most minute and distant. The blood of his high ancestry would rebel against the change. His education at the feet of a Rabbi would confirm his attachment to “the Jew’s religion,” would enable him to defend it with adroitness. His sect, as a Pharisee, would induce the pride of a more strictly ceremonial consistency. Bigotry would call in public favour to its aid, for he was esteemed the champion of his nation and his faith, of his country and his God.

Persecution could not find a more ready instrument. He enters into its service with an unparalleled quickness and force of congeniality. He is formed to it at once. He puts forth all its perfect instincts and fangs. Who does not tremble as he proceeds? “Damascus is waxed feeble and turneth herself to flee.” The terror, scourge, and spoiler of the church—the pestilence withering all into a desert—the conflagration “setting on fire the course of nature, and itself set on fire of hell”—the star of disastrous influence, which falling to the earth, converts its waters into gall and blood—to what can he be compared? How long shall he be suffered to make havoc of the saints? Will not “God avenge his own elect?” “Are not his eyes upon the truth?” Where sleeps his thunder? “Judgment slumbereth not.” The rebel falls: amidst his most intoxicating dream, his most applauded career—in “the greatness of his way”—he falls! Jesus of Nazareth has struck down his foe. Well has the bolt sped, true has the arrow flown! But that light streams not to blast, that voice upbraids not to condemn, that power smites not to destroy. Oh, what a change has moved over his heart! What “a new creature!” He weeps. He abhors himself. “Behold he prayeth.” The hands which “haled men and women to prison,” which a few hours ago received the fatal commission, and until this moment grasps the murderous weapon, are now penitently clasped, and suppliantly uplifted! The knees which shook not when he was surrounded by the wailings of mothers and children, whom he made widows and orphans, now pliant as the infant sinew, are bent in earnest transfixing prayer! The eyes, no longer bent in moody scorn, or shooting with wrathful glance, now overflow with tears! The lips which “breathed out threatenings and slaughter,” now utter the cry of shame and surrender, “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” What a conquest! What a spectacle! So sudden, so enduring! “Where is the fury of the oppressor?” It is a trophy of grace. It is a marvel of Omnipotence. “The lamb may lie down with the lion, the sucking child may play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child may put his hand on the cockatrice’s den.”

REV. R. W. HAMILTON

## THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

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REV. J. BURNET,

2. AGLE STREET CHAPEL, RED LION SQUARE, JANUARY 15, 1834.

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“Thy word is truth.”—JOHN, xvii. 17.

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THE subject, my friends, that has been assigned to me in the opening of this course of lectures, is “The Authenticity of the Scriptures.” No subject could be more important, as it is the very foundation of the religion of Jesus Christ. At the same time, perhaps, there are few subjects connected with the importance of religion that it would be more difficult fully to develop in the length of time usually appropriated to a single discourse. There are many points connected with this subject that are very far from being precisely adapted to popular discussion. The difficulties of time, therefore, and the abstruse character of many of the points connected with the question, will prevent my going into it at large. I shall, therefore, offer you some observations in each department as I conceive may be best calculated for the object for which these lectures were established, and leave these to your own judgments, upon which you may exercise your meditations, and by which, perhaps, you may find assistance in directing your inquiries at your leisure.

The subject, however, will appear more important if we reflect that, if this Book be the truth of God, if it be the very result of a divine and an infallible inspiration, if its statements shall be sustained by all the attributes of heaven, if it must stand at the last and final decision of the world’s doom, and if by it every one whom I now address must stand or fall for ever, no question, surely, can be more important than the question of its authenticity.

Understanding, by the authenticity of the Scriptures, that they are what they profess to be—truly a revelation from God—I shall endeavour to lay before you the views I should be disposed to take of the means by which you may ascertain how far the Word of God may be found to be authentic, and how far it holds up to you the evidence of its own authenticity. I do not intend to carry you through a vast and extended field, unconnected with the Word of God; I intend to confine myself to the Word of God alone, and endeavour to ascertain from it the evidence of its authenticity, the evidence on which it grounds its pretensions to come from God.

The usual way in which we endeavour to ascertain the justness of any pretensions is to examine the claimants to those pretensions. Having, then, the Word of God before us, and having a variety of witnesses contained in that volume, in the form of documents and declarations that present themselves as witnesses to their own authenticity, to our examination, I think that, if we examine them candidly, we shall find that all the points that would confirm similar evidence on

any other subject will combine to confirm the authenticity of the Word of God, and to establish the proposition laid down by the Saviour in the expression before us—"Thy word is truth."

In considering any case where witnesses present themselves, we naturally expect, if the case be of great importance, there shall be a sufficient number to enable us to ascertain, by examination and cross-examination, the circumstances to which they are about to depose. Now, when we come to the Word of God, we find thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New, amounting to sixty-six, all presenting themselves as witnesses for our examination. We cannot, therefore, complain of a lack of number in the witnesses to be examined, in order that we may ascertain the authenticity of the documents.

Besides the number of witnesses, however, when we wish to be fully satisfied as to any given case, we are anxious to find witnesses placed in different conditions, so that we may find no combination amongst witnesses of the same grade, the same time, the same place, and under the same circumstances.

Combinations to give fallacious evidence, of course, have a facility in the sameness of rank that may prevail among the witnesses, in the proximity of dwelling that may characterize their situation, and in the sameness of circumstances otherwise in which they may be placed. And hence we have doubts, when we find that this facility for combination to give fallacious evidence exists. Now, when we come to the books before us to ascertain their authenticity, we have no reason to complain of the sameness of the witnesses, taking any view of them. They lived through a period of fifteen hundred years; for through this long duration do we find the writings to extend. The times, therefore, at which these witnesses lived were sufficiently distant to prevent the power of combination which may be supposed to exist in the case of contemporaneous witnesses.

They were, however, not only very differently circumstanced in point of time, they were also very differently circumstanced in other particulars. They were, some of them, in one grade of life, and some in another; and if we had witnesses to examine through fifteen hundred years of duration, amounting to upwards of threescore in number, and occupying all ranks of society, from the sovereign upon his throne to the very meanest of his subjects that surrounded his footstool, surely we should feel that we had ample scope for any inquiry that could lead to the most satisfactory result we could possibly desire, as to the authenticity of the statements that may be made.

Now, it so happens, that we have this number of witnesses here, that we have this length of time by which they were separated from one another. It so happens that we have these different gradations of rank in which they were severally placed: for some of the writers of the books of the Scriptures will be found to be monarchs, and some of them will be found to be occupied in the very lowest occupations of society: some of them will be found to be princes and some of them priests, and some of them will be found to be civilians, and some of them will be found to combine both the priestly and the civil characters with the military itself: some of them will be found to be humble fishermen of Galilee, and to have had no opportunity of examining the intrigues in which individuals in more exalted stations can form, devise, and carry them into execution. And, thus, if we take them in their different ranks, we shall find that they were differently circumstanced as to education, and, consequently, they here again give us an opportunity of examining them so thoroughly, that it is perfectly impossible, if combination had existed, that that combination could escape us.



We have them, however, not only in different ranks, and educated some more and some less perfectly, and some not at all; but we have them under different forms of government. Some of them were patriarchs, and some of them were under the Mosaic economy, and some of them lived under the Gospel of Christ, when that economy had been abrogated. And hence we have varieties of religious forms, associated with all the other varieties in that religion, in order to bring before us witnesses whose circumstances would thus defy a successful combination. We have not only different religions, however, or different systems in the same religion, under which they lived, but we have them placed under different forms of government. Sometimes we find them a theocracy under a judge; sometimes a theocracy under a priesthood, the chief priest being the judge for the time being; sometimes a theocracy under a monarchy; sometimes we find them the willing and peaceful subjects of any community in which Providence may place them, as in the New Testament. Sometimes we find them at large, and sometimes in captivity. (I speak not now of the Jews as a people, but I speak of the writers of these books.) Now, if we find them under all these circumstances, we should expect that these different circumstances of life would very naturally prevent any thing like a successful deception.

But we do not find merely that the witnesses themselves, the writers of these books, were placed in different circumstances, we find that the countries over which some of them presided, and to which some of them administered their instruction, were placed under different circumstances. If we look, for instance, at the condition of the Jews at different periods of their history, we find them sometimes idolatrous, and sometimes returning to the worship of the true God, and casting off their idolatry; sometimes in bondage, and sometimes in a state of national independence; and under all these circumstances giving new materials for prophetic admonition and prophetic declaration. If therefore we find these witnesses placed in circumstances so various, the events around them constantly changing, and the individuals to whom they ministered changing with them, we have no reason whatever to suppose that there could be a possibility of combination among the parties thus writing in order to secure the production of a successful result.

If this then be the character of the witnesses that we have to examine, I have no hesitation in saying that there is no fact thus sustained, there is no system that produces witnesses so circumstanced for our examination in order to its support, there is no philosophy thus sustained, there is no ancient record thus sustained, there is no historical narrative of remote times that thus comes before us. The Bible stands alone in the advantage that it gives to the sifting hand of the strictest scrutiny; it is peerless in the opportunity which it gives to candour and to honest investigation; it stands aloof from all works in all ages and in all nations in this particular; and it stands before us unrivalled and alone when it invites us to look at the character of the witnesses that it presents to our tribunal in order that we may ascertain its authenticity. I make these assertions boldly because I know that they cannot be contradicted, and that they must commend themselves to your conscience, as presenting, in the very first instance and on the face of the case, such witnesses for your investigation as must compel you to examine or stand self-condemned for your opposition to truth.

We have looked only at the witnesses, at their number, and at their circumstances; and we find on these two points—their number and their circumstances

—what would commend to us any witnesses in any court of justice, in any country. But we must go further, and, having taken this view of the witnesses presented to us, we must examine them, and ascertain whether the testimony they deliver is of such a nature as to shew that they speak as they pretended—namely, as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

Here, then, I would say that their testimony is one throughout the whole of this extended document, produced in this variety of form—sometimes in narrative, sometimes in prophecy, sometimes in moral statement, sometimes in doctrinal announcement, sometimes in descriptive poetry, sometimes in vision, sometimes in direct and explicit prediction—in this varied document we find but one system prevailing from its commencement to its close. And I will say, that if you can detect on an honest examination of that Book, a single feature in that system that clashes with another feature of it, given by any one of the varied writers to whom I have referred, scattered throughout the length of duration in which they lived, and placed in the variety of circumstances by which they were surrounded, I would then admit that the Book did lack a proof of its authenticity, a proof of its pretensions to have come from God: but if you find the features of this one system varying only in developement, but never exhibiting a discrepancy, varying only because by some they are more fully disclosed than by others, but never contradicting one another; and if you find that, in the hands of all these writers, in all these grades of society, from the monarch of Israel in the midst of conquests who carried its territory far beyond its original boundary, to the humble fishermen of Galilee who had not where to lay their heads—if you find that all the features of that system exhibit thus one beautiful whole, then I ask by what power could we possibly suppose this uniformity of testimony was given and continued but the power of God?

Now, what was the grand substance of their testimony? It was, first of all, that God made man perfect. Now, there is not one of all these writers who asserts any other doctrine. The philosophers of Greece and Rome cavilled about the introduction of evil into the world, and cavilled about the fact whether the world ever existed without it, but were unable to make any distinct or harmonious statement on the subject. We find them one at one time taking a certain view of the matter, and at another time taking another. We find each clashing with the other, and individuals clashing with the whole. We find a jarring system of strife and of verbiage pervading all their systems, until at last they become so complicated that we can scarcely unravel the different parts they have interwoven, in order to make any thing like a clear and distinct system of it.

If, then, we find this to be the case with the great and the learned of those nations, let us come to the Word of God, and let us see how far the writers accord on this point—whether there is one of the Sacred Writers that distinctly states, or from whose distinct statements you can draw the inference, that man was not made perfect. Do they not all concur in this common view of his high original? Do they not all distinctly bring before us the same great fact that he was made upright, but has found out many inventions? If, therefore, we find that they describe man as coming perfect from the hand of the Creator, and if this is the testimony of all the witnesses—no discrepancy, no prevarication with any one, nor difference from his fellows found pervading his testimony—if we find this uniformly the case, we have found one point, and a grand one, in which they agree.

We come to another. They not only tell us that man was made perfect, but

they tell us that, by sinning against the Creator that gave him this perfection of nature, he fell; and on this point we find them perfectly harmonizing. There is not one found offering the slightest contradiction to the fact of the fall of our first parents: there is not one that throws the least obscurity over the narrative given of that fact; there is not a branching off by any of all these writers, from any one of the others. They are all found in perfect harmony on these two points; and, without the slightest deviation, whatever their circumstances in life, their greatness or their meanness, their ignorance or their knowledge, whatever their distance in point of place or in point of time, they are here at one, and perfect harmony prevails among them.

There is another point on which all these writers perfectly harmonize, and one of great moment too; and that is, that man is helpless: he was made perfect, he fell, and he is helpless and cannot restore himself. Now, this is the testimony of every one of them: if they are called up one by one, from Genesis, the first of these witnesses, to the book of the Revelations, the last of them in the order in which they stand in our copy of the Scriptures, it will be found that every one of them, if scrutinized to the minutest syllable he has inscribed on the Sacred Page, will hold a doctrine perfectly uniform on this subject of the helpless condition of the human race.

There is another point—the redemption of man, his recovery from his fall. Upon this there will be found again throughout the whole of these writers a perfect harmony if we examine them. For this point was started by the earliest of the witnesses to whom I have referred. (I now speak of the documents as witnesses: we have not living men to examine, but we have the documents, and I speak of these.) In the book of Genesis we find it plainly intimated that “the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;” that is, that Christ should triumph over Satan. In Abraham was to be found this seed of the woman, and from the generations at the head of which this Patriarch stood, he was finally to issue forth. And we find him prefigured by sacrifices and ceremonies, distinctly pronounced in themselves incapable of taking away sin, but all directed to the great fact that a Saviour was to come, and that in his sufferings he was to expiate the guilt of man, become his Surety to God, and his Intercessor at God’s right hand. Now there is not one of the writers to whom I have referred who does not perfectly accord with all the others on this subject. We do not find one introducing man on his merits in order that he might stand before God on his own ground, and another introducing man through a mediator to the Deity that he might secure his peace with him: but we find a constant reference to one grand Mediator, the common Surety of all; and we find all these documents, from the first to the last of them, holding together in perfect harmony on this very important and interesting subject, as well as on every other doctrine to which I have referred.

Again—When we examine these witnesses further we find a uniform testimony on the subject of man’s resurrection and future judgment. We do not find one of them dissenting from this general proposition, that God shall judge the world in righteousness. We find the different particulars connected with the coming judgment gradually developed as we pass along the witnesses before us; but we find no contradiction in any part of the Sacred testimony of this great and fundamental position.

We have another harmonious agreement if we examine all these witnesses as to the reception of the good and the rejection of the evil—the reception of those

who have been purified by the Spirit of God through the power of the truth as it is in Christ, and the rejection of those who have denied his testimony, and have adhered to their condition of moral helplessness and moral obliquity. If we look to the rejection of these and the reception of the former, we shall find that on this point all the writers to whom we are alluding bear a common and an harmonious testimony. We do not find one placing the wicked in a certain condition in the future world, and another placing him in a different condition: nor do we find a different allotment assigned to the righteous by the writers before us: but we find them all harmonizing, and in every one of their statements, whenever the subject is introduced, corroborating one another.

But again. We have not only these doctrinal points brought before us, and a harmony exhibited to us by all the writers who take them up, but we have also historical narratives brought before us; and here again we find precisely the same harmony. The different circumstances recorded in the Word of truth, notwithstanding their number, and notwithstanding their variety, will be found, when tried by the strictest test, to be narrated with the most perfect harmony of testimony by the different historians in the Sacred Oracles. I do not ask whether there may not be sometimes the appearance of discrepancy; I insist that this is the case with every work; it must be the case, because of the imperfection of language, and it must be the case in consequence of the difference of phraseology prevailing in different times. But I am not now speaking of what a witness may appear to state, but what he really states when you sift and try him. We sometimes have statements before us that appear to be truth, which when examined prove to be falsehood: we sometimes find witnesses apparently contradicting one another, but on further enquiry we find they are in perfect harmony. Just so is it with the historical narrative: there is not a single point in the narrative, continued through the lapse of ages to which I have alluded, written by the numerous individuals, and the differently conditioned individuals to whom I have referred, that would be found to disagree with the general narrative of the whole.

If, therefore, we find this harmony in narrative, let me ask again whether in point of morals we may not find the same harmony? Throughout the whole of this period, and among all this variety of individuals, we find the same system of morality exhibited. In the very opening of the Scripture narrative, we find Cain held to be the keeper of his brother: "Am I my brother's keeper?" said he, endeavouring by this method to cover the fact that he had been his brother's murderer, and insinuating that he had not the charge of his brother. The morality of God was different from that of Cain; he held him as the keeper of his brother, and Cain was aware of it, and wished to cast away the known morality of heaven from his conscience. But this was nothing more than a plain illustration of the fact stated by the Redeemer four thousand years after, that every man should love his neighbour as himself. The character of Christianity is that it makes every man his brother's keeper; and this great principle will be found to pervade the whole of the Old Testament and the New: the laws of Moses are full of it; the patriarchal dispensation is replete with it, Christianity founds all its morality on this great principle of disinterested love, that we ought to hear to one another; and you will find all these writers bearing an harmonious testimony to this precept.

Now, if we find all these witnesses harmonizing, and harmonizing so fully, on the great principles that I have just mentioned, forming (as these do) the very foundation of morality, and enlightened, and rational religion, and if we

cannot find a single discrepancy among them on any one of these points, notwithstanding their number, notwithstanding the variety of their circumstances, must not that be a species of incredulity, obstinate and criminal in its character, that would refuse to allow that these men must have spoken by the direction of God? If that Book is authentic, if it is what it pretends to be, and if the Bible pretends to be a revelation from God, and presents its witnesses to be thus examined through this lapse of ages, and if harmony is found in their common testimony, then I insist there is something more marvellous in the unbelief that would reject such evidence than any miracle which the Word of Truth itself contains. It is quite obvious that there must be some fearful depravity operating on the intellectual powers when they can see no strength in the evidence adduced by so many witnesses, with such perfect harmony, under such a variety of circumstances, and through such a lapse of ages.

But, still, in considering the witnesses which the Bible presents for our examination, we must notice the national condition of the Jewish people. Let us look at that people previously to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and during a period when the far greater part of the Old Testament was written; and what was their condition? The Word of God contains perfect morality, the elements of the most exalted species of civil government, laws most just and most equitable, and every case of crime is met by an appropriate punishment. The laws of no nation from that moment, to the present, will be found to meet so effectually the circumstances of the people for whom they had been enacted, as did the laws of Moses meet the condition of the people of the Jews. After the elements of legal science have been studied, and after they have been published by every variety of genius, and after they have been examined by every variety of acuteness, we cannot boast of a more appropriate code, nay, we cannot boast of so appropriate a code, among any of the enlightened nations of Europe, as that of Moses is applicable to the condition of the Jews. If we look at all the writers who follow Moses to the close of the Old Testament, we find the same exalted and enlightened views pursued by them all. Now look at the people of the Jews, a people broken and sunk in Egyptian bondage, a people that came into a country where they were shut up to agricultural pursuits, excluded from the commerce of the world at large by the peculiar character of their economy; a people regarded as illiterate and barbarous by the nations around them, that carried their views further, and cultivated more thoroughly the powers of taste and intellect, a people that was considered by the Greeks and the Romans, as far beneath them in the scale of being, a people that was regarded as possessing no proofs of literary character, and as really possessing none. Where are the fragments and remains of Jewish learning previous to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and where are the enlarged and luminous views to be traced in any thing but the Word of Truth amongst them? Now, how was it that these views arose in the midst of a people placed under so many disadvantages? Where did this barbarous, and this untutored nation, in the obscurity that reigned among them and around them, on the grand questions connected with the progress of science—where was it they found the religious views that we discover in the works before us? We have not found in moral science any thing to correct the morals of the Bible. We have not found in civil jurisprudence anything that would have bettered the institutions of Moses if viewed in connexion with the people for whom they were enacted. Where was it, we ask again, that this people received these enlarged views, both of legisla-

tion and of morals? When we come down to the fishermen of Galilee, the lowest of the low nation of the Jews, and find among them precisely the same views; when we find their morality carrying with it the same vein of generous purity and disinterestedness, and when we find that the most exalted writers of the first schools amongst the moral philosophers of the pagan world, sunk far beneath them; nay, when we take the morality of these very fishermen of Galilee, and when we hold it up and compare it with the most exalted species of morality in the heathen world, and find we must change the comparison into contrast, when we find that the one, while it emits its own lurid light, is outshone by the other just as the sun outrivals the twinkling of the midnight star: when we find this is the case, with whichever of the philosophers we compare the productions of these fishermen of Galilee, nay, when they stand above the boasted philosophy of the infidelity of our own day, nay, when that infidelity itself, in the most cultivated and most learned of its authors, distinctly admits the purity of its morality, can we possibly suppose these individuals to have framed, and to have founded, a system so pure, and a system so exalted. And, let it be remembered, that in this, its exalted and pure character, it pervades the whole of the documents to which I am referring. I feel no hesitation when I consider these circumstances. If I were compelled to find a verdict concerning them, I should have no hesitation in saying, I durst not deny that this Book is the very work it professes to be, a revelation from God. I should feel myself compelled to say, 'The finger of God is in this, and these men had no means of collecting together such a mass of facts harmoniously narrated, such a mass of doctrines harmoniously stated, such a mass of institutions so exalted and appropriate; these men had no means of accomplishing such a book as this but by the inspiration of God; and, therefore, I am compelled to admit the authenticity of the documents that come to tell me through them what the will of God is concerning the children of men.

I shall not on the present occasion dwell at large on these doctrines, or moral precepts, or facts, to which I am alluding. You will perceive that I have, however, given you an outline of evidence which you may pursue at your leisure; and if that evidence is pursued with honest candour I have no apprehension with regard to what may be the result of such a pursuit. If any case were made out, affecting the lives of any one of our fellow subjects, however dear he might be to any or all of us, on such evidence as this, there is not one of us that would feel that our friend had not received justice; there is not one of us that would feel a recollection arising in our minds against the jury that condemned him; there is not one of us that would feel that justice had not been pursued to the very utmost measure of it, and that the individuals had had all the advantages that could possibly be enjoyed in the fairest and the most equitable administration of law and of punishment. Now if we must feel in this way, if we were called upon to give our verdict in the case of a friend, should we not allow the same standard of judgment to be applied to the word of God? And if we do this, certain I am we shall be convinced of their authenticity.

But again; I would look for a moment at the effects produced by the Word of God, and see whether we could not find in them a further proof of its authenticity. The passage before you reminds me of these effects. The Saviour says, "Sanctify them through thy word, thy word is truth:" that is, purify them, sanctify their nature, moralize them through thy truth. This is the prayer of Christ for his disciples; and not only for his disciples that then believed on him,

but for all who should believe on him through their testimony. Now it may be natural to ask, whether this truth does sanctify them; whether it purifies the heart, elevates the feelings, refines the affections, and gives a right and a holy direction to the powers and faculties of the human mind. If we look to a professed attachment to the truth, and if we ask, whether all who profess to believe the Bible, and call themselves Christians, are sanctified by the truth, I answer at once, No; and the passage before me does not say that all are to be sanctified who profess the truth, but it implies that those who are influenced by it, who understand and believe it, those individuals shall be sanctified by it. It is, therefore, no ground against the moralizing effect of the word of truth, that thousands and millions who profess to believe it are not influenced by it. Bring me the individual who not only professes to believe the word of truth, but acts what he professes; bring me an individual who can prove that he understands what he means when he professes to believe the word of God; and I will pledge myself that that individual is one whose history will prove that he is sanctified by it: but bring me the man that tells me he is a Christian, and knows nothing more of Christianity; the man who can give me some items of the word and knows nothing more of it; the man who has had a glimpse of its glory, but has not dwelt upon its radiance—the man who has cast his eye only in a cursory way over its productive fields, without domesticating himself in it, and dwelling amongst its beauties—bring me the men who know thus much of Christianity, and call themselves Christians, and I have no hesitation in saying, I will admit at once they are not sanctified by the truth, because they do not know it: but bring me the man who has made it his dwelling-place, who has gone over the length and breadth of it—the man that has settled down in it as in an inviting landscape, till he has made himself acquainted with its plants, its mountains, its plains, its rivers, its streams—the man who has gathered up his feelings there, and has found his home there—and then, my friends, you will find an individual who is sanctified by the truth, because he has found himself under its habitual dispositions, and has been influenced by its constant application to him; and hence shall we find the truth, wherever it is thus placed, produce these effects. And thus we have another illustration of the authenticity of the Bible; for nothing but the truth of God could produce these effects.

You ask me whether other truths would not produce these effects? I answer, No; and I produce in support of the negative the testimony of all history. Where is the nation of antiquity that could produce one enlightened, morally enlightened, principle? I do not say many, but I say one. None of the nations of antiquity held a single principle of so pure and blessed morality: no such principle was known in Greece; no such principle was known in Rome: the most exalted individuals in both the one country and the other, will be found speculating at random on the very elements and foundations of morality; in both of these countries, however exalted they may have been in taste, directed into a certain channel, and however mighty they might have been in the pursuits of arms. Nor will it be found that any one of these nations was ever able to embody in the divinities they have fashioned by their own imaginations, a single moral attribute: their Gods were passions, and passions of the vilest order, personified and worshipped: the attributes of their divinities were the attributes of fiends. They had gods of war, and they had gods of intrigue; and they had gods of every species of iniquity: they had not a single divinity of morality: they had not a single god of love, in its highest and loftiest sense. Under these

circumstances, therefore, how are we to account for Christianity wherever it has been received, illustrating all these principles, and wherever it was not found, how are we to account for all these principles being wanting? But the mass of these principles were as little felt as the principles themselves were unknown in the absence of Christianity. And hence we find in these nations, avarice and injustice, and oppression, and despotism, constantly prevailing; either the sovereign was found oppressing the people, the leaders oppressing the republics, or the people disobeying, and thus oppressing their sovereigns, or the republics disobeying, and thus oppressing their leaders; but the free circulation of moral health, constituting the life's blood of a nation, was unknown in the very best days of the most exalted heathens where Christianity was unknown: but the moment we come within the confines of Christianity, new principles start before us, and new powers are developed, exercising a commanding influence over the human mind. And if infidel philosophy is ready to lay claim to the new principles as its own discoveries, and to its influence as its own discovery, we maintain no trials have been made—we do not say no attempt has succeeded, but no trial has been made—to trace the history of the discovery of these principles, or the creation of these systems, under the direction of any system of infidelity whatever. We can trace the plain history of these new influences of truth to the introduction of Christianity; but infidelity has never taken up this position, to trace the history of these principles and influences in connexion with its own cold, its own lifeless, its own heart-rending system. If, therefore, we find this the fact, can we doubt the genuineness of the word of truth, if its power is so mighty where its promises are really known and really felt, and if its indirect influence in shedding its lustre around it, and giving some degree of superiority over Pagan nations to those who are only in their twilight; surely we must admit that it proves its genuineness by the superiority of its effects as well as by the harmony that pervades the testimony of its witnesses.

If such, my friends, be the character of these witnesses, such the testimony, such the effects of the truths they record, such the condition of all the world where these truths are unknown and unfelt, and such the condition of those that really feel their power, let me ask what must be the state of the mind that, notwithstanding this, doubts the authenticity of the word of truth? I can very easily conceive of one doubting the authenticity of the work when he has never examined it, and I can easily conceive of that authenticity being not only doubted but disbelieved and denied without being examined. But wherever this has been the case, and if I speak to any one with whom this is the case, I would say, You know you are not an honest man: you are not honest to yourself, you are not honest to this book, you are not honest to fair and just investigation, you are not honest to God. But if this be the case, I have offered you an outline of the testimony concerning this Book: look into it, and see if that outline may not be filled up. The witnesses are ready at your tribunal as well as they are at mine: examine them with candour, and they will give you the authentic testimony of the God of heaven; they will reward you with light, and life, and immortality; they will set before you that Redeemer who came to give himself "the just for the unjust," that he might bring sinners unto God.

I have thus endeavoured to lay the case before you; and if I had, my friends, any of you collected and sworn as jurors, and if you were called upon to give a formal verdict on the testimony of these witnesses, I am quite sure you would allow that the Word of Truth is authentic, and that that must be the verdict



you would give. If so, then, think, my friends, of the heavy responsibility that rests upon you all. You must at the bar of God give an account of the use you make of this testimony of God's witnesses. He calls upon you to study it, to examine it, to believe it, and to act under its influence. He is the God of reason, and therefore gives you light to enlighten you, and rational powers to examine; a God of holiness, and therefore gives you moral principles to refine your moral faculties and powers; a God of equity, and therefore he exhibits to you the grand principle to "do unto others as you would they should do unto you." And the book that is thus fraught with all that is harmonious in beauty and in principle, the book that is thus fraught with all that is suited to give glory to God, in the salvation of the guilty children of men, puts before you that salvation without money and without price, invites you to lay hold of it, and to lay hold of it "with pure hearts fervently."

I leave these observations to your serious consideration as in the sight of a pure and holy God. Let me close by observing, that at His tribunal you and I must meet at last, and, if we have rejected this great salvation, how shall we then be saved? I press the case no further: perhaps we shall not meet to consider it again till time shall be no more. We *must* meet then; let me urge, **then, my friends, on you all the importance of so receiving Christ Jesus that you may walk with him even as he is.**

## THE ACCESSION OF THE HEATHEN TO CHRIST.

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REV. J. HAMBLETON, A.M.,

ST. BARNABAS' CHURCH, KING SQUARE, SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 1834\*.

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“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”—ISAIAH, lx. 8.

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THIS sixtieth chapter of Isaiah is a truly missionary chapter. Whoever doubts whether God has purposes of mercy towards the heathen world, whoever is tempted to faint in the work of missions, whoever is ready to despond at the prospects of the Church of Christ, has not got his mind and heart imbued with the spirit of this noble chapter, in order to thank God and take courage.

The text, as you may perceive, foretells the glory which is to come to the Church of Christ in the abundant accession of Gentile converts. It is an expression of the glad surprise felt by the Church, on seeing so many converts come flocking within her pale from the distant heathen nations. “Who are these,” she enquires—“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” What then is meant? Who and what are these that “fly as a cloud?” This shall be our first consideration. And, then, Why are they like to “doves” flying “to their windows?” Such, my brethren, is to be our subject this evening, when you are to have the privilege of taking your part in the interesting work of helping to send missionaries to the heathen world. I believe I am addressing a willing people, who will readily enter into the idea of its being a gracious privilege, as well as a bounden duty, to do all we can to give freely to others the gospel we have had so freely given to ourselves. If there are any persons, still indifferent to the subject of missions, or prejudiced against it, I say, they have yet to learn the value of the gospel of Christ to their own souls. I would try and not forget the case of such, while I am to bring before you all the subject of Christian missions, as it is presented in our text. And may God, whose blessed Spirit inspired our text, be pleased to assist us in considering its import.

We are first to enquire WHO AND WHAT THESE ARE THAT FLY AS A CLOUD. Our text tells us, they are heathen converts, hastening with earnestness, in large numbers, and in a united spirit, to join the Church of Christ. The church is represented as receiving them with glad surprise; because all true members of the Spiritual Church know the multitudinous difficulties to be overcome in the conversion of even one sinner in any country, and much more in the case of many even here in a Christian land, but a thousand fold more among the heathen, where prejudice is so strong, ignorance so deep, sin so abounding, and the god of this world holds such multitudes in his iron bondage

\* On behalf of the Church Missionary Society.

There is wonder in heaven, and there should be wonder in earth, when one sinner in any place truly repents: there is great wonder in heaven and there should be great wonder on earth, when numbers of poor benighted heathens hasten to join the Church of Christ. "Who are these?" we should anxiously enquire, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

This denotes their coming *with earnestness and haste*. They come *flying*: "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" And why so earnest? If, brethren, you are yourselves truly converted Christians you will know why. When sinners in any land really understand their state of guilt and danger before God, when they hear from his Word, and believe what they hear, that there is a large and glorious salvation freely provided for them in Christ Jesus; when they see the time so fair, and opportunity so precious, and invitations so urgent, then they come with an earnestness of spirit well described by the expression of our text, "Fly as a cloud."

Ask you where it is they fly from? From their state of condemnation, from the brink of destruction, from the kingdom of Satan, from a world of sin, from the wrath to come. And whither do they fly? Whither but to Christ? Who else is a refuge for the poor sinner? Is not he "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest?" To whom can the stray lamb, lost upon the dark mountains, flee, but to the Good Shepherd, who came to seek it, and who promises to gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young? To whom, but to Jesus can the heathen flee, and be assured of salvation by the Word and covenant of God? Is not he the only Mediator, Sacrifice, and Propitiation offered to this lost and ruined world? Is there any name but his given under heaven among men whereby they can be saved? To Christ, then, and to his Church, the Gentiles fly with earnestness and haste.

My brethren, you and I who are Christians were all sinners of the Gentiles: have we fled with earnestness to Christ? Does our text describe us? You must not tell me that earnestness in religion is but another name for enthusiasm: the world says it; but the world in saying it knows not what it says. Search the Scriptures and see: I invite the most worldly-minded person present to examine in his Bible, whether earnestness and seriousness of spirit are not there described as constant marks of a true Christian. Is there no earnestness meant when the Scripture says, "Flee from the wrath to come"—"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"—"Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation?" Is there no seriousness enjoined when your Bible says, "Fight the good fight of faith"—"Strive to enter in"—"So run that ye may obtain?" What, shall man be earnest in this world's business, alive as to all its vanities, serious in indulging sin, and is religion the only thing about which it is wrong to be earnest? Was not Christ in earnest in dying for sinners on the cross? Is not God serious in his denunciations, and earnest in his invitations? Is not death in earnest, mowing down men as though they were grass? Is not time speeding on in earnest to join eternity? Shall man, immortal man, who has a soul to be saved or lost, be the only trifler in the universe? If any among you are careless Christians, let me tell you the man who is not serious in religion is no true Christian; whoever can treat such momentous things as death, judgment, the soul's salvation, Christ, eternity, heaven, or hell, with a careless indifference, or wanton levity, is himself in all the guilt and danger of an unconverted state. Before

I can ask of such an one to care for the poor heathen, I must bid him, and I do it affectionately, to begin to care for his own poor, perishing soul. Fly, I would say, for yourself to Christ; fly with penitence and faith; fly without any further delay or excuse. Let fools, if they will, mock at your concern; God in heaven approves it.

You, too, who have fled to Christ for yourselves—you who have often felt your sinfulness and helplessness and insufficiency urge you to Christ, be not ashamed of your earnestness; mourn, rather, over your frequent coldness. Lose not the fervour of your first love. Is not heaven now nearer you? Is not your time of glorifying Christ shorter than it was? Is he become less precious? And will you not that we say to such, Be anxious to seize the favourable opportunity now given to the Christian world of endeavouring to prevail on heathens to hasten and come to Christ? Are not now the Indies open as they never were in our days, or in our fathers' days, for missionary enterprise? What means the shaking of the Mahomedan power to its very base? Is it not a summons to Christians to erect the standard of the cross, and to proclaim Jesus, the true Prophet, Priest, and King of his church? Ancient Christian churches meanwhile are beginning to revive as if from the dead. We have our missionary at Smyrna, where you remember was once an apostolic church. We have another missionary in Abyssinia, and another in the Syrian church, which was planted in the first ages. Will you not co-operate with the good Providence of God, which is now in a most extraordinary manner inviting to missionary works?

Our text not only describes their earnestness and haste, but also, I may mention, it describes the *great numbers* in which Gentile converts are to be seen joining the Church of Christ. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" A single convert would not be thus described. Many vapours form a cloud; many converts make up a cloud of converts. So St. Paul says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." It is a figure also used by heathen writers: Homer speaks of "a cloud of soldiers." The context says much of the numbers of Gentile converts who join the Christian Church: "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

And in this view also our text has been in a measure previously fulfilled. How many a cloud of pious converts from among the heathen were seen flying to Jesus and his Church in the first ages? How often in those days did angels gaze with wonder and delight at some beauteous cloud rising gradually from earth to heaven, like that which the traveller witnesses rising from the lowly valley on the mountain's side, ascending upwards until lost in the brightness of the heavens? In our own day, among the many dark clouds which seem to lower around us, amidst all the infidel profaneness and licentiousness, of worldliness and intemperance, which forebode a heavy storm of judgment, is there not still, in the eye of faith, another cloud, of a brighter and more cheering aspect? I mean, is there not still a great cloud of faithful witnesses for "the truth as it is in Jesus?" Is there not a large increase in the number of pious and devoted ministers? And is not almost every such minister greatly encouraged in seeing many, young and old, high and low, becoming anxious for salvation, flocking in numbers to hear the gospel, and many who are flying for salvation to the Saviour?

And what are the accounts from missionaries in heathen lands? All, I believe, are encouraging—some in a most delightful manner. Read and judge

for yourselves. Without any thing like exaggeration, or mis-statement, with no false colouring or overwrought description, the fact I believe is, that the fields of the heathen world are fast whitening for the harvest: missionaries are graciously prospered in their work: our own missionaries in India, New Zealand, Africa, and other parts, see many "a cloud" of converts flying to the church of Christ. If in some parts the cloud is but small, have we not heard of the cloud no bigger than a man's hand which arose from the mass of waters, and swelled and spread, until the heavens were black with clouds, and there was great rain? Who that has traced the progress of light and holiness in his own soul can find it in his heart to despise the day of small things?

Once more, under our first head, besides earnestness and numbers, our text also intimates *mutual union and fellowship in the converts joining the church of Christ*. A cloud consists of vapours, once scattered, now condensed and united together. There should be an union of spirit among all who are truly prompted to come and join the Spiritual Church of Christ. What is it we read of the early Christians? "And the multitude of them that believe were of one heart and one soul." Often were surrounding heathens forced to exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" So it should be still: the world is full of discord; ambition, selfishness, and pride divide multitudes; but Christ, our Master, was the Prince of Peace; he is himself our peace; in coming to him we are to learn the secret of peace—in his forgiving love towards ourselves we are to learn how to forgive each other our trespasses. Yes, my brethren, in all true converts to the faith and love of Christ, we see a oneness of heart and spirit, a sympathy, affection, and brotherly concord, to which the world are yet strangers: they have all felt the burden of a fleshly nature and the load of sins; all have been drawn by the same grace to the same Saviour; all have heard at his lips this his new commandment, "that ye love one another." Think not that I here forget the divisions which have been seen among professing Christians: they are the spots in our feasts of charity, and the disgrace of the gospel of Christ: neither think that I am recommending a hollow union, however plausible. Let Christ in his divinity, humanity, and saving grace, be the bond of union; let his spirit be the cementing principle, his gospel the one standard, his example the one pattern; and then let all who agree in these agree also to love one another, and to leave strife, enmity, and division to the world without.

And here also Christian missions claim your encouragement. What an interesting sight is that now seen every Sabbath-day in New Zealand. Large groups of converts, and catechumens, and heathens, are there gathered around the Christian missionary, hearing and joining in the pious petitions of our Liturgy, and listening to the gospel of peace, singing the praises of our Redeemer, where but a few years since all was barbarism, ferocity, and deadly hatred. Now they cheerfully allow the missionaries to be peace-makers among their tribes; now they earnestly beg to have missionaries sent among them. Can you, Christians, can you refuse such a request? They ask you for the bread of life; will you give them stones

We have thus, under our first head, seen heathen converts hastening with earnestness in large numbers and in a united spirit, joined to the Church of Christ? But why are they further likened unto "DOVES FLYING TO THEIR WINDOWS?" That is our second point. And here we have an image truly

elegant and beautiful in the doves flying to their windows, or dove-cots. The Holy Ghost, who inspired the prophet to use this figure, and who is himself the Author of all true conversion, is himself represented in Scripture as a dove: and just as he is called the Holy Ghost, not only because he is holy himself, but because he makes sinners holy, so is he the dove because of his own gentle, gracious character, and also because he works similar effects on all whom he converts. While you think, then, of converts flying as doves to their windows, remember that the Holy Spirit leads the way, turns, guides, and sustains them, as the parent bird teaches her young to fly.

The figure of doves flying to their windows appears to represent the eagerness with which converts fly to the church of Christ, as to a place of rest and safety. As Noah's dove came back to the ark when she could find no rest for the sole of her foot, so does the sinner, weary of wandering up and down the world in folly, vanity, and sin, rejoice to come to Christ, who is his ark. Storms may rage without, judgments may desolate the world—in Christ there is no condemnation, all is safety, security, and peace.

Brethren, would you not help the poor heathen to find their way to the place of rest and safety for their souls in Christ? Why, you would all, if you could—I am sure you would—all show to a benighted traveller his right way. Who would refuse to help a poor blind man to avoid the precipice? If a poor affrighted dove flew to you for shelter, who would not open the window and admit the trembling bird? Will you be less kind to the souls of the heathen, benighted with worse than Egyptian darkness, and gone very far astray from God and holiness, sadly blinded by the god of this world, applying to you—some actually by their voices, and all through their misery—to show them the place of refuge and safety?

Now, while this is the general meaning of the doves flying to their windows, that it represents converts flying eagerly to the Church of Christ as to a place of rest and safety, I cannot but think, with some of the greatest commentators on Scripture, that there is a reason why converts are here especially likened to doves. Other birds fly to their nests, and there find rest and safety; why, then, is the dove selected here? The dove, you will remember, is *the bird of purity*: “Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” The Gospel finds all men naturally inclined to be impure in heart and imagination, delighting in unholy thoughts: it comes, also, and it finds them, persons of polluted lips, and very often, unless graciously stopped, of unclean life. The Gospel proposes, first of all, to forgive men freely all their unholiness and sin through the atoning cleansing blood of Christ, and then it proposes also to sanctify and make them pure in heart: it converts men, who resemble unclean birds, into doves in respect of purity.

Are any inclined to mock at this thought? “Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap: he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Young persons, can you bear this test? Are you pure in heart? Are you becoming so transformed by the Spirit of our God, that you have no pleasure in the wanton jest, the impure allusion, the bad book, the vile picture, the filthy conversation of the wicked? Do you feel a sense of pleasure where licentiousness shows her brazen forehead? Are your prayers earnest for grace to purify and preserve you? Old Christian, what say you to purity of heart? Can you

see God without it? Have you gone to the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness? Are you delighting in spiritual and holy pleasure?

But, here, my thoughts again turn towards heathen lands. They are all, without exception, I believe, regions of impurity. Idolatry is uniformly licentious as well as cruel: the car of Juggernaut, which rolls its blood-stained wheels over so many pilgrim devotees every year, is also decorated (I should rather say is disfigured) with representations the most obscene and filthy. The gods of heathen Greece and Rome were the patterns of licentiousness; and if such were the deities, what were the people? No nation ever arose in morals above the character of their deities. So, also, Mahometanism is a religion which encourages licentiousness and sensuality. Now, although these things abound here, as we cannot but know, yet here, in this Christian country, they are against our religion, in direct opposition to the gospel; and are, we must confess it, our shame and our disgrace; but there, in those lands, their religion sanctions them; none feel shame; there is no moral principle to counteract them. And will you not feel for them—you who feel for the decencies of Christian society, who cherish the purity which raises a man above the beast, and who acknowledge that to the gospel of Christ and the grace of God you owe it all—will you not send that gospel, and pray for that grace to be given to the poor heathen?

The dove is also *a bird of affection*. I have spoken of the union among Christians; let mutual affection cement that union. We heard it this morning in the epistle: "Be ye kindly-affectioned one to another." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, gentleness, and goodness." The gospel then, though opposed to licentiousness, is not opposed to the charities which bless, the sympathies which soothe to the deeds of gentleness and kindness: far from it: Christianity forbids only what is sinful and injurious to man; it recommends "whatsoever is lovely and of good report." The friendship, which has Christian principle for its basis, will alone prove permanent: no change of circumstances, no distance of time, can separate those who are one in Christ. It is Christianity which teaches to bear one another's burdens, to "Weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice." If you know how to love as brethren—if you have tasted the sweets of Christian friendship—will you not shew the poor heathens the gospel, which alone can teach them what genuine affection means?

As the dove is a bird of purity and affection, and so is a fit emblem of the Christian convert, is it not also a *plaintive* bird? What that has ever visited woodland scenery has not listened to the plaintive moaning of the dove? Need I tell you that prayer and earnest confession for sin are marks of every convert? Was it not thus with Hezekiah of old; "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upwards: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." Is it not so with the prophet Ezekiel. "They that escape of them shall escape and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valley, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity." It is at the same time true that the believer has songs in the night; he mingles thanksgivings with his praises and supplications. Yet he has many sorrows, frequent heaviness, and much tribulation; sin tempts and hinders, the world tempts and hinders, the flesh tempts and hinders. And hence he has much to mourn over in his slow progress and his manifold corruptions. He sees much to grieve him in the world; much in the church around. Hence, like Hannah, he is often "one of a sorrowful spirit:" like David, his harp is oft-times tuned to notes of

sadness he weeps, as his Lord did over the impenitent; he sighs, as his Lord did, over the sufferings of humanity; he mourns, as his Lord did, over the graves of beloved friends.

Some perhaps, may despise this topic, and think it a lowly thing to resemble the moaning dove. God does not. Surrounded by the praises of heaven, he bends to hear you, though only a little child, or a poor beggar, while you pour out your sorrows into his paternal ear. And if you have done this, have you not found how gracious are the consolations of Jesus! Is it not truly written, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?"

And, then, will you not on this ground likewise aid us in teaching the heathen to sorrow with a godly sorrow, that they may be comforted as you have been with a joyful consolation? Is it not music in the ears of Jesus, our glorified Saviour, to hear the moaning of penitence ascending to his throne of grace from among the heathen? Have angels no pleasure, think you, in hearing of fresh victories gained by the Saviour over sin and Satan? Have the spirits of the just made perfect no matter for fresh delight when told that prayers are ascending from spots for which they laboured and prayed while on earth? Is there no joy, also, to yourselves if any thing of the same mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus, to hear through our missionaries and Christian travellers of good report, the murmurs, as it were, and the faint echoes of the prayers and praises of heathen converts beginning to worship your Saviour, who agree with you in all main points of Christian experience?

But you will help, if you yourselves are true converts, resembling the dove in purity, affection, and plaintiveness of spirit. If you have fled for yourselves to Christ and his church, as a place of safety to your souls—if, as our first part urged, you have hastened with earnestness, many or all of you, in a united spirit to join Christ and his people—then, I am sure, the cause of Christian missions is quite safe in your hands; you will then rejoice to do what you can: and I can neither ask nor wish for more. The widow's mite, the poor man's penny, the servant's sixpence, will be as welcome as the rich man's gold. I rejoice to learn that your auxiliary association is in a very improving state, because I trust it is a gracious proof and sign that true conversion and genuine devotedness to God are increasing among you. But let me exhort you to go forward, for very much more remains to be done. Millions of heathen are still perishing for lack of knowledge; your time for exertion on their behalf is but short: O do what you can, and do it while you can. And I especially entreat that whatever you are pleased to give to this cause may be accompanied and followed by a prayer for the blessing of God upon it; for without that blessing missionary work certainly never can prosper at all. Fly to the throne of Christ in prayer, like doves flying to their windows: let your supplications ascend like a cloud of incense. Soon, very soon, my Christian friends, the time will come when you must take your flight into the eternal world: then with what joy will angels see you if indeed you are numbered among the true converts and faithful disciples of Jesus—with what joy will they see you come flying as a cloud, a bright and glorious cloud to the happy regions; with what gratulation will they welcome you as doves to their windows, falling gladly at the feet of Jesus, and admitted to the mansions which he has gone to prepare for you. There, dear brethren, may we meet with multitudes of our fellow Christians, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues, to praise, to adore, and to glorify the Triune God throughout eternity.



## THE "CLOUD OF WITNESSES."

WE would remark on the term "witnesses," that, possibly, we somewhat overstrain its import when we imagine those who had departed in the faith looking down from their resting places, spectators of the combat which we carry on with evil. It is an idea which we are all prone to entertain, but one of whose justice it might be hard to demonstrate, that the dead are not wholly withdrawn from intercourse with the present scene of being; but, that, though we upon earth can hold no communings with disembodied spirits, our actions lie open to the scrutiny of those who have thrown off this frame-work of flesh. There is something which we may not suspect commends itself to the romance of our nature in the supposition, that dead kinsmen and friends take an interest in what we do, and in what we endure, and that with much of the attributes of guardian spirits they tend our pathway, and watch solicitously our every action. There is something which partially does away with the bitterness of separation when we imagine it confined to ourselves, and not extended to those whom we love and lament: and it seems almost to rife the grave, and strip death of its power, when we imagine fastened on ourselves the eyes of the departed ones who most enjoyed our affection, and feel that, however broken the ties of companionship, we still move and still act in their presence. Yet the complacency we may feel in the entertainment of the opinion is not to be received as a proof of its existence; and if we remember how sorrow preponderates over joy in human allotments, and how, in the conduct even of the holiest amongst us, corrupt principle manifests itself as still fearfully powerful, we shall find cause to think it could not consist with the happiness of separate spirits that they should be, as we suppose them, acquainted with transactions of which earth is the theatre, and admitted to the inspection of our toil and our warfare. It might add to the bliss of a parent delivered from the flesh, and received into the blessedness of heaven, to be allowed to behold his orphan child pressing on bravely in the pathway of godliness; but if this child forsake the law of his Maker, and walk in the broad road to destruction, it surpasses our power to conceive that the parent could look on from his own state of felicity and feel no disquietude, though he dwell where sorrow cannot enter: the supposition is impossible that he should know grief or anxiety. Thus the ascribing to them the power of witnessing, according to the common acceptation of the term, what is done and suffered on earth would involve us in a labyrinth of ideas. If we suppose them acquainted with one part, we cannot suppose them kept ignorant of another part of the actions and circumstances of their bereaved households. If they looked upon the righteous child, and not upon the unrighteous, the very division would seem to tell them the fact, which, so far as we can judge, must interfere with their happiness.

It is indeed true—and perhaps no truth more overpasses our present comprehension—that the eternal blessedness of the saints is independent of re-union with kinsfolk or children. It is an overwhelming thought, but, nevertheless, one which we dare not put from us as unfounded, that many a parent shall be unspeakably and everlastingly happy, and yet know that his child is lost. In our present state we naturally imagine that the absence of a beloved one would cause a blank in the circle, and that the certainty of his misery would mar all our enjoyments; yet nothing is more evident that the imagination must be

incorrect. The case will undoubtedly occur of parents who miss their children and of children who miss their parents among the shining groups of the heirs of the first resurrection: but since we know that there shall be no more crying, neither any more pain, we are sure that thus failing to meet the object of earthly affection shall be attended with nothing that approaches to disquietude, and that even he who stands the alone saved one of a household has the same felicity in this his loneliness as though girt around by the beings whom he once held most dear.

Inexplicable it may be, but easily supposed, that so shall the man admitted into the privileges of immortality be swallowed up in God, that every manifestation of the divine attributes will add something to his happiness, and that in whatsoever the Creator is glorified, in that will the ransomed find materials of delight and awe and solemn adoration—aye, even though it be the destruction of an impenitent and impious multitude, and that multitude comprehend some or many of their own flesh and their own blood. We cannot be Christians and doubt that the affections of our nature seem to recoil from the statement that God shall so literally be "all in all" through eternity to the glorified soul, that, from whatever the one reaps honour, from that does the other reap happiness. Forasmuch as it lies beyond all peradventure that the Almighty shall be glorified in the condemnation of the reprobate as well as in the deliverance of the righteous, it must also be incontrovertible that the saved ones shall recognize, and that with thankfulness, the displayed attributes of the Deity in the awardments of the fire and of the worm, and that they shall not be withheld from pouring out the confession that "the Lord is known by the judgments which he executes," by the consciousness that, in the cry of anguish which comes up from the pit there are the moanings of those who called them parents on earth, and that the glory of their Maker is wrung from the stretched sinews and the agonized spirits of those who had once been the centre of the warmest and most powerful affections.

Now whilst we most unreservedly admit, that the final happiness of the redeemed shall in no degree be interfered with by the failure of relatives to win the like portion, we think it unfair to argue, that the spirits of the righteous may be spectators of what passes amongst the members of their bereaved households. It is quite true, that God shall be hereafter glorified in the punishment of the disobedient, and that in this punishment as manifesting the divine justice and holiness of character, the children of the resurrection shall find righteous satisfaction: but then it is to the fullest extent true, that God is not now glorified in the disobedience of the disobedient, but that, on the contrary, he is grievously dishonoured by their life and conversation. We cannot therefore infer, that because the redeemed shall behold without disquietude the punishment, they may also behold without disquietude the disobedience: that which in the last instance annihilates disquietude, and fills the mind with complacency, namely, the ingathering of glory to the Creator, is wanting in the first instance. If you bring them in as witnesses of the things done on this theatre of probation, you must consider them as alike interested in the struggle and the success of the combatants; and you cannot, we think, reconcile with this taking of interest, a truth of which we can allow no infraction, that the deep repose of separate spirits is never disturbed; but that, whether those whom they loved in the flesh yield to them or become their antagonists, in each an unbroken tranquillity shall encircle them to the day of the resurrection.—REV. H. MELVILL.

## THE PREACHING AND RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL.

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REV. W. JAY.

SURREY CHAPEL, JUNE 7, 1829.

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“ We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”—2 Cor. vi. 1.

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SCRIPTURE, my brethren, is universally applicable; it meets man in all his relations, and in all his exigencies; it teaches him and makes him wise unto salvation. Is he weak? it makes him strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Is he a wanderer? it becomes his guide. Is he cast down? it comforts him; it possesses him with a “peace that passeth all understanding;” it animates him with “everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.” But you will observe it always distinguishes between liberty and licentiousness, between confidence and presumption: it calls upon us to “examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith,” and to “prove our own selves.” It cautions us, it warns us, it calls with a loud voice, and often too—“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.” It is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” And addressing the Corinthians, who had already heard and received the word of God, the Apostle says, “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

The word “then” refers us to something going before: and what was this? “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

Let us consider three things: First, the admonishers—the “workers together with him.” Secondly, the subject of their address—their reception of the grace of God. Thirdly, the reasons of their anxiety, and earnestness as “workers together with him”—We “beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

First, **THE ADMONISHERS**: they are called the “workers together with him.” Now this immediately, and in a peculiar sense, regards the Apostles, but it really, and in a subordinate sense, includes all the ministers of the everlasting

Gospel. For when Jesus ascended up on high, "he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers." Here are some extraordinary officers, and here are some ordinary officers; but the design was the same in all—"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

The case is this: the whole of our religion is found in this Book; but the question is, How is it to be transferred from the book into you? Now, we are not to limit the Holy One of Israel; but generally we find this is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." What was it, in the beginning of the Gospel, that turned the nations from Pagan to Christian? When "the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed." At the Reformation, what was it converted this country from Popish to Protestant? It was the preaching of "the truth as it is in Jesus." You may have heard what was done in Scotland, by Knox and his companions, and what was done in this part of the land at the time of the Reformation, and since by Whitfield and Wesley, and the band of men whose hearts God touched, and who flew like angels, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth. Now, if you take the members of any Christian community, and examine them as to their experience, how many will acknowledge they were divinely impressed by the preaching of the word! How often have we witnessed acknowledgments like this:—"Ah, sir," says one, "you cannot imagine what a poor careless creature I was, without one serious thought about my poor soul, till I heard such a sermon, which, like thunder, roused my conscience and induced me to ask, 'What must I do to be saved?'" "Ah," says another, "you cannot imagine what a proud Pharisee I was, trusting in myself that I was righteous, and despising others, till I heard such a sermon, which induced me to quit the hope I held before, to trust the merits of Christ, and to say, 'In the Lord I have righteousness and strength.'" Another would say, "My soul was clad with the blackness of despair, without one ray of hope, till by such a sermon there arose light in the darkness, and it was the light of life to me."

Well, here they are called workers: not loiterers, but labourers—"workers:" not lying down, sleeping, loving to slumber; but zealous, constant, active: therefore they are often compared to husbandmen, to builders, to soldiers, and to fishermen, who are always employed in seizing their prey or in mending their nets. They who imagine that the ministry of the Gospel is an easy work are greatly mistaken: "Much study is a weariness to the flesh."

" 'Tis not a work of small import,  
The Pastor's care demands;  
But what might fill an angel's heart,  
And fill'd a Saviour's hands."

The Christian minister, in addition to the trials he has in common with his fellow Christians, has also trials peculiar to himself; and "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." But oh, that we had more of these workers! We need them; the enemies are in motion; the people's prejudices are yielding; they discover in general a disposition to hear every where, and souls are perishing for lack of knowledge. No persecution restrains our endeavours; and the fields are white unto the harvest. "The harvest truly is great, and the labourers

are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

They are said to be "workers together." The question is, With whom? "With *him*," say our translators; that is, with God. This is bold work indeed: and yet there is a sense in which this is true; because they are engaged in the same cause with Him who, as the Apostle says, "would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And this is their honour, that they are "workers together with him:" and this is their encouragement—without him they can do nothing. They cannot have a too clear and full conviction of this: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The excellency of the power is not of men, but of God: and they have access to this power, and they are authorized by his own word to depend upon him for his co-operation. Melancthon began with too much confidence in himself, and after many fruitless exertions, he is reported to have said, "Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon." But old Adam is not too strong for the God of all grace, who hath said to his ministers, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Is any thing too hard for the Lord? How was it with the first preachers of the Gospel, who left the lake of Galilee? They went forth preaching, "the Lord working with them, and confirming their words with signs following." And how was it with the Christians scattered abroad upon the persecution of Stephen? They "preached the Lord Jesus; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." Why? "The hand of the Lord was with them." Now any of you can be equally "strong" with them "in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

But if you look at your Bibles when you go home, you will see the words "*with him*" in italics, to intimate they are not in the original; and they have been unnecessarily, if not improperly, supplied. "We then as workers together,"—meaning "with each other"—fellow workers: that is the meaning. We differ in our stations, as if he had said, we differ in our abilities, we differ in our modes of preaching: and there are some, says he, who take advantage of this, to form divisions, and say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas;" whereas whatever each may think of himself, ye all are weak and infantile: for "are ye not carnal? for whereas there are among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" However, says he, we are distinguished—however we are employed, wherever we are engaged—if one has five talents and another ten, still we are all fellow-workers, or labourers in the same field; like so many fellow builders in rearing the same edifice; and, "as workers together, we beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

This leads us secondly, to THE SUBJECT OF THEIR ADDRESS:—a vain reception of the grace of God. Two enquiries are here very necessary.

First, *What are we to understand by "the grace of God?"* According to the common acceptation of the word it *cannot* be received in vain; it always brings glory to God, and "we are confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will carry it on." Here, by "the grace of God," is meant the Gospel. It will be needless to appeal to many passages of Scripture for proof of this, where the word is used in this sense, and where it can be used in no other. What is the *source* of the Gospel? Is it not the grace of God only and entirely? Did we deserve it? Were we prepared to receive it? Did we desire it? Has it not reached us from the mere goodness of God? And

was it not "free" in every sense of the word?—What is the *subject* of the Gospel? Is it not the grace of God in the free, full, and everlasting salvation of sinners? Is it not the opening of the eyes of the understanding? Is it not the renewing of us in the spirit of our minds, making us new creatures; so that "instead of the thorn comes up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier comes up the myrtle tree." And is it not thus always in the Scriptures called "grace," because it is gratuitous influence or agency in us? The Gospel therefore springs from the grace of God, displays and produces this grace in the heart and the life; and therefore very properly bears the name and is called "the grace of God."

The second inquiry is, *What is it to receive the Gospel "in vain?"*—This is a very important question, and an awful part of our subject.

The Gospel is received in vain when it is received *partially*. If you regard it as a system of doctrine only, or as a system of duty only, you only receive one half of it, and the one cannot live without the other; therefore the doctrine and the duty must be united; without this it will be received "in vain." The Gospel reveals to the sinner the means of his justification, and the means of his sanctification, and the absolute necessity of both. Justification and sanctification are of such vast importance, that proper conceptions of them are necessary to a correct and useful knowledge of the Gospel itself: and where these are not distinguished, a religious scheme can never be clear; and where these are not united, a religious scheme can never be safe. Where *Justification* and *Sanctification* are not distinguished, there will be found *Law* and *Gospel*, *grace* and *works*, the Saviour's obedience and the man's meritoriousness, all running into a mass of confusion together. And where these are not united, you will always find there is produced either licentiousness, or Antinomian ignorance, or Pharasaical pride. They must therefore be blended together, they are inseparable. Jesus came not by water, nor by blood, but by water *and* blood: these were not severed in their effusion from the cross, and they are not to be severed in their application to the soul. Man wants both equally in his misery, in his helpless condition. Unless his sins are subdued, as well as pardoned, unless he is renewed, as well as justified—it is impossible he can hold communion with God, so that God can receive any proper service from him. This agrees with the experience of every believer: he is made to feel the burden of corruption and condemnation equally; he is made to pray equally, "Cleanse me from my sin, and wash me from my iniquity," and "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Hence you are to possess both faith and works; you are not to judge of yourself by your faith without works, but by *both* of these together. The legal hypocrite has works without faith, and the evangelical hypocrite has faith without works. But this will not do; these go together where faith is saving: "Faith works by love," and "faith without works is dead, being alone." It is not sufficiently known that truth may be even useless, and even dangerous: truth itself is the *stratum* of all error: every error that has prevailed in the church of God, has arisen from some truth taken out of its place, and driven in too far: and hence we find there are some who will oppose redemption to salvation; some will separate privilege from duty, and the promise from the command, and the end from the use of the means, and God's "working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," from our "working out our salvation with fear and trembling." But you

see all these together, there is no severing them. If therefore you would receive the Gospel to purpose, you must receive it as God has revealed it in his Word.

Secondly. You receive the Gospel in vain when you receive it *speculatively*. I mean in distinction from *experience* and *practice*; for such a reception does not accord with the nature and design of it. The Gospel is not a mere narration of events of no interest; it is not the decision of a problem, or the determination of a question, the knowledge of which is merely necessary to inform the judgment. It brings us "glad tidings of great joy." Indeed the very scheme, taken as a scheme, is astonishingly sublime and glorious. God manifest in the flesh: Deity here for three and thirty years, walking up and down in flesh and blood: the journey of a God from heaven down to the cross, and from the cross back again to the throne: how sublime! And therefore the angels, who never sinned, and who never need repentance, desired to look into this; and they are never considered as naturalists and philosophers; but they dropped around the cross, and came to Calvary to learn the manifold wisdom of God.

All this is for our welfare; we are deeply, eternally concerned in every step of this humiliation and exaltation; it is "all our salvation," and should be "all our desire;" and it never can be properly received, unless it produces emotions that nothing else in the world can produce. Why, it is not given to teach you to dispute, but to pray; it is not given to exercise your ingenuity, but to change your hearts; it is not published to amuse your curiosity, but to nourish you up to eternal life. Jesus Christ was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." This is not announced in order to raise your wonder, but that you may "receive the adoption of sons." Our aim therefore in reading and hearing the Gospel, should be the same with God's end in giving it. And why has he provided, why has he revealed a Saviour? In order that we may "behold, and wonder, and perish?" No, but that by "believing ye might have life;" that you may be disposed to say "Heal my soul, for I have sinned"—"Lord save or I perish." Fly then to this only refuge, this grand restorer, this Almighty Saviour, able and willing to save to the very uttermost, who has declared, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Oh my dear hearers, rest not in any thing short of this: take heed of a religion that consists in theory alone. True religion has something more, something to be known and felt. There is such a thing as real experience in divine things: "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." And this is what we are to seek after. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." We are told that the Publican went down to his house "justified;" he carried away the blessing itself. How different is this from many who hear the Gospel, who after hearing a discourse carry away the doctrine, but are regardless of the practice, and undetermined to consider whether they are interested in it. But this is the grand thing—to partake of the blessing *seré*, to know that we are pardoned through the blood of the cross. What will it avail us, or what will the Gospel avail us by all its teachings, if it has not taught us to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world?" What has it done for us unless it has enabled us after all our hearing and reading to say with Paul—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the proof that we have not received it vain. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." How did the Thessalonians receive it? "Why our Gospel,"

says the Apostle, "came to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." They did not receive the grace of God "in vain."

Thirdly. The gospel is received in vain when it is received *unperseveringly*. Peter speaks of our receiving "*the end* of our faith, the salvation of our souls:" and our Lord says, "He only that endureth unto *the end* shall be saved." It is not the first step, but the last, in the journey that brings you to your home. Many have gone far, but not far enough: they have been informed, but not illuminated; they have been reformed, but not regenerated. The Galatians *did* run well; they began in the spirit; but the Apostle entertained fears concerning them, lest they should end in the flesh. And our Saviour says, "If ye *continue* in my words, then (alone) are ye my disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Apostasy from the faith and practice of the Gospel generally go together; sometimes the one takes the lead, and sometimes the other; but the other is soon after. Bad practices render bad principles desirable; and then you have recourse to infidelity as to a refuge, and a relief. You make the Bible your enemy, and then you question it because it does not prophesy good concerning you, but evil. On the other hand, "whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." It is a very easy thing to destroy your religious convictions if you please. There are two ways of doing it; the one is by *assassination*, the other by *starvation*; and in either of them you may completely succeed if you wish. God can let a man alone; the man does not like to retain God in his knowledge; his vain jangling is increased unto more ungodliness; he will make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; he refuses the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God ceases to strive with him on earth. God withdraws his restraints, in consequence of his provocations, and the man runs wild, denying the Lord that bought him, and bringing upon himself swift destruction. How many have we seen of this awful character during our lives? How many are there now lulled to sleep by principles that once made them tremble, and who can now turn into ridicule truths that were once to them as life from the dead. It had been better for them not to have known the way of Christ, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. The last state of that man is worse than the first. But that which is divine will always endure; that which came from God shall live to God. The devotion it produces will not be like a blazing straw, but like the fire on the Jewish altar, which was kindled by the breath of heaven, and never went out. It will not resemble the summer brook, but the perennial fountain. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

In the third place, let us notice THE REASONS OF THEIR ANXIETY AND EARNESTNESS. They "*beseech* you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." There are two principles on which their importunities are founded—the possibility, and the deplorableness, of the event.

They beseech you not to receive the grace of God in vain, because *they apprehend the event which very commonly follows*. In all ages God's servants have been compelled to complain, "Who hath believed our report?" Four sorts received the very same seed, in the very same season, from the very same hand: and what is the result? Only one of the four yields any thing to the



purpose. Why, you will say, This is very censorious. Nay, it appears to me that the application shows the candour of the interpreter: for I would now say Appeal to the lives and tempers and conversation of those who hear the word, and who hear the word of the Gospel too; and tell me what reason have you to hope that one in four of these who hear the Gospel believe? that one in four of the large number of hearers have received the grace of God to the salvation of their souls? Is it not awful?

These workers together beseech you not to receive the grace of God in vain because *they dread the event as deplorable*. They know, whatever you may think of the case, that nothing is so much to be dreaded as this. They are affected with the thought, and they are affected on three accounts. First, by the thought of it on *God's* account: they know how he is dishonoured, his authority despised, his commands to believe disobeyed; how his infinite wisdom and goodness are reflected upon; how they frustrate the grace of God, and make Jesus Christ, as it relates to themselves, to have died in vain. They are affected with the thought of it on *your own* account: they know what your infirmities are; they know that hence will arise your chief sin and your chief condemnation; they know that in consequence of this it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you; they know that you cannot escape if you neglect so great salvation. And this will be found the savour of death unto death; that is, you will have to endure the condemnation of the Gospel added to the condemnation of the law; the one, because you have transgressed it, the other because you have neglected it. They are affected with it on *their own* account. It is painful in the extreme to plant and not to gather, to sow and not to reap. How distressing it is to labour in vain, and to spend your strength for nought! There is a sense in which this is not painful; for they are not answerable for their success, but for their fidelity and diligence and zeal; they are unto God a sweet savour, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. See, therefore, that they may be able to hail you in the day of Jesus Christ as their joy and crown of rejoicing. This gospel early reached our highly favoured isle; and, notwithstanding our national sins and manifold provocations, it has continued among us to this day; and "to you is the word of this salvation sent:" "Receive not the grace of God in vain."

Let me then speak to you freely for a moment. I would not address you indiscriminately, and it does not become me to address you hopelessly: but, after all the allowance that tenderness requires, is there not enough to alarm? Some of you have had a religious education; you early kneeled around the family altar; from children you have known the Scriptures; prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things you hear, and have not heard them; but blessed are your eyes, for they have seen, and your ears, for they have heard. What opportunities have some of you enjoyed! Where are they all now? Have you forgotten them? Have you not, knowing the value of them, trampled them under your feet? Is there not an awful responsibility on your part touching these things? Is there not an awful insensibility amongst many? Do not some, while they hear the Gospel constantly, walk according to the course of this world? Do not some attend the house of God and places of dissipation? Do not some endeavour to serve God and Mammon? Wearing the form of godliness, but denying the power of it, some get rid of all their early impressions. There was a time when under the preaching of the Gospel

they, like Felix, trembled; but they don't tremble now: there was a time when they loved retirement to meditate and to seek God; but now they wish to shun him; and in actions, if not in words, they say, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Allow me to address you with all that compassion you ought to have for your own souls. How good has God been in sparing you through all this! 'Tis of his mercies you are not consumed. Why is it your harvest is not past, and your summer not ended? Can you imagine God has protracted your lives only to get money, to eat and to drink, and to adorn your bodies? Oh no; he has a far more noble object in view: the long-suffering of God leadeth to repentance; it is your salvation; and despisest thou the riches of his goodness and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?

To say that these are things you never regard is not your excuse, but your crime: you know you *ought* to regard them, and you *can* regard them, and you *know* you can; and it is in vain therefore for you to say that it is not in your power, for you know this is not the principle you act upon; and you know that even inability can be remedied. How remedied? In a moment: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For if ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Oh that you may make use of this blessed promise. Newton says, "When I was first awakened, I read this promise, and I reasoned thus—'If this book be true, this promise also of the Spirit is true: then if I ask I shall obtain.' I did ask, and did obtain." You should be induced to do the same. We beseech you, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and in the name of your perishing souls, no longer to oppose or disregard these truths. "No longer," says God, "spend money for that which is not bread, nor labour for that which satisfieth not; but hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live: and I will **make** an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

## THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

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REV. J. PARSONS,

TREVOR CHAPEL, BROMPTON\*, JANUARY 30, 1834.

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' And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.'—ROMANS, xv. 29.

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THE opinions which have been formed by men in different ages respecting the system of Christianity, have in various ages, and are still now very different in degree. Some have rendered to the system a heart-felt homage, as possessing the very highest authority, and as comprehending in it those principles which are the one rule of duty, and the one source of happiness. Some again have accorded to it a loose and general approbation, from which the fervour and the feeling of personal piety have been absent, and which has been associated with practical carelessness, and practical neglect. Some have again denounced it as a system all whose pretensions are erroneous, and all whose results are pernicious to the general interests of mankind. Here are perhaps not a few by whom any controversy with regard to the merit of these different conclusions would be regarded as trifling and insignificant; but I trust that none are now in the presence of God, who do not at least theoretically admit, that a just estimate of their different merit must be regarded as of transcendent importance, especially as the reception or rejection of Christianity must lead to our eternal happiness or torment in a future state of being.

The writer from whose language it is our intention this evening to address you was led to form for himself such a system of Christianity, or of Gospel truth, and to commend, at the same time, the same system to others, who acknowledge it the one governor of the heart, and the one great blessing of the human soul. That system we are prepared to state, and you doubtless are prepared to agree, from unimpeachable evidence must be regarded as perfectly conclusive and right. It arose from the direct agency of the Spirit of God on his soul; it was secured by the same agency on the minds of the persons who went out as companions with the Apostle that they might be the devoted champions of the Christian cause in the world, and it must be by all men as essential to whatever is tormenting in misery, and delightful in felicity. There are, perhaps, few portions in the writings of the apostle Paul, in which the majesty of the revelation of Christianity are more beautifully vindicated than in the chapter from which we now address you; and there are few expressions in which more of the value of Christianity can be regarded as comprised than the expression at the close of the verse on which your attention is to be directed—"I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the

\* For the Irish Evangelical Society.

Gospel of Christ." It is our intention, my friends, this evening, to request your pious and your patient attention, while we present some general propositions with regard to the Gospel, which, while they will assist to promote the object for which we are ostensibly convened here, at the same time will commend themselves to the best affections your hearts can render.

First we observe, that the Gospel originates in a source of supreme elevation ; secondly, that the Gospel is fraught with abundant blessings to the world ; and thirdly, that the ministry has been specially appointed as the instrument for conveying the blessings of the Gospel. And let it be our individual and fervent prayer, that for ourselves we may possess the "fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

First, it is observed from these words, that the GOSPEL ORIGINATES FROM A SOURCE OF SUPREME ELEVATION.

You are of course aware, that men are naturally apt to form their opinions as to the character of existing systems, by referring to the character of the founders from whom they are ascertained to have been derived. The absence, for example, of dignity and worth in the founders of systems, is always converted into an argument against the principles they have propounded ; and on the other hand, the real or imagined possession of that dignity and worth is considered as an argument of no common strength for rendering to those principles commendation and favour. This mode of reasoning is, of course, liable to great and continued abuse ; but, my brethren, if it be applied without prejudice, fairly and impartially, we have reason to think it cannot be impeached. If it be applied aright to the Gospel, and to the character of Him who is its founder, it will be discovered as possessing every claim on the human mind to what that mind can render of reverence, of admiration, and of love. You will remark, that to the being possessing the emphatical and memorable designation of "CHRIST," the gospel is indebted for its existence : and hence in the text the association of his name—"the Gospel of Christ." Christ unfolded its promises and principles ; Christ established its essential laws ; Christ performed its confirmatory miracles ; Christ bestowed its inherent and intrinsic efficacy ; and Christ constituted those various arrangements, by which it was to be propagated in the world, and throughout the lapse of interminable ages.

There are some admitted facts in the history of Christ when he was dwelling upon earth, that seem to common view, to separate him entirely from what we are accustomed to denominate "greatness," and to assign to him a state of humiliation, and to constitute what is emphatically called in Scripture, "a stumbling block," on account of which many are disposed to deny and disown him. He associated with men in the most despised circles of society ; he selected his companions from those ranks on which men are especially accustomed to look with fear or contempt. Thus, prompted by the impulses of Almighty mercy and love, he trod perpetually on the very confines of poverty and want. He was finally seized and tried on two separate charges of sedition and blasphemy, was convicted as a guilty malefactor, was condemned to die, and did die, the painful death of the cross. If these facts stood alone, we shall at once admit they would be startling and forbidding ; but you are aware they are to be explained in such a way that they do augment and redound to the splendour of his glory.

And then, my brethren, there are truths with regard to him, which render to

him a character of high and matchless elevation. The first truth is, *he was without sin*. There was not a deed, there was not a word, there was not a thought on which there did rest, or on which there could rest, even the slightest shadow of a stain: in the emphatic language of Scripture, "He was without sin; and no guile was found in his mouth:" he was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

The second truth is, that *the human nature which he wore was invested with an especial appointment from God the Father*, because all the offices which he performed as Mediator between God and man arose from the important fact, that he was the Messiah, or the Christ; that is, the set apart and the solemnly anointed of God.

The third truth is, that besides the possession of such a human nature, *he was essentially and eternally divine*, the second person in the co-equal and co-eternal Jehovah; the divine and human nature being united by a miraculous and mysterious union in one incarnate being. Therefore we read that he was "Immanuel, God with us;" that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" "that by Him were all things made," whatever was created throughout the extent of the universe; that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;" that "being in the form God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man;" and that, while he came "of the seed of David, according to the flesh," he was "over all God blessed for ever."

These three truths, to which I have now briefly adverted, have, we are well aware, been contradicted, and cavilled at, and denied; but their revelation is distinct, and their authority is final, and our duty and our privilege is to receive them, and delight in them, as combining to represent the great Author of the Gospel as one whom the seraphs of heaven may well adore and obey, who merits all possible ascriptions of blessings and praise, and who is yet infinitely higher than the practical ascriptions of both.

Besides the elevating and dignifying truths with regard to the person and the character of Him who is the founder of the Gospel, we might further direct your attention, and at considerable length, to those facts which revelation has recorded, with regard to his existence as Mediator subsequently to the accomplishment of his ignominious death on the cross, and which, in fact, that death purchased and secured. As, for instance, his resurrection from the dead; his ascension to our Father and to his Father, to our God and to his God; and his glorified session as the triumphant Mediator at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But the time would fail us did we attempt to enter, even superficially, into the developement of this great mystery of godliness, that "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory;" and therefore we at once call your attention to the amazing dignity which the Gospel receives in consequence of its association with such a Being as its founder and its source; and at the same time we must remind you practically of the solemn and imperious claim which the Gospel, by reason of its connexion with him, possesses on the profound reverence, the implicit faith, and the uniform obedience of mankind.

The apostle of the Gentiles forms precisely the same conclusions from precisely the same premises, when, after having, in the most sublime strains of his

eloquence, announced the divinity of our Lord, in the first chapter of the Hebrews, he then proceeds to mark the solemn and the devout conclusion, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?" Living, my dear hearers, as is the case with ourselves, under the fairest form of a system emanating from such a source, take heed that ye render that "more earnest" attention to the Gospel which in this manner is so distinctly and so solemnly demanded: and oh, beware, lest by your scorn, your indifference, and your neglect, you shall encounter that "much sorer punishment" which is to arise from the anger of Him into whose hands it is "a fearful thing to fall," and of whom it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

We have, my brethren, in these brief remarks, verified the first proposition arising from the text, that the Gospel originates in a source of supreme elevation, it being the Gospel of Christ, who, notwithstanding his apparent degradation and deep humiliation in the flesh, was without sin, was in his human nature invested by an appointment from the Father, and was at the same time essentially and eternally divine;—those great truths being explained and ratified by his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into the heavens, and his session on the right hand of the majesty on high.

Supposing, then, these facts to be beyond the reach of controversy, let us now proceed secondly to observe, that **THE GOSPEL IS FRAUGHT WITH ABUNDANT BLESSINGS TO THE WORLD.**

It may be observed, that the very import of the term "Gospel," sufficiently verifies the proposition which is now made, as there are but few who are not perfectly aware, that the word "Gospel" signifies "glad tidings." As for instance; when the angels appeared to the shepherds, for the purpose of announcing this to the world, he who came down as the first herald said, "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:" and then, as if that very term or announcement had given new energy to the raptures and the harmonies of heaven, "there was heard a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." The meaning of the term employed by the Apostle is expressly and most emphatically intended to set forth the fact on which we now intend to enlarge—"the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." It may perhaps be known, that the strength of the expression, "the fulness of the blessing" arises from the genius of the Hebrew language; and that if we were to say, "I shall come in the very impulse of the abundant blessings of the Gospel of Christ," this would be the manner of expressing the idea as we are now accustomed to speak.

I must request you to render here your devout regard while we notice the blessings which the Gospel is able to impart, and the extent to which it is intended that blessing shall be diffused.

First, we propose to notice *the nature of the blessings which the Gospel is able to impart.* And here, my brethren, we scarcely know where to commence and where to close. When we speak of the blessings of the Gospel, we seem as though we stood at the entrance of a fair and beautiful garden, within whose

limits we cannot stir a step without plucking flowers, and beholding fruits on the trees of life, whose very "leaves are for the healing of the nations." All that we can now do is to make a brief selection of its prime blessings, which you will find however to extend themselves over the wide sphere of life and immortality.

You will remark that the Gospel imparts to man *a knowledge of God and of all spiritual truth*. This knowledge, in consequence of the state to which men have become reduced by their own voluntary and wilful depravity, would, apart from Christianity, have been entirely and utterly impossible. Moral revelations of truth, my brethren, were afforded to men in the early ages of the world; they were afforded to the patriarchs—the fathers of the nations; and they were afforded, in a subsequent time, under the economy of Moses, to the people of the Jews: but the nations have, in process of time, changed the truth of God into a lie, and have plunged themselves into the deepest abysses of the foulest systems of idolatry. The Jews, in their traditions, had perverted the commandments of God, so that it became of none effect: and had it not been for the advent of new and brighter disclosures, men would have remained enshadowed in a midnight darkness, from whose horrors no finite influence, however gigantic, could have relieved them. Now the Gospel came, in consequence of the plan of eternal mercy, that it might supply the deficiencies, that it might remedy the evils, that it might impart the appropriate boon: and you are aware that it throws a bright and steady lustre over the otherwise impalpable realities of the world that is to come, lighting up every truth pertaining to the government and character of God, and to the duties and the destinies of the men, in such a manner that no verity is hidden which it is important for man to know.

The communication of this knowledge is especially mentioned by the Apostle in the chapter subsequent to the one from which we have selected the text; as when he speaks of "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." It will be remembered again, that the Apostle speaks of the same manner of communicating these blessings as when in 2 Corinthians, iv., he says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And thus, also, in the 2 Timothy, i. he thus speaks of the purpose and grace of God, which was "given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

It would not be consistent with the general design of this discourse to enter into a full and ample detail of those doctrines which we conceive to be made known to men in the range of spiritual verity, by the instrumentality of the Gospel; we merely observe the general and the important fact; and those doctrines which have been noticed are borne out by the general spirit and genius of the whole. We consider the communications of spiritual knowledge as a secondary boon only to religion. It is essential to all real dignity; it is essential to all moral worth; and it is essential to the introduction of man into that state by which alone he can be prepared for future and everlasting happiness, of which we read that "that which is in part shall be done away,

and where "we shall know even as also we are known." Here, then, in the communication of the knowledge of God, and of spiritual truth, is one department of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

But again observe, that *the Gospel imparts to man a deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin.* Man is everywhere to be viewed as a guilty, polluted sinner against his God. This view of human nature permit me, my friends, to put forth with all possible distinctness and solemnity. Man is everywhere to be viewed as a guilty and polluted sinner against his God, universally exposed to the curse of the divine law, and universally exposed to those threatenings of the divine law which are finally to inflict their penalties in the interminable torments of futurity. Now the main design of the Gospel as a system of blessings and benefits is to present and develope the existence of a provision, the embrace of which by man, and the application of which to man, shall be the means of averting the perils by which he is surrounded, restoring him to the enjoyment of acceptance and favour with God, and causing him to wear his image, that he may be morally prepared and made ready for his glory. The great provision that we have referred to, is that which has been secured by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. My brethren, when he died upon the cross he quenched that fire which had been lighted up to desolate, which had run along the surface of the earth, finding fresh fuel in every folly and every crime of man, and which, had it not been for the interposing power of his Maker, would have reduced the habitations of our race to ashes, and would have wrapped the universe in flames. The death of Christ must be regarded as the propitiation and atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world, the application of which to man, through the appointed instrumentality and medium, is to effect every thing that can be desired for the well-being and restoration of the soul.

If I speak to any who may have undervalued, or who may have denied the doctrines to which we have now referred them, we can but appeal to the testimony of that Word by which we must always consent to abide. We are told in the previous part of this epistle, that men, who have "all sinned, and come short of the glory of God," are to be "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." How beautiful my brethren, is this doctrine of reconciliation by the sacrifice and atonement of Christ opened in its application both to Jews and Gentiles. In Ephesians ii. says the Apostle, reminding them of what they were in their natural condition, "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace," (that is, he is the author of our peace) "who hath made both one," (that is, both Jews and Gentiles) "and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: having abolished in his flesh" (that is, by the sufferings endured in his flesh) "the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh." And thus again: "It pleased the Father



that, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him he would reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they are things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight." And do you not read elsewhere, that "the blood of Christ" is for cleansing "from all sin?" And do you not read elsewhere, that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world?"

Now, my brethren, the belief of the testimony which God has given concerning his Son is the appointed instrument for applying to man, in state and in character, the whole benefit of the provision of the atonement. Faith is the appointed instrument of imputing the righteousness of Christ, for the sake of which there is granted the blessings of justification or acceptance before God; and faith is the appointed instrument for overcoming the world, purifying the heart, so that men are made personally meet to be the partakers of the inheritance of the saints. Will any one in the presence of God compare the difference between a state of condemnation on the one hand, and of justification on the other; a state of pollution on the one hand, and a state of purity and holiness on the other; and not at once perceive, that here are given, through the Gospel, blessings so vast that no intellect can compute them, so boundless that no fancy can conceive them? Oh, my brethren, if the Gospel did not communicate forgiveness through the atoning sacrifice of which we now speak, its other communications would amount absolutely to nothing; and the sound of its glad tidings would be hushed and die away into the stillness of one final and everlasting silence. But the Gospel, having communicated blessings like these, has invested the sphere of human destiny with a bright and imperishable grandeur, and must already inspire those deep songs of joy, whose high and rapturous harmonies are to resound through the temples of heaven for ever. For what, my brethren, are the raptures of immortality, except in the pouring forth of thanksgivings on the part of the ransomed for the fulness and the triumphant efficacy of the atonement: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: salvation to God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

But again, it must be observed, that the Gospel of Christ imparts *abundant consolation and support amidst all sorrow*. It would be but a truism to remind you, that the present life is a scene of continued sorrow and distress; that sorrow is the portion of persons who have received an interest in the power of the everlasting Gospel, and that, in fact, they are the persons on whom oftentimes the tempests of worldly persecution pours the fury of its most deadly and most bitter storms. But the very fact of the consciousness of an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, is of itself like a cordial and balm to the spirit, whatever the nature of the sorrows and the agonies it may be compelled to endure. And there are sources of consolation arising from these communications of evangelical mercy, which remove the sting from all sorrow, and which render sorrows in all respects but blessings in disguise. The power of the Gospel to administer consolations like those to which we have referred have been abundantly exemplified in the experience of millions. Observe the language of Paul himself contained in the fifth chapter of this epistle: speaking of

the delightful anticipation which himself and his companions enjoyed in the prospect of the divine glory, he says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now it is not extraordinary for a man to rejoice in the hope of glory, nor in the prospect of peace and of perfect felicity; therefore Paul proceeds still further, as if exhibiting a still greater marvel and mystery in the achievements of that wondrous religion of which he was the advocate and champion: "And not only so"—as if to say to "rejoice in the hope of *the glory* of God" were only an inferior attainment of Christianity—"And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And on other occasions, you remember how he speaks with regard to those around him, as if sorrow had no effect, and were altogether deprived of its sting: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

My brethren, have not these consolations been felt by the captive in his dungeon, and by the martyr in the flames? And speak I not to many in the presence of God to-night, who can say by their own personal experience, that oftentimes they have felt them themselves? Yes, my brethren, have you not felt them beneath the pressure of poverty, when worldly sources of supply and contentment seem to be withdrawn and withered? Have you not felt them when you have endured obloquy and persecution and scorn for your attachment to the name and cause of your Redeemer? Have you not felt them when you stood by the bed of sickness, and watched the languid and failing eye and the quivering lip, and the last convulsive agony of those on whom your attachment has been accustomed to repose, and when you followed in the dreary march of the funeral train, and committed them to the noiseless tomb, the house appointed for all living? Have you not felt them when disease and infirmity have invaded your own frame, when the sentence of death seemed to have been rankling like noxious poison within your vitals, and when you thought yourselves ready to become the prey of loathsome reptiles. Oh yes, you are the living witnesses that they have "strong consolation" who have "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel;" you can testify, and you can rejoice while you testify, how perfect is the balm which the power of the Gospel gives, and already are you panting with intense gratitude and fervour for the arrival of the time when you shall praise and laud him worthily in the temple of that state from which sorrow and death are excluded, and which bears over its portal the letters of the promise, "Thou shalt weep no more."

These, my brethren, are perhaps to be regarded as the main classification of the blessings imparted by the gospel of Christ. We must now briefly notice, as we proposed, secondly, on this part of the subject, *the extent to which it is designed that these blessings are to be diffused.*

You doubtless are prepared for the assertion, that a great portion of the value of the blessing depends upon its extent; that on the one hand contracti in

lessens it, and that on the other the power of diffusion augments it. Now, if the Gospel had possessed but a restricted and confined constitution, if it had erected barriers and obstacles to the communication of its mercies among the race of mankind, and if it had been so restricted as by implication to pass a sentence of outlawry on any portion of the human family, even the vilest and most degraded, you would perceive there would be a vast subtraction from the positive amount in value, and that whatever might have been the intrinsic nature of its blessings, still, if these wanted diffusiveness, they would have been but ultimately of a secondary and inferior kind. We, therefore, have to remember with pleasure that in the Gospel there is nothing at all which is sectarian or peculiar, there is nothing whatever which causes it to be governed or limited by the character of governments, the character of climates, the influence of civilization, of knowledge, or of art; but that it goes forward freely and fully, without a manacle, and without a fetter, and without a restriction, intended to bear the charter of its mercies to every kindred, every clime, and every tongue.

You are aware that prophecy speaks of this expansiveness in the communication of the coming blessings. It was indicated during the personal existence of our Redeemer: it was indicated by his parables, it was indicated by his instructions, it was indicated by his example; it was indicated expressly by those series of commissions which he gave to his Apostles, as the regulation for the continual and future exercise of the ministry of his word; for he taught them that "it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" and said as his last words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The general evidence, my brethren, beyond this it may not now be needful for us to mention; we have only to observe comprehensively (and vastly indeed is the value of the Gospel augmented by the fact,) that this Gospel is the religion of mankind, and that it is the religion of the world.

We can only, in our statements on this part of our subject, make a brief reference to the intentions of Jehovah with regard to the Gospel in future ages of the world. Its operations have been yet imperfect and incomplete; many nations on the surface of the earth have yet heard no call of the Saviour's voice, and have not had even a glimpse of the Saviour's glory. We have not yet seen all things put under his feet; though we have distinct and positive testimony, that there is yet to arrive an era in the history of this long-prostrate and apostatizing world, when the Gospel shall become the property of our race. And what, my brethren, saith the voice of prophecy? "Ask of me," saith the Father to the Son, "and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Again: "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the channel of the sea." Again: "The Lord will make bare his holy arm amidst the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." And again: "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the hills, and exalted above the mountains, and all people shall flow unto it; there shall be one Lord over all the earth, and one King, and his name one: the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

I enter not here into controversy as to the mode by which this grand expan-

sion shall take place. There are some who suppose that it will take place not under the constitution of the Gospel, but as the result of the personal advent of our Saviour to reign upon the earth: opinions from which, respectfully, but most firmly and decidedly, I do dissent: for we conceive that all these promises are intended most distinctly to refer (as we might prove at length did our time permit) to the establishment of the Gospel as it now exists in the last economy of the grace and mercy of God. But, my brethren, so replete shall be the then weight of joy and blessing, when the groanings of creation shall have been hushed, when its travailing shall have been terminated, and when peace and liberty and joy shall have become the charter of our free and emancipated race, that, then, my brethren, will “the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice’s den.” The battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, will be known no more; men will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Then the light of immortality will shed its splendours around this once darkened and wretched globe, and the testimonies of the presence of God will everywhere be enjoyed by men obeying one Saviour, walking in one path, trusting to one atonement, and seeking one heaven: then, when the mystery of God shall be finished, when the mighty angel coming down from heaven shall lift up his hand, and swear by him that liveth that time shall be no longer, and when the splendours of immortality shall close all the scenes of probation and of time, then shall be consummated and totally verified the title of the Gospel, by which it is presented as “the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ.”

We must now refer, finally, to the proposition, that **THE MINISTRY IS THE APPOINTED INSTRUMENT FOR CONVEYING THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL TO MANKIND.**

It will be remarked, that the Apostle in this verse is speaking to the believing Romans as one engaged in the exercise of the ministry of the word; that is, set apart for the purpose of orally declaring in divers ways the great principles of the Gospel, as the only method of man’s redemption and man’s salvation. You will observe, in the twenty-eighth verse he says, “When I have performed this”—a certain benevolent work connected with the contributions for the poor saints at Jerusalem, at that time suffering persecution—“When therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in “the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.” I, as a minister enjoying the fulness of evangelical blessings myself, shall come in accordance with the great object of that ministry—the communicating and establishing still further, the possession of the same fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ to you.

It must be clear that there is here a connexion instituted between the ministry and the power and the efficacy of the Gospel. I speak not, doubtless, amongst persons addicted to mystic theories, on the one hand, or wrapt in profound and

ignoble ignorance on the other, and the fact to which our attention is now called will not require very particular illustration. The connexion of the ministry of the Gospel as an institution of Christ, is most beautifully illustrated in the well-known passage occurring in the tenth chapter of this Epistle: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Thus also at the close of the 2 Cor. ch. v.: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." These statements sufficiently indicate the truth, that the ministry of the Gospel, the oral and the public teaching of the truth as it is in Jesus, is to be regarded as the great instrument of imparting and applying this Gospel to the world, until the world shall be evangelized and the office of Christianity shall be done.

I cannot relinquish this part of my subject without observing, that this truth cannot be too much enforced; a most important and solemn application of it must be rendered by all persons who are in any way engaged professedly in the ministry of the Gospel. I know not whether I speak to any fellow labourers in the cause of Christ within these walls to-night, but if I do you will permit me, my brethren, with respect and simplicity of heart, to remind you, that if the ministry be thus connected with the impartation of the "fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ," to the world, there is a solemn call on us diligently and accurately to study the constitution of the Gospel, and to ascertain and to acquire a perfect and mature knowledge of its contents. And there is at the same time a solemn and most imperious call on us, having ascertained the nature of the Gospel office, freely and faithfully, to declare it to our fellow men. If there is one truth more than another on which we are called to dwell, it is that delightful theme of reconciliation by the merit of the atoning sacrifice, the prominence of which causes the Apostle to speak of the ministry of the Gospel as "the ministry of reconciliation." And if we are at any time compelled to lead you by the thunders of Sinai—if we are compelled to open the volume of the decalogue, and remind you that "God spake all these words"—if we are compelled to bring you to the torments of futurity, and show you the region where spirits writhe and are lost in torments—every statement of whatever order, even apparently the most remote and disconnected, must be observed to concentrate and converge, as in one common centre, around these doctrines of the cross.

And, my brethren in the ministry, let me remind you that if ever there were time for more close ardent earnestness in the exercise of this work, that time is now; and that the aspect of the times, from the mutual relation of the world and the church, and from the gigantic efforts which are making by the adversaries of truth to strengthen them in the impious warfare, piling

mountain upon mountain, until perchance they shall be enabled to scale the height and vanquish the Omnipotence of heaven—that all these things are urging on us to stand forth, as with a mighty and more flaming zeal, between the living and the dead, and hold up the cross with faithfulness and with uniformity, calling upon men to behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world. “I charge thee,” saith the Apostle, “before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things; do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” And let our motto ever be, in the simple poesy of modern times:—

“ Careless—ourselves but dying men—  
Of dying men’s esteem;  
Happy if God, our God, approve,  
Though all beside condemn.”

And then, my brethren, there is also a solemn call from this fact on those persons who are accustomed to attend upon, and listen to the ministry. The call on you, my hearers, is to honour the ministry; not by granting to us the privileges which might be claimed by an ambitious and tyrannical priesthood; not by attempting to elevate us to the high places and opulence of worldly men; but by giving “earnest heed” to the things which you hear from us, remembering, that he that despiseth us, despiseth not man but God. “Let a man so esteem us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” And the call further is to apply the purport of the ministry to ourselves: we watch for souls; we travail in birth for souls; we desire to have souls who shall be to us our joy and our crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. It is your part to examine, whether these anxieties for you are to be in vain; whether these anticipations for you are to be in vain; and whether you will stand at a more remote distance at the latter day, in order to render an account, the result of which shall be the transmission of your spirits to hell.

My hearers, the ministry is exercised amongst you now; and although he who now speaks to you is a stranger to you, after the flesh, yet it is with the freedom, and the faithfulness, and the earnestness, which the testimony of this Gospel justifies and demands, that I tell you, “I am an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech you by me; I pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God.”

My brethren, I have endeavoured to complete, within the limits of your time, an exposition of this most delightful testimony of the inspired Word of God. We have shewn you that the Gospel originates in a source of supreme elevation, being ascribed in its excellence to the Lord Jesus Christ. We have shewn you, that the Gospel is fraught with abundant blessings to the world: it imparts a knowledge of God and of spiritual truth; it imparts a deliverance from the power and guilt of sin; it imparts an abundant consolation and peace amidst all sorrow and distress: and these blessings, in place of being restricted to a confined and narrow compass, are intended to be finally diffused throughout all the kindreds and nations of the earth. The ministry of the Gospel, the oral teaching of the truth, is the appointed instrument for conveying these blessings to mankind, involving a solemn call upon the study and fidelity of those who

professedly preach the Gospel, and a call to honour the ministry, and personally to apply it, on the part of those who listen to it.

In conclusion, let me remind you of the awful danger that will be incurred on your part by the rejection of the Gospel. Is it possible that you will reject the Gospel? Just consider what is involved in those simple words—"Reject the Gospel!"—the medicine that will cure your diseases, the light that will dissipate your darkness, the balm that will soothe your sorrows, the refuge that will shield you from peril, the life that will save you from death, the heaven that will save you from hell. Reject the Gospel! My hearers, if there be one amongst you who is yet inclined to depart from these walls as a rejector of the Gospel, I remind thee that there will be a term in that tremendous futurity to which thou art recklessly hastening, the equal of which cannot be imparted to any one dwelling among the darkest places of the earth: "He that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes, for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Ask yourselves whether you are prepared to encounter that far "sorer punishment" which God is to render against those who have trampled the blood of the covenant under their feet as an unholy thing.

And, finally, let me remind you, having yourselves a part in the Gospel, of your duty to assist in its propagation. My brethren, the calls of many voices are around you, urging you yet to consider the wants and the miseries of men; shew them that the Gospel is the ordained instrument for preventing their misery and promoting their welfare. Are you not called on as men, as philanthropists, and as Christians, to strive your utmost that the Gospel may be carried to the ends of the earth? It is my lot and my privilege to plead the cause of the institution for which your charitable contributions are now to be freely rendered, the cause of "THE IRISH EVANGELICAL SOCIETY;" a society formed for the propagation of the Gospel in Ireland. You, my friends, may be aware, that at this moment, according to ordinary computation, there is a population of no less than six millions in that interesting and important part of our empire, devoted to what must be called the follies and the crimes of Popery. The "Irish Evangelical Society" has been formed for carrying the Gospel there, not by means of the reading of the Scriptures only, but by that specific instrumentality which has been referred to this evening, even the oral teaching, or ministry of the Gospel; directing their exertions to the three provinces where Popery almost entirely abounds. There is one feature in the character of this institution that may be mentioned as generally urging its claims—it is not a sectarian institution; it was formed for the purpose of combining the exertions of Evangelical ministers of the Established Church, as well as the various denominations of Dissenting churches who hold the Head, even Christ. And, my friends, if there be persons of different denominations here, it ought to be remembered by them, they are giving to what is strictly a catholic institution, designed to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and without sowing divisions in the Church, to help the conquest of the world. Between fifty and sixty agents are employed by the society; and many of the statements, which, under some circumstances, I might perhaps have been able to read to you this evening, with regard to the work of God, are cheering and delightful. There is one other circumstance

would mention, namely—that the treasurer is now in advance to the amount of more than six hundred pounds: a debt which has been incurred by the necessity of answering claims which could not have been neglected, excepting by a sacrifice of feeling which no Christian could desire to exist. With these brief remarks, I now leave the claims of this important institution in your hands, praying that you will give from a sense of your obligation to the Gospel, and from a conviction of the necessity of its propagation to secure the happiness and well-being of their souls. I have only to pray that **God may cause his blessing both to the giver and the gift. Amen.**



## THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS.

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As “the ambassadors of Christ, we pray you in Christ’s stead that ye be reconciled unto God.” I am truly aware that we may urge this solemn entreaty in vain if we urge it solely on the authority of our office without making the whole of our doctrine and living conformable to the character. I am aware that if there be not a deeply-rooted conviction in the minds of our hearers that we are, in the first place, qualified to discern, and in the second place, earnest and sincere in setting it forth, our ministry cannot be a profitable or a fruitful ministry. It is necessary, therefore, that we be first competently learned. With respect to the first preachers of the Gospel, the absence of all human learning rendered more conspicuous and unquestionable the miraculous interposition of the Spirit, by which they were enabled to confound the most acute, baffle the most learned, and silence the most eloquent of their opponents. God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. The absence of all acquired endowments gave scope for the full and free manifestation of the Spirit in all its miraculous energies; but the ordinary gifts of the Spirit are to be expected in proportion only to our diligence in cultivating the natural faculties of our minds. And whatever branches of knowledge may be supposed to lie within the circle which a learned minister of the Word has traversed and explored, there is one to which even the humblest must aspire—he must be mighty in the Scriptures. And what is it to be mighty in the Scriptures? It is not to repeat merely verse on verse, or chapter on chapter; but to have well considered the meaning and coherence of all the different parts of Holy Writ; to understand their intent and application; to be able to press them on the understanding and conscience of others with the convincing clearness or reason, without any of those forced and unauthorized interpretations, those mystical speculations, which perplex the weak and offend the strong; but with an earnestness of application to every man’s conscience, which does indeed make the learned and discreet minister mighty in the Scriptures: for it enables him to throw down the prejudice of pride and worldly-mindedness; to force open, as it were, the doors of grace; and so to wield the sword of the Spirit, as to give demonstration of the truth, that the Word of God, when rightly applied, is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword.

But then it must be the whole counsel of God which we must recommend and enforce—not some of its features to the neglect and disparagement of the others. We are not merely to convince men of their own sinfulness, but to persuade them of the free mercy of God. If we teach them that he has fore-known, and consequently fore-ordained, from eternity, the salvation of those who are to be saved, and the condemnation of those who are to be condemned; we shall but foster a dangerous assurance in the presumptuous, and drive to despair the timid, unless we convince them that in the revelation of his will he deals with all men as free agents, at liberty to choose the good or evil, and answerable for the choice, able to come to him, and to work out their own salvation, albeit with fear and trembling.

But the theme of our preaching, the basis of our arguments, the ornaments of our eloquence must be Christ—Christ crucified. We may tell you that you may come unto God, but it must be through Christ: that you may obey him

and please him, but only in Christ: that he has promised to abide in you, but only as ye abide in Christ; that you may perform works good and acceptable to him, but good only as the fruit of faith in Christ, and acceptable only as Christ has purchased their acceptance by his death. I do not advise you to usurp the office of judge over any of those whom you are commanded to honour and obey; nor ought you to be offended with the peculiarities of those preachers whose mode of instruction may be unsuited to your judgment, or contrary to your taste. But I cannot desire you to honour those who do not preach Christ, and him crucified. Let no man deprive you of that sure and certain anchor of the soul, that sole foundation of your hopes as responsible sinful beings, that only real source of strength in this life, and of hope in that to come. For what is the language of the great Apostle? "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." "We preach Christ crucified." "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for his sake." "Christ in you the hope of glory."

It is the consideration of Christ crucified, my brethren, the thoughts of what he suffered, and the object for which he suffered, that constitute the sacredness and the dearness of that spiritual relationship which binds a faithful pastor to his flock. What a constraining, what an overpowering motive have we to vigilance in the duties of our holy calling in this one consideration, that the church of God which we are appointed to feed is that church which he hath purchased with his blood. The redemption for which he paid so dear a price is offered freely to all men; all are called into his fold out of a wicked world. It is not the will of our Father that one of his little ones perish. It is our province to repeat and enforce the call, to urge and persuade you by every possible argument and motive, by reason, by entreaty, by rebuke, by example, to make a personal application to yourselves of the benefits of redemption, as ambassadors for our Heavenly Master; praying you, in Christ's stead, that ye will be reconciled unto God. And if by reason of our apathy or negligence, one soul be lost of those whom Jesus died to save, have we not the sinfulness of our folly and the greatness of our punishment recorded already in the sentence of eternal judgment:—"Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

BISHOP OF LONDON'S FAREWELL SERMON, AT ST. BOTOLPH'S,  
BISHOPSGATE.

## THE CONNEXION BETWEEN BELIEVING THE GOSPEL AND MAKING IT KNOWN.

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REV. W. LUCY.

BRISTOL MONTHLY MEETING, JULY 14, 1830.

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“ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”—ACTS, iv. 20.

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SUCH was the language of the Apostles Peter and John, under circumstances of a peculiar kind, which we do well to notice. From the second chapter of this Book, we learn that they had cheering demonstrations of the Saviour's presence, in the powerful and saving influence of the Holy Spirit accompanying the message they delivered, thousands being pricked to the heart, and induced to cry “ Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved ?” and at length giving themselves to the Lord and to his Church by the will of God ; “ and the Lord adding to the Church daily such as should be saved.” They were now to experience trial ; and having entered the Temple at the hour of prayer, they saw a poor man who had been lame from his birth ; on whom they took compassion, and for whom they effected a cure. This excited considerable stir ; and great numbers came about them. Peter embraced the opportunity afforded, and preached unto them Jesus Christ, exhorting them to repent, and to be converted, that their sins might be blotted out, when the times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord. About five thousand believed, turned from their iniquities, sought the Lord with purpose of heart, and obtained salvation. This enraged the priests, and rulers, and Sadducees, who took hold of the Apostles Peter and John, and put them in confinement. The next day, having assembled a company, they brought them forth and set them in the midst, demanding how they had effected the cure on the poor man. Peter, with all boldness, informed them, that it was through the name of that Saviour, the only Saviour of men, whom they had rejected and despised. Beholding the conduct of the Apostles, they were constrained to acknowledge that they had been with Jesus, and had learned of him ; but desirous of preventing their future success, though they could but acknowledge that a wonderful cure had been performed, after consultation with each other, they commanded them no more to speak in the name of Jesus. Then the Apostles, knowing that their commission was from Heaven, answered, “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

The subject announced for this evening, is neither “ believing the Gospel,” nor “ making it known ;” but “ the connexion between the two.” To see it clearly, however, it will be necessary to dwell a little on each of the former. We shall, therefore, first, state what we conceive to be believing the Gospel. Secondly, What is included in making it known. Thirdly, The intimate relation of the one to the other. May your hearts be lifted up to God the

Holy Spirit, for his assistance and blessing. May he who speaks, speak agreeably to the oracles of divine truth; and may you who hear, receive the truth in the love thereof; that we may derive advantage, and be disposed to glorify the name of the Lord.

First, we state briefly, WHAT WE CONCEIVE TO BE BELIEVING THE GOSPEL. By the term *Gospel*, we understand the method of restoring lost, ruined man to the divine image and favour which God has revealed in the sacred Scriptures; the scheme of mercy and salvation which he has graciously made known through the mediation of Christ Jesus, his well-beloved Son, his obedience, his atonement, his intercession.

There is a belief of this Gospel which has no influence on the heart, leaving the individual equally unconcerned about himself and about others, equally impenitent, and far from God. Simon Magnus believed; but immediately after his profession he was pronounced to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." There is an historical faith with reference to the facts made known on the sacred page, as well with regard to those things which concern the present world. We are convinced, we acknowledge that they took place, and there it ends. But when we speak of *believing* the Gospel, we mean that faith which is available to salvation, including the forgiveness of sins, the justification of the person, the sanctification of the heart, and finally, the enjoyment of heaven. It may be thus simply described: entertaining it in the mind, so as for the judgment to approve; yielding to it as God's method of acceptance; and so to feel its influence as to effect a change of character. We conceive these three united will clearly show what we understand by believing the Gospel.

It is, first, *entertaining it in the mind, so as for the judgment to approve*, from a conviction of its importance, and the vast importance of being prepared for the eternal world; to give the Gospel a fair, cool, deliberate consideration, especially the distinguishing doctrines thereof, which are generally styled the essential doctrines of Christianity; such as, the Son of God's assumption of our nature; his atonement upon the cross of Calvary; the satisfaction of divine Justice by his death, and thus making way for the mercy of Jehovah, consistently with all his perfections, to be extended to the guilty rebel man. These glad tidings made known to the Jewish nations, were not thus entertained, but were despised and opposed. Saul himself thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and he opposed the doctrines of the Cross to the utmost of his power. When it was made known to the Gentile world, it was equally opposed by them; for thus we read: "the preaching of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." And so many in the present day oppose these doctrines, instead of entertaining them, and giving them a fair consideration so as for the judgment to approve. We mean such as deny the divinity of our Lord, and simply regard him as an example of holiness in the world. If we take away this pillar of divine truth, there is nothing on which we rest, and we may destroy our pulpits, close our Bibles, shut up our sanctuaries, and give up all for lost.

"Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear  
 My hope, my joy begin:  
 His name forbids my slavish fear,  
 His grace removes my sin."

There are many nominal Christians, who hold the doctrine of the Trinity, and who confess that Jesus Christ was none other than the Son of God, upon whose minds the Gospel has had no effect; it has not been entertained by them: the preaching of it in their hearing has resembled the pouring of water on a rock, producing not the least effect. The seed of the kingdom has been scattered, but it has been to them by the way side, and the fowls of the air have devoured it. The world, and the things of the world, have engaged their attention, and occupied their thoughts. They have never calmly and coolly considered the Gospel of the Son of God. Of this description was not the Eunuch: he took the word, and examined it; he entertained it, and, using the means, the divine blessing accompanied it. Eventually he saw the truth: it was approved of by his judgment, and delighted in by his heart; he believed, and he was saved. Thus, too, with Lydia: she entertained the truth of the Gospel, and the Lord opened her heart, so that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul. We have reason to fear that many in our congregations have never given a due consideration to the important truths of revelation. Permit me to ask, is there one or more of this description, in the divine presence this evening? Remember its vast importance—that believing it, you are saved; dying in unbelief, you are lost for ever.

It includes a *yielding to it, as God's method of acceptance*. There is in the mind of man such a principle of self-righteousness, that he rejects with abhorrence any proffered assistance in relation to his eternal welfare. From a false view of the divine perfections, and blindness with regard to his own insufficiency, he supposes he is capable of conducting his own affairs so as to terminate well, and he trusts to his own obedience. Where real faith is, this feeling is removed, and there is a consciousness of unworthiness and sinfulness, and a disposition to receive the Lord Jesus as Jehovah our righteousness: there will be a giving up that which before was esteemed valuable. Thus the Apostle—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Pride, and haughtiness of character is removed, and the Lord alone is exalted in the heart, and is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

We observe, *it is so to feel its influence as that the character shall be changed*. This is expressed in the commission which was given to Paul—"I send thee to the people and to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." It is to be endued with the spirit of Christ, so as, in a measure, to exhibit that mind which was found in him—humility, self-denial, devotedness to the service of God. It is hatred of evil, and a departing from it. It is a choosing of good, and that which is holy, and following it with all the ardour of the soul. And while the believer, resting upon Christ Jesus, feels his love to him so constraining him, as to depart from iniquity, he is not satisfied with the present state, but he leaves those things that are behind, and reaches forward to the things that are before, and presses forward to

the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ; he desires to bear more of his holy likeness ; and beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed by the same image from glory to glory.

This faith, generally speaking, comes by listening to divine truth. Hence it is written, " Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Permit me to ask you, Have you this faith ? Have you thus believed ? It is a question of the greatest importance to us all—Dost thou believe in the Son of God ? for we read thus—" He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Have we been made the subjects of this faith so as to receive the Gospel with pleasure, to yield to it as God's method of acceptance, to feel its influence changing us from glory to glory ? By grace we are saved, through faith ; and that not of ourselves—it is the gift of God. This will always induce individuals to make known the Gospel. Thus says the Apostle, " We cannot," it is impossible to be otherwise with us—" We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Let us notice, then,

Secondly, **WHAT WE INCLUDE IN MAKING THE GOSPEL KNOWN.** It is the diligent use of all lawful means, with a prayerful dependence upon God for his blessing to rest upon us, knowing that " every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness nor shadow of change." We must ever bear in mind, that whatever efforts we employ, we are indebted to the blessing of God for success ; the most simple means, employed with a single eye to the glory of God, and the welfare of immortal souls, are often blessed by him more than others which are more splendid in appearance. Clay, and spittle, and Jordan's streams, could cleanse when it was his pleasure ; and so now, the most simple means shall succeed, and we shall have to bless him for that which is done, while we see others partakers of the blessing. Some of these means may be mentioned.

*Imparting spiritual knowledge to those with whom we are acquainted*—husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers, friends, or relatives ; those who serve us, if such there are—the household, of whomsoever it may be composed. We mention this, because the charity of the Gospel begins at home, and because this is too much neglected in the day in which we live. The conversion of our friends and relatives, the bringing of those nigh to God by the blood of Jesus under the influence of the Gospel, that they may be saved, is lost sight of. This arises, we conceive, from that conformity which is manifested in the present day. There is not that opposition to the Gospel, but a seeming conformity to its bidding, and a bowing the knee at the family altar. And then decision of character, and experimental acquaintance with the truths of Christianity, are overlooked. Has it not been too much so with you all ? While we speak so, we speak to ourselves. Has it not been so with the ministers of religion, the deacons, and the members of our Churches ? They have been contented to eat the bread of life, while others have perished by their side. Having the lamp of eternal light, they were content, while others sat in darkness and the shadow of death. We have reason to believe that when this spirit is less prevalent, there will be greater prosperity attending the Churches of the saints. The Lord will honour them that honour him ; while we are anxious about the souls of those with whom we are associated, his blessing will rest among us.

*Giving Christian education.* This has been much overlooked, especially

by certain classes of the community. There has been great anxiety, for instance that the daughters should appear to advantage in the drawing room, with the accomplishments that are considered necessary to adorn them; that the sons should exceed their fellows in literature, or in the possession of the qualifications requisite for the situations they are about to fill: while there has been no anxiety that they should be qualified to fill important situations in the Church of God, to occupy the places of those who are gone. We commend, and approve highly, the cultivation of *the mind*: but let us not neglect the cultivation and the sanctification of *the heart*. Has there not been negligence on the part of some with respect to this? While they have given attention to the accomplishments of the day, they have not been desirous that they should possess the faith of the Gospel—to become disciples of the despised Nazarene, that they may be heirs of the grace of eternity. We marvel not, that some Christian parents have to mourn over the abominable conduct of their offspring. They have not taken them to the throne of grace: they have not instructed them in the principles of Christianity: they have not asked the divine blessing to rest upon them: and there having been no spiritual cultivation, how is it possible there could be any spiritual fruit?

We should not content ourselves with the children of the lower classes being in Sunday-schools, unless there is scriptural knowledge imparted. When we say “scriptural knowledge,” we do not mean merely reading the scriptures, but that they should be explained—that they should have an important bearing on the conscience—and that the truth should be brought to the affections, so that they may love it, and rejoice in it, and follow it all their days. In Scotland there is a greater degree of morality, greater attention to the Sabbath, and more perusal of the Scriptures, arising, we conceive, from the greater attention paid to the rising population. In Wales there are great numbers of young persons devoted to the service of the Lord, which may be attributed to the same cause. They are brought under the discipline of the Gospel; and the Lord is pleased to bless them; and one and another comes forward to give themselves up to the service and glory of God.

Christians who have given their children to the Lord—and most Christians, we conceive, do so, though they differ as to the mode—are laid under peculiar obligations. It becomes them to see that their children are instructed in the great truths of Christianity, so far as they are capable of understanding them, pointing out the danger of sin, the evil of the world, and the need of a personal acquaintance with, and a union unto, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are aware that some will say, this is taking the work out of the Spirit's hands. Is it not then, taking the work out of the Spirit's hand for the minister to stand in his pulpit from week to week? What is it but doing the work of the Lord in a similar way? only the one is more private, the other more public. We are aware that unless the blessing of God rest upon it no good will result: but take the principle in reference to earthly matters. The husbandman, though he cannot secure the crop, plants the ground—asks for the rain to descend upon it, and for the sun to vivify it, so that it may bring forth fruit. Open the fallow ground—cast in the seed of the kingdom—pray that the beams of the sun of righteousness may be felt in their hearts, that they may spring up to the praise and glory of God.

*Distribution* is another means—Distribution of *religious tracts*. Who can possibly tell the good that has already resulted from sending these little messengers of mercy into the cottages of the poor, even in our own city? But

the good we expect is not realized: it has only been the seed-time: we wait for the harvest. We expect that through the influences we are using, numbers will come forward to testify of the goodness and grace of the Lord. Go on fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. Despise I by many, remember that you carry a balsam in your hand which will heal—that you carry a lamp in your hands which will light the individual who follows it to the realms of everlasting day. There should be care as to the selection of tracts, that they may be suitable; for having done so, we may expect the blessing of the Lord to rest upon them. *Other small books* containing the principal doctrines of our religion; Baxter's Call—Boston's Four-fold State—Romaine's Walk of Faith—Booth's Reign of Grace, and others containing truths essential to salvation. Distribution, especially of *the sacred Scriptures*. This book is able to make wise to salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ; and many, at the present time, are rejoicing in hope of the glory of God through reading the sacred Scriptures, who never enjoyed the means of grace. Let us, then, use these means, remembering there are thousands, and tens of thousands, who at the present hour have not the sacred Scriptures—that there is much work yet to be done. The field is the world; and we never should be satisfied till all the land is cultivated, and the wilderness shall blossom as the rose.

It is exceedingly desirable to bear in mind *the spirit with which we set about the work*—feeling our own sinfulness—rejoicing in the blessings of the Gospel made known to us, and desirous that others may be made participants of the same glory; and then looking up in the exercise of prayer, that he will send down the influences of his Holy Spirit as a copious rain, that the seed scattered may produce fruit.

*The preaching of the Gospel.* We are of opinion, that by this means, in connexion with those we have mentioned, the Lord will eventually evangelize the world. He has been pleased to raise up men after his own heart, to fill them with his Holy Spirit, and to send them forth to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south, till the whole shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Those who are conscious of having a call to preach this Gospel should be faithful. But all cannot preach—that is, they are not sent to stand up, and exhibit publicly, a crucified Redeemer. But they can do so through the medium of others; and those who have been brought to the enjoyment of the Gospel themselves should preach it to others, either by giving themselves, or sending others to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. We would not dictate to what extent individuals should give to the Lord; but we feel persuaded that, when the Spirit shall be poured out, there will be much greater liberality shown. We talk of our exertions, but they are comparatively small when we look at the exertions that were made by the primitive disciples. Not, perhaps, that in the *lower* classes of society there will be much greater exertion; but we mean that those who have possessions, who have the riches of the world, will be disposed to consecrate them to the service of the Redeemer.

*By deportment becoming the Gospel*—to exhibit the spirit which the Gospel inculcates in all the situations of life in which we may be placed. This was the case with the Thessalonians. “From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad,” &c. When in adverse circumstances, to show contentment of mind—when in affliction, to be patient and resigned—when in prosperity, to be full of zeal and devotedness to the service of the Lord, so as to



constrain men to take knowledge of us that there is a reality in the religion we profess, that it has an influence on our minds, and that they may be constrained to glorify God our Father who is in heaven.

Let us now, show thirdly, THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE TWO. To trace the legitimate effect of principle in any system is exceedingly pleasing: but especially is this the case with Christianity; inasmuch as the interests of thousands are connected with it. And where there is a real spiritual reception of the Gospel, there will be a publication of it arising from the following considerations.

*Sympathy with the distressed.* It is natural to feel for our fellow creatures when they are in a state of suffering, whether it arises from poverty, or disease, or what we commonly call accident. And if this be the case with regard to the body, is it not so with reference to the soul? It cannot be otherwise: and if there is not a sympathy with those who are in distress with regard to their souls, it is because we have not ourselves been brought under the influence of the Gospel. When we think of their present state, ignorant of God, blinded to their own condition, led captive by Satan, delighting in those things that will prove their ruin; and when we think of that state to which they are going, the blackness of darkness, the worm that never dies, an eternity of woe, we should be led to enquire into our own condition. We have heard of a flock of sheep passing over a bridge, and one by some means being induced to take a leap and go over, all the rest followed in a train as fast as possible. Are we not reminded of our first parents taking a leap indeed, by eating of the forbidden fruit, ruining themselves, and all their posterity following in their train, and as they pass over the stage of life, leaping over the bridge into irretrievable ruin?

*Love to the Redeemer will induce this publication of the Gospel.* If we are brought to believe in him so as to secure our own salvation, he must be precious to us. When we esteem an individual, we wish others to esteem him also; and especially is this the case when it secures an advantage to the person who is brought. If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ he is accursed: but if he is brought to exercise faith in him, so as to secure his salvation, love to the Redeemer will burn in his breast, and he shall enjoy blessedness for ever. And this is not confined to a particular class of society: *Whoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And how shall they believe who have not heard? It becomes us, then, who have received the Gospel to describe the Saviour in his person, and in his work, and in his grace; so that individuals may be attracted to him, and love him supremely.

*Anxiety for the cause will induce this.* If we are interested in any thing that is good, there is a great propriety in seeking its extension. The cause for which we plead is the cause of heaven, and of righteousness, and of immortal souls; and we shall not be contented, if we feel aright, till it extends to the utmost bounds of the creation—till every mountain shall be made low, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it, according as he hath spoken.

*Think of the happiness to be possessed.* Happiness here, peace of conscience to be derived nowhere else, nearness to God as his children, and the sanctified use of all things below. But when we think of *hereafter*, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God has prepared for them that love him: it is the society of saints

and angels, and the enjoyment of God for ever. When we think of this, will it not influence us to extend our hand to scatter the blessings of heaven and the salvation of Christ?

*The glory that will be secured to God.* What honour, what glory will be brought to his name, when, throughout our world, instead of enmity, and disorder, and confusion, there shall be peace, and comfort, and joy—when, instead of rebellion and ungodliness, there shall be obedience of heart and life—when, instead of there being gods many, and lords many, unto Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. That it is the Lord's will this should be the case cannot be doubted for a moment. Think of the command he has given to *parents*, to instruct those that are connected with them:—"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children," &c. (Deuteronomy, vi. 7.) Think of the command given to his *disciples*:—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. (Matthew, xxviii. 19.) Think of the expressions concerning believers: "Ye shall be a blessing in all the earth." "Ye are the salt of the earth, the light of the world." We have *examples* left, *individual* and *collective* examples. *Individual examples.* David was desirous of building a temple for the Lord, that his worship might be perpetuated and enlarged. The woman of Samaria, when she found the Saviour, was desirous of making him known to others: "Come, see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Paul, when he was converted, "straightway preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God." *Collective examples.* The Apostles went and preached every where, that Jesus is Christ. After the persecution took place, those that were scattered abroad went every where preaching Christ. The Thessalonians caused to be sounded out the Word of the Lord, so that the Apostles needed not to speak any thing; they were living epistles, known and read of all men. In later times, when Luther, and Calvin, and Melancthon, and others, emerged from a state of popery, they came forth and preached the Gospel to those with whom they were associated first, and then to all who would give them a hearing. And in later times still, a Whitfield, and a Wesley, and I may be allowed to say, the Countess of Huntingdon, did what they could to spread the Gospel of the Son of God.

Let me ask, what have *we* done? There are a great number who profess to be members of a Christian Church; is this the sentiment you feel: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard?" Are you making it known in your families, in your neighbourhood, in the city in which you live, and throughout the world? An individual's house was on fire. The alarm being given, she became anxious, and thought of this article, and the other article, and ran to this apartment, and the other apartment, to secure this and that; and having done so she exclaimed, "Oh, my child!" She went to see after her child; but it was too late, her child was consumed by flames. We may be taken up by this and the other trifle, and we may give away our money; but we may lose our child, our neighbour; and at the great day of the Lord his blood shall be found upon us. May the Lord enable us to use all our efforts for the extension of his kingdom throughout our world. Amen.

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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REV. W. B. LEACH.

ROBERT STREET CHAPEL, GROSVENOR SQUARE, EASTER SUNDAY.

APRIL 3, 1831.

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“And was raised again for our justification.”—ROMANS, iv. 25.

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ON Friday our attention was directed to the former part of this verse, when, in conjunction with thousands of our pious countrymen, we repaired to the hill of Calvary, and surveyed the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died. In that elevated position—so favourable for instruction and the exercise of devotional feeling—we beheld the treachery of Judas, the malice of the Jews, the contempt of the Romans, the denial of Peter, the cowardice of the Apostles, and the insults of the populace. There we beheld the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world, the Lamb led to the slaughter, the sheep dumb beneath the hand of her shearers, the blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins, the fountain which was opened for the purification of sin and uncleanness, the price which was paid for the procurement of our pardon, and the peace which was ratified between God and his offending creatures.

From the Saviour's cross we are now invited to turn our attention to his tomb. As the bodies of the malefactors were under the power of the Roman magistrates, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. He, accompanied by Nicodemus, perfumed the body, and conducted it at last to the sepulchre, followed by a few poor but pious females, who were the attendants in this funeral procession. On being thus deposited, a stone was rolled against the sepulchre's mouth, and was sealed by the Roman signet; whilst a military guard was placed to protect the spot, lest the disciples, for the confirmation of their belief in the Lord's Messiahship, should come and steal him away by night. At length, on the eventful morn of the first day of the week, which was big with important events, an angel descends from heaven; a trembling shakes the ground; the earthquake removes the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; the seal is broken; Jesus comes forth, and appears to his disciples. Thus, whilst “he was delivered for our offences,” he “was raised again for our justification.”

There is not a more momentous event in the whole economy of salvation, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. Upon this point our hopes must rest: for “if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins.” It was important, therefore, for the confirmation of his Messiahship to justify the hopes of his saints, to take possession of the heavenly inheritance, which he laid down his life to purchase—to attest the completion of his mediatorial work, which confers the benefits of his meritorious righteousness, and that he might enter on that office in heaven which was indispensable for the good of his Church, and the extension of his kingdom here below.

The resurrection of our Lord is important *for the confirmation of the truth of his Messiahship*. For the protracted space of four thousand years, the ancient Church calculated upon his coming as the Son of man in the flesh. He was repeatedly spoken of as the desire of all nations, to whom was to be the gathering of the people; as the heavenly Shiloh; as the offspring of David; as the stem of Jesse, the plant of renown; as the precious corner stone. But yet, notwithstanding the clearness and perspicuity with which his approaching advent was announced to the Jews, no sooner did they behold him, divested of that earthly splendour and majesty on which their sordid minds had calculated, than they unitedly rejected his mission, disbelieved his divinity, insulted his humanity, persecuted his followers, and at last nailed him to the tree. Well, my brethren, go to his tomb. In three short days after his crucifixion the question is to be decided. If Jesus rise not, the Jews were right in their opposition to him; but if he burst the barriers of the tomb, his Messiahship is attested beyond debate. He *did* rise. He rose for the confirmation of his own character, and for the confirmation of his people's hope.

It was important *in order to sanction and confirm the faith of his followers*. It is well known how extremely difficult we find it to lose old prepossessions and prejudices, in which, perhaps, we have even been cradled; which we have imbibed from our very birth; which have been infused into our minds by the influence of education; which have been associated with all our habits and modes of thinking and acting; which have grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength. These old prejudices and prepossessions seem to have had a very strong influence over the minds even of our Lord's disciples. There is one Scripture that informs us that "neither did his brethren believe in him." And strange to say, even to the very last, those few members of his family, notwithstanding all that they had heard from his lips respecting his own resurrection in particular, and the resurrection of the dead in general, seem to have had very confused notions respecting that great transaction. "They doubted in themselves," we are told, "what the resurrection of the dead should mean." And when two of them going to Emmaus, were talking about this wonderful occurrence, they said, not supposing that Jesus was in the midst of them, "We trusted that it had been he who should have delivered Israel:" not being able still to get quit of the notion that he was to establish a temporal jurisdiction. Such had been their sordid views for years. However, when the happy morn arrived in which he came forth from the bars of mortality, and appeared to them in a remarkable and miraculous manner, all their hopes were, at once justified; their hesitation was lulled to rest; their fears were silenced; and after this period you see them quite different persons. Their former timidity and prejudices seem to have given way; and they went forth with unbounded zeal, being faithful even unto death.

The resurrection of Christ was important, *because it was indispensable to attest the completion of his mediatorial work*. We want a complete salvation. Jesus Christ took upon himself our humble form; by his obedience he magnified the broken law, through whose breach Jehovah's curse came upon our guilty world, and made it honourable: he also poured out his soul unto death. When he rose from the tomb there was Jehovah's voice declaring to us that "it was finished," that he had completed the whole of the transaction. This was the topstone of the great fabric of Almighty mercy: the basement was laid in that covenant which was formed before the foundation of the world; and in our risen

Saviour we seem to see the last act of divine benevolence on behalf of our fallen world, and our deliverance from endless woe. That was the morning, surely, when the topstone was brought forth with shouting of "Grace unto it."

It was needful our Lord should rise to *re-ascend to his glory and settle those things which relate to his Church and his kingdom here below*. Did Aaron enter on the great day of atonement into the Holy of holies, with the blood of sprinkling? So it was with our Great High Priest. "This man," says the Apostle, or, as it should have been rendered, this *priest*, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." He has therefore risen and passed into the heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us. He has gone to take possession of those mansions which he laid down his life to secure, as our covenant Head, forerunner, and representative: he has gone to advocate our cause; he has gone to present the memorials of his purchase. There he lives, being made Head over all things to the Church. There he has a name which is above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth." There we see him as our exalted king, having all rule, and all authority, and all power over angels, over the various departments of universal nature; over all the nations of our globe; over the churches of his saints, over the families, the affairs, the bodies, the minds of his people as individuals. Thus the reins of universal government are in the hands of our risen and exalted Redeemer. Under his peaceful sway nothing happens by chance; but all things work together for our good, and for the glory of his name.

In the second place, let us adduce **SOME REASONS IN CONFIRMATION OF THIS GREAT DOCTRINE**. It is not enough that we assent to it; it is requisite that we be at all times prepared to give an answer to every man who proposes a question on such a leading feature of our Christian character, upon such a leading article of our Christian creed. It is indispensable, because the resurrection of Christ forms a very material link in the chain of Christian doctrine. The Jews deny it: so do infidels. But we ask, Would the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ have taken away his body from the grave? For the *removal* of his body is indisputable: the only question is, *who* removed it? Was it likely the enemies of Christ would have done so? This would have confirmed all the expectations of the disciples: for they calculated on his bursting the barriers of the tomb; they calculated upon his coming forth from the prison house. If then it is not likely the enemies of Christ would not have done it, was it likely that his disciples would have done it? Timid creatures! There was Peter, the boldest among them, alarmed only at the voice of a servant maid, who said to him, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth:" was it likely he would have risen so above himself as thus to have acted? And, even if that were likely, where were the guards? Why, says the Scripture, when the Jews found that Christ was raised, they came to the Roman governor, and gave the soldiers large sums of money, and said, "Say ye, his disciples came at night, and stole him away while we slept." Nothing was more unlikely. If the guards were asleep, how did they know who stole him? and if they were awake, why not prevent the theft, since their character, and even their life were placed in such imminent danger?

But without further debate we call our witnesses. Who are the men able to

prove this fact? They were not men of affluence: they were not men of literary fame, who were likely, by the eloquence of their speech and pleading, to impose on the unwary and the mass generally. Look at their *condition*. They were only poor men—they were only lowly fishermen of Galilee, and tent-makers. Look at their *number*. It was not a solitary individual who came forth and said, he had seen the Lord Jesus. But it would seem to be a considerable number of these individuals—men who had been accustomed to converse with our Lord—men who knew him well. Paul says, “I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. After that he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also”—alluding to his conversion—“as of one born out of due time.” Such was their number.

Observe the *nature of their evidence*. It was not what they had heard: it was not what they imagined: for it is well known how far the imagination may be worked up, and what a variety of pleasing pictures a sanguine mind can easily pourtray to itself. They had not only beheld him, but had conversed with him. John says, “That which we have seen and *heard* declare we unto you.” Considerable weight is to be attached to the *agreement of their testimony*. They all united in confirming the same point before various tribunals. They had given in this report before Jews, Gentiles, the Sanhedrim, senators, philosophers, nobles, lawyers, rabbies. The *place* likewise in which the fact is asserted to have taken place was not a position far off: it was near—they could speak of a transaction that had occurred at their very doors. And beyond this, we are to look at their *constitutional incredulity*: they were not men to be imposed upon easily. Look on Thomas, as an instance: how hard was he of belief! The disciples who had seen their Master before him, apprized him of the privilege they had enjoyed by the interview. But he said, “Unless I shall see for myself I will not believe. I must not only have the evidence of one sense only, sight; I must have the confirmation of another, feeling.” At the next interview this was granted: Thomas was satisfied, and declared, “My Lord and my God.”

*Their conduct and suffering in support of their testimony* is another argument in favour of the doctrine. What were they likely to gain by it? Affluence—places of state—places of secular influence and advantage? Far otherwise. From that moment they entered upon the rugged road of persecution, the termination of which was the martyr's stake. But although they foresaw what would be the consequences of bearing their record concerning the resurrection of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they went forth everywhere, not accounting their lives dear to themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God. They lost their property; their character was maligned; and at length they sealed their testimony by their blood.

From hence you perceive you have not followed a cunningly-devised fable. We lay these facts before you, not from the supposition that you question the doctrine; but that you may see the reasons of your belief in this fundamental article of the Christian creed. This is one of the great foundation stones of the spiritual building; and “if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”

This leads us to notice, thirdly, **THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH OUR LORD ROSE FROM THE GRAVE.** Who were the visitants at the grave of Jesus? "It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them." What an honourable position do pious females occupy in the New Testament. In many respects, my brethren, they present an example well worthy of our imitation. It was not a female that denied him. Women were last at the cross, and they were first at the tomb. Christianity, my female friends, has done much for you: it has placed you upon your proper footing in the scale of creation. And Christianity has done much for you in the way of salvation. How many thousands, and tens of thousands, of your sex are now praising him in the kingdom of God's dear Son!

Observe *the time* of their attendance. It was "very early in the morning." What more lovely than early devotion! Those who go early to the Saviour's sepulchre, even now, by acts of faith and worship, beginning the day with prayer, are likely to end it with praise. Good is it when we can say, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." "O Lord, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." What was the *object* of their visit to that tomb? It was to pay the funeral rites to their beloved Lord; to embalm the body with the spices they had brought, according to the custom of the Jews. And as they went forth a difficulty presented itself: they said, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" But ah! how much better was the Lord to them than their fears: for, when they arrived at the sepulchre, the stone was rolled away already. Thus it is oftentimes with our troubles. We imagine that such and such obstacles are before us; and looking at these in the abstract, we are ready to say, "All these things are against me:" but, by and bye, when perseverance and prayer have led us forth, we find the stone is removed, and that the obstacle was more imaginary than real.

But who removed that stone? It was effected by the earthquake. Here is an additional confirmation of the majesty and authority of the Prince of life. When he assumes our nature and becomes incarnate, a new star is visible, descends over the place where the infant was lying, and directs the attention of the Magi to the Son of God. When Jesus died, the rocks were rent, the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom, and there was a supernatural darkness over the land from twelve to three o'clock. And now, when Jesus rises, there is an earthquake for the removal of the stone. And whom did the attendants find at the mouth of the grave but angels? There you see their ministry. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Finally, let us consider the consequences which arise out of the subject.

Did Jesus rise? Then henceforth in the view of the Christian, the grave loses its terrors. Christ bare there the penalty which was due to our disobedience. By bursting the bars of death he shows us there is a new and living way opened which conducts us to the Holy of holies. He has led us into that way, for he has gone before. The grave he has perfumed with the incense of his presence: he has conquered its power and authority by his rising. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin arises from a broken law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Did Jesus rise? Then we see an earnest of our resurrection; for, in the

memorable language of Paul, "now is Christ risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of them that slept." This is the pledge, this is the pattern. Was the first sheaf of old presented before the Lord in the temple? This was the pledge and the pattern of the future harvest—this was the evidence that the fields were now in a state of ripeness, and that their appearance invited the husbandman to thrust in the sickle. In like manner, the Saviour's resurrection from the grave is a pledge of your rising; and in his glorious body you see something of the pattern of that which you are to wear when you awake in the divine likeness, and he opens the way to the mansions of bliss. Follow him thither by your prayers, your faith, your hope, your desires.

See, then, the solid basis on which your hopes rest. You have not followed a cunningly-devised fable. You build all your expectations of acceptance with God, and the happiness of the future state, on what he has done and suffered. God forbid that we should henceforth glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom, and through whom, the world is crucified unto us, and we 'nto the world.

Learn, again, your immense obligations to the Lord that bought you. Nothing has been neglected that was requisite to be done. Here is a finished salvation: how full, how free, how valuable, how valid. Where is the poor penitent sinner to look but to the cross and the tomb of the Saviour? In that tomb you will lose the burden of guilt that presses upon you, as Bunyan's Christian did when he arrived at a similar place. Come, then, to Jesus just as you are. "His heart is made of tenderness; his bowels melt with love." He will not break the bruised reed; he will not quench the smoking flax. **He** knows our souls are in adversity: though we are poor and needy the Lord **thinks** upon us.



## INSTABILITY IN RELIGION.

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“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”—GENESIS, xlix. 4.

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IF we throw a stone into the water, although at first certainly it divides the surface and gives it a new impression, yet, after a few circling eddies, tranquillity is restored, and no mark remains of its recent motion. If you launch a boat upon the stream, instead of its remaining a fixed weight upon it, it rolls and moves with the rolling current. If we cast our eyes upon the ocean, that mighty world of living waters, how changeable is the scene that comes before us! Every breeze that blows varies even its colour, while its waves exhibit to us nothing but tumult and commotion.

Now all this is, in reality, what it is intimated to be in the text—an emblem and a picture of several amongst the children of men. Whenever a new object comes before some people, it makes, like the stone cast into the water, an impression upon them at first; it engages their attention; they are, probably, pleased with it and delighted, and fancy that they have discovered the treasure of true satisfaction. But again, like the stone, after a few circling eddies—that is, after a few observations, after a few gratifications and short acquaintance—the novelty is over; something fresh catches the attention, and the former object departs without leaving a single mark or vestige behind.

You shall see other people, like the boat upon the stream, quite at the mercy of the fickle current. They never fix to any thing: they are without a rudder, without ballast, without any of the other requisites of good management. The surface upon which they rest is soft and variable; and thereon, without allowing any confidence to be placed in their firmness and stability, they rock about with every momentary agitation of the water.

Thirdly, there are others completely like the sea. Such people never continue in the same mind for a month, nay, sometimes not even for a day together—and that too upon subjects of the greatest possible concern and importance. Now they view life and the world under one colour, and now under another: one while they are full of hope, and energy, and self-satisfaction; at another time they are absorbed in gloomy presentiments, and anxieties, and melancholy: one day they represent this life as every thing; the next they speak against it as of no kind of importance or value at all: and all this, not from any change of circumstances; nor indeed from any one good cause, as relates to themselves, is this alteration in their opinions, but from an innate principle of unsteadiness, and from the temper and humour they happen to be in at the moment of forming them.

Now, look at such men in their pursuits, and in their occupations: and there they are just the same as they were in their opinions; there is a perpetual variation. Take their studies for instance. To-day, perhaps, they are full of the importance and necessity of the knowledge of a particular subject, and they follow it up with the greatest ardour and alacrity. They read, and note, and discuss, and apply, and really are making all the improvement that so praiseworthy a zeal deserves and ensures. When you observe them a short time after, this object is all laid by, and they are now distractedly fond of something else, and are directing all their endeavours after the attainment and enjoyment of it, until even this soon gives way possibly to some new vocation, which obliterates the past, and absorbs all their care and attention.

Observe such persons once more—observe them in their attachments: and what are they in this respect? The very same—inconstant and fickle. They select a person from their acquaintance as their more particular associate and intimate companion: they cultivate his regard, they extol his merits, and they appropriate him to themselves; and then, from some trifling misunderstanding—nay, frequently, not even so much, from mere whim and caprice, from being tired of one, and captivated perhaps by another, they break through the ties that held them together, and pass by, if they meet their former friend, as if they had never been acquainted.

Now, my brethren, you will observe that, in these three several instances, it is not so much the variety that is to be blamed, as the being constant to none. There is not, nor can be, any harm in having several opinions, many objects of pursuit, or a long list of friends. In this respect, simply as such, there is no fault to find: but the fault is in this—in being of a restless, wandering, wavering disposition—setting your affections upon many things in succession, and loving and pursuing constantly none. Just like waves of the sea, which, rolling closely the one after the other, the hinder one pushes the former upon the rocks only to come himself the next moment to the same termination.

Now, of such persons and of such conduct, what say reason and experience? Nay, what say the Scriptures? for they all hold one universal language. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways:” and in the text—“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” Never was a truer sentence than this. A fickle unsteady person never can arrive at true improvement, or do himself any lasting and final good. No one can depend upon him, nor indeed can he have any very great dependence or confidence in himself. All his principles and opinions are hasty, prejudiced, unguarded, and uncertain: all his pursuits in knowledge are superficial and inconclusive; and for the very best of causes—he never gives himself time to improve steadfastly and properly, which is the only way of true improvement: before he half gains one object he changes it for another; flies, or rather flutters about from point to point; and with the best of abilities, possibly, if rightly directed, he knows a little of everything, and nothing well.

And as to friends—who ever knew an unstable man to have many of them? The very qualities which are most absolutely essential to real friendship, are qualities to which he is a perfect stranger. *Fidelity* is the only pass-word to earthly friendship, as well as to heavenly. He who wishes to make a good friend himself, or to find friends in others, must not be too fond of new faces: he must not be “unstable as water,” changing as the wind changes, ruffled perhaps by the slightest breeze, or cold and calm when pressing occasions

demand his interference and exertion. In short, it is the same all through life : whoever hopes to do himself any real good must steadily direct all his endeavours to one point ; he must not trust alone to superficial knowledge of this kind, or superficial knowledge of that : life is hardly long enough—so difficult a thing is sound acquirement—to gain one branch of knowledge thoroughly and well. Therefore general information is lawful, because it is all we can have upon most points : but excellence is an object of steady growth ; it can only arise from the fixed purpose and the regular habit of applying, and investigating, and determining, and then persevering.

But I come now to the most useful bearing in this argument : and that is the adaptation of it to higher, and to spiritual designs.

If the sentiment in the text, my brethren, be a true one in affairs of this world how much more true is it in things connected with that world which is to come ! If a man cannot excel in a trade, a profession, or science without study, application, and perseverance ; if a man cannot, and with very just cause cannot, we will say, become either a good scholar or a skilful architect, provided he will not submit to the rules of the art, and if he only attend by fits and starts ; how, let me ask, can he reasonably expect to become a good Christian by the same means ? What is it that exempts Christianity from that careful attention that belongs to every other pursuit ? What is it that induces us to hope that the foundation and superstructure, the knowledge, the experience, the application, the comfort of religious truths, are all to be acquired by a few trifling fanciful attempts, just according to a momentary burst of feeling, or a capricious use of accidental opportunities ? Is it that religion is of no importance, and therefore needs not take up much of our time ? Brethren, what can be so important ? What can, or what ought, to excite a half—nay, a thousandth part of the concern upon our minds of all the things of this world, as that single question—whether, when the few years of our pilgrimage are over and gone, we shall live for ever, body and soul, in heaven or in hell ? I will venture to assert, that a truly pious man who has the magnitude of eternity properly fixed upon his heart would, if it were not for the relative duties he owes to society, and the pleasures wisely affixed by the God of nature and of grace to the performance of these duties—as far as the abstract importance is regarded, would, with the greatest readiness, give up all of it, retire to a dungeon for life, or spend his days in a wilderness.

Is it, again, that Christianity is sooner learned, and upon that account we may treat it with inconstancy and neglect ? What, my brethren, is the Bible soon read, and studied, and understood ? Are its histories soon arranged—its connexion soon perceived—its doctrines of faith, and grace, and justification, and holiness soon comprehended—its habits soon formed—and the objections to all these (and many are often urged) answered and confuted by a momentary study ? Is the whole armour of God to be fitted on and used without the least practice ? Be assured of this, and some amongst you may have found it out by experience, that the more we know of religion, the more we shall perceive is yet to be known. Our work is never done. Amongst the clearest truths in the whole Bible is this, that religion is a progressive state. If we are not getting better, we are getting worse before God ; that is, if our principles and habits are not becoming more fixed by exercise, and our hearts more purified and more holy by the increasing operation of the grace of God, increasing exactly in proportion to our

endeavours and to our prayers—why, then habits must be contracted of inattention, and the thoughts lose their relish for all spiritual subjects and enjoyments. It is exactly like proceeding in a boat against a stream; if we relax the oars only a single moment, in that moment the current prevails, and we float back and lose our labour.

Now, these are truths perhaps, which none will deny: and yet let us see how many men behave notwithstanding. One man shall think that if he goes to church upon a Sabbath day, he may do almost what he pleases during the rest of the week. Another reads the titles of the books of the Bible, or goes so far as to peruse some of the lessons of the day; and there remains his acquaintance with and knowledge of the Sacred Volume. A third repents of his sins bitterly to-day, and commits every one of them again to-morrow. A fourth makes resolution after resolution, and observes none. A fifth shall pray to God at night sometimes, and omit it entirely as a morning sacrifice. Nay, a sixth shall go further still, he prays perhaps with devotion in the house of God—hears a sermon, or reads a book that affects and convinces him when he is at home, he instantly resolves to act accordingly, to reform his ways, to walk henceforth in a more humble, and virtuous, and religious course—and, we will take it for granted, he perseveres in this for a short period: but, alas! the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. A few gay scenes, a few entertaining companions, dissolve the charm, and the next rising sun dispels the whole as a morning cloud or the early dew. And yet all these several parties shall be astonished—astonished that they do not feel the comforts of religion—astonished that they do not see its beauty—astonished that they are unable to resist temptation, and that they do not grow in grace—astonished indeed at every thing but at their own folly.—The reason, however, of all this is plain: “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” As long as they remain in this indecisive, fickle, inconstant state, they never will excel, although they make the attempt over and over again to the end of their lives.

Let us attend, then, for a moment to a few short rules and exhortations, sincerely but humbly offered, which under God’s blessing may help to correct the evil.

The first grand foundation of being steadfast in religion is, *to be thoroughly convinced of its reality.* Spare no pains to effect this. Read and study and ask advice day and night, until you arrive—as I know every one will arrive who really tries in a right spirit—until you arrive at these important conclusions—namely, that there is a God, and that there is a Saviour; that the Bible is his Holy Word; that there is a guilty heart to be cleansed, and that there is free grace ready to cleanse, and to purify, and pardon; and that there certainly will be a future state of happiness, and a state of misery. Now, I say that it is every man’s duty, as well as every man’s interest, to come to a right and clear understanding upon these questions; but then, having done so, let him act up to it, openly and firmly. Do not believe God, and yet not serve God: do not believe in Christ, and yet every day crucify Christ afresh, do not believe in heaven and in hell, and yet never stir a single step upon account of either.

But secondly: *Read the Word of God,* and read it regularly—a certain small portion at least every day. Let nothing prevent or impede this habit. You find time for your meals, to say nothing of your pleasures: find time, likewise, for that meal which gives you the bread of eternal life.—

In the next place, *Do not be fond of prying into new doctrines.* Do not

encourage, itching ears, hearing the word for the sake of entertainment only, or curiosity; or, like the Athenians, (recorded in Acts 17th) spending your time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing in religion. I do not mean to say that the caution is particularly required by any one here, but it is a caution not unuseful in the present day. Some men will be found to alter with every passing day: one while Armenians, then Calvinists, then a mixture of both; now of this, and now of that party. Unquestionably, brethren, this cannot tend to eventual good. There is no objection to a man's altering his creed (and acting up to it) with patient investigation and with due conviction; nay, it is rather a proof of a sincere and a pious mind. The thing to be guarded against is changing for changing's sake, lightly, inconsiderately, capriciously, and from momentary motives and feelings. "Prove all things," says the Apostle; but he adds, "hold fast that which is good." Let conscience be your guide in every hour of your life, and against its solemn dictates let no temptation, no threats, either of the world, the flesh, or the devil, ever prevail. Conscience will well repay to you every debt which it owes. It has been said that perseverance is to be admired even in a bad cause: without going to that length, however, how admirable is perseverance in a good one!

My brethren I am aware of human infirmities: I know that sometimes even the best men may waver: but then how delightful to see them recovering, and catching hold again of that friendly plank which in the spiritual shipwreck they had dropped from their hand in an unwary moment. Look at St. Peter—who knows not his conduct? Look at more modern times when in the days of persecution one of the greatest ornaments of our own church, Archbishop Cranmer, tried to save his life by the recantation of his faith. The moment he had done it, like the Apostle he wept bitterly; and when tied to the stake, amidst the flames, (for his concession, after all, could not save him from a cruel death,) with a noble fortitude he plunged the hand which had signed the paper into the fire, and there he held it unmoved until it dropped, a cinder itself amidst the ashes; crying out all the time, "This is the hand that sinned—this is the hand that sinned." "When we see," says his biographer, "human nature struggling so nobly with uncommon sufferings, it is a pleasing reflection that through the assistance of God, there is a firmness in the mind of man which will support him under trials in appearance beyond his strength."

Nor can I refrain from mentioning an interesting fact, recorded in ecclesiastical history, of the forty martyrs of Sebastian, mixed up as it is with a useful, although an awful lesson. About three hundred years after the death of our Saviour, there were forty soldiers in the Roman army who had become Christians, and who had turned away from idols to the service of the Living God. One day an edict was passed by the governor that they should turn from Jesus Christ, and worship their former idols of wood and stone. This they unanimously refused to do. They told their exasperated leader that they were certainly his worldly servants, and that their bodies he might dispose of as he thought proper; but that their souls were not their own, but bought with a precious price, and that the Redeemer who had bought them, him only would they serve. The governor then resolved to put them to death, and in a very extraordinary way. Under the walls of the town was a river frozen, and upon this river he exposed the forty naked sufferers to perish of the cold: a warm bath was prepared at a small distance for any of them who would relent, and would turn from Christ to the Roman temple. They cheerfully submitted to the

desperate trial, and they bore boldly hour after hour the thrilling agonies of the frozen air. At last one unhappy sufferer relented: while the gates of heaven were just opening to his view, while the thousands of angels were preparing his crown of victory, and saints were expecting his ascending spirit, the wretched apostate arose from his icy couch, crawled to the seductive bath, and stepping into the warm emollient water—he expired! May that God who knew what was in man have mercy upon him! But may the lesson not be lost upon us.

Finally, then, let me entreat you not to be “unstable” in your prayers. If once a man habitually finds excuse for neglecting his prayers, the chances are fearfully against him. Here let the Christian make his great stand. Never omit morning and evening prayers: never omit them either because you are tired, or because you are late, or because you are unwell, or because you are in a hurry. No; twice a day at the least bend the knee to your Lord and Saviour. Pray, and he will hear you; he will guard, perfect, stablish you; he will bring you safe through all temptation, and he will build you upon that which shall **resist** the winds and the waters, for he shall build you upon a rock.

## RELIGIOUS REVIVALS

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REV. J. CLAYTON,

POULTRY CHAPEL, FEBRUARY 9, 1834.

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Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?"—JOHN, iii. 9.

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THIS language was evidently employed by the ruler of the Jews when he came to Jesus by night, in order to enquire of Him, who was a professed teacher come from God, into the nature of those tenets which he was diffusing among the people. Our Saviour, in reply, at once began by referring him to the indispensable necessity of a change of heart wrought by the divine agency in man, and says to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The enquirer mistook his reference, and considered the words which he employed in their literal sense; and, betraying his ignorance and his inconsideration, rejoined—"How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" His instructor proceeds again to reiterate the necessity of this change, that the man who was the subject of it might possess that spiritual perception that he should discern spiritual things, and that spiritual taste that he should enjoy the privileges of the kingdom of God. Jesus answered and said unto him, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." He then goes on to illustrate the mysteriousness which was connected with this wondrous alteration which takes place in the human mind when all things become new, and says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Still his meaning seems to have been not apprehended by Nicodemus; for he enquires, "How can these things be?"

Now, my dear hearers, this is the literal reference of the passage I have already read as my text; of which however I am about to make another application, as my subsequent remarks will prove. For expressions like these have been frequently applied to what we are accustomed to term revivals of religion. All indeed who take a deep interest in the affairs of piety will acknowledge the desirableness of such revivals in our narrower circles where Christianity prevails; and likewise in the Churches of this land, which the Lord hath blessed, or where they are established throughout the world; though there are existing some shades of difference of opinion as to the circumstances associated with them, and as to the means by which, under the blessing of God, they are to be secured. There are some, however, who have brought forward this statement—that our population is not in a suitable state to receive the plenteous outpouring of the

Spirit of God: and they endeavour to support their theory by a continual reference to the position of the primitive Churches, and by an allusion, also, to certain events which have transpired in countries distant from our own.

I cannot but feel, and strongly feel, that the sentiment to which I have now alluded, is calculated to damp some of the finest and noblest expectations which we are authorized to indulge; and likewise to obstruct us in the employment of those preparatory means, by which we may reach those attainments to which, as Christians, we profess to aspire.

I purpose, therefore, in speaking from these words, first of all to shew you, that there are solid grounds on which we may build a hope of the dispensation of the Spirit to produce a revival in our Churches; and secondly, that there are preparatory measures to be adopted by us, in order to the attainment of these high and gracious distinctions.

First, THERE ARE SOLID GROUNDS ON WHICH WE MAY BUILD A HOPE OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT TO PRODUCE REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN OUR CHURCHES. On this point, that I may take up several ideas, which I am anxious to embrace, accept the following explanatory observations:—

Primarily, my hearers, it seems to me, that *we should endeavour to obtain scriptural and correct estimates of the real condition of the primitive Churches, of whom we read, that they received the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Now, there are two opinions which are held upon this subject; opinions which are extremes. On the one hand, there are some who consider that the primitive Churches had reached a very high state of attainment, such as bordered even on celestial perfection; and, on the other hand, there are those who consider that they were societies emerging, like many others, from a state almost of barbarism; and discovering, therefore, the weaknesses and the infirmities attendant upon an infantine state. It strikes me, my dear hearers, that the truth here, as in most other cases which we examine, will be found to lie between the extremes. We doubt not, for a moment, that the primitive Churches were distinguished by peculiar privileges, and marked by very exalted attainments. There is no question whatever that they received many of their instructions directly from the lips of men who were under the immediate and extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. There is no doubt whatever, that in many instances the members of these Churches possessed miraculous powers: they could heal the sick by their touch; or when their clothes, or portions of their clothes only, came in contact, accompanied by an influence which they put forth, with the subjects of inveterate diseases. There is no doubt whatever, but that not a few of them spake in foreign tongues, in new languages which they had never learned by any process of education or previous study. Moreover, we cheerfully and gratefully admit, that they were remarkable for the freshness and the ardour of their devotion, for their peculiar sanctity, for their inartificial manners, for the fervour of their souls, for the tenderness of their sympathy, for the magnanimity which they discovered under privation and suffering, and the fortitude with which they endured, in not a few instances, a martyr's death. But that in their collective capacity they exhibited—what shall I call it?—that *beau idéal* of perfection which many have supposed, is not at all, to my mind, apparent, after the most careful examination I can make of their characters and of their circumstances: so far from it, they seem to me, excellent and eminent as many of them appear to have been, possessed of infirmities and imperfections, and “like passions” (as the Scripture says) “with



ourselves." We read concerning their painful disputes about their missionary journeys; and about the ceremonies which some thought should be maintained, and others imagined should be relinquished. We read concerning their murmurings and disputings about the application of money to be given to poor widows. We read of the lamentable divisions in the church at Corinth, in the church at Galatia, and in the church at Colossia. We read concerning the mournful abuse of the sacramental ordinance; their toleration for a season of certain sensualities of which it was a shame even to speak. And how many of these sins, not to say vices, did we observe in the Asiatic churches, when, not many months ago, we passed through the sad history of their declensions? Now all these facts go to prove, that they were not in that state of pre-eminent perfection, as an aggregate body, which multitudes would represent; and yet nothing is more indisputable than this fact—that whilst there were those among them who were exemplifying the imperfections I have thus described, there were others who were in the actual and constant receipt of the gifts and the influences of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, I remark, that *the Holy Spirit chooses oftentimes to display his divine prerogative of sovereignty, as to the time, as to the place, and the various modes of his operations; and he displays it in such a manner that not unfrequently he gives no account of it to mortals.* I am well aware there are great mistakes entertained by some on the subject of the divine sovereignty; and I am equally disposed fully to concede, that believers are represented as being in a state that is disconsolate, or in a state full of enjoyment, as they backslide from God, or as they live in nearer and intimate communion with the Father of their spirits. But still I cannot but consider, that there are many cases in which we are unable to give any explanation whatever of the undeniable facts that present themselves to our view. Look into families: there you will see two children, nursed at the same breast, cherished in the same arms, subjected to the same early discipline, trained to the same sentiments, placed at the same school, having before their eyes constantly the same order of examples: one is perfectly graceless, and the other the subject of real and vital godliness. There are two servants in the same household, subjected to the same instruction, attending on the same place of worship, witnessing the same spirit and conduct on the part of the pious master and mistress, deterred from the same associations that are ungodly, and introduced into the same associations that are pious; the one is a purloining thief and a story-teller, and the other shows all good fidelity to the master and to the mistress, and the Master who is in heaven. Now, I say, how will you account for this? I declare solemnly I am unable to do so in many instances of this kind, but on the conviction, that God in the dispensations of his grace, as well as in the dispensations of his Providence, often exhibits to us his sovereignty, and gives no account of his matters. And it is worthy your observation, that our Saviour when he contemplated this subject did not explain it, but he gave way to devout admiration, and said, "Father, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth—even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

And there is another light in which we ought to view this part of our subject. There is an analogy oftentimes apparent, between the operations of God in nature and in grace. As different countries, for example, will yield different productions, each excellent in their kind; and as oaks are of slow growth, and certain plants and flowers are rapid in their growth, and will spring up even in

a night, or in a few hours; so it is with conversion, which takes place either by a swift or by a slow process.

Hear the explication given of this subject in the language of the Apostle Paul himself in 1 Corinthians, xii: "Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Now, my brethren, it strikes me, that it is here that many persons have stumbled at the very porch of the subject: they have stumbled in the estimate they have formed of the comparative dispensations of God's Spirit, towards different communities and different countries. Take one example. I will give all due honour to the eminent knowledge, the fervent piety, and the devoted zeal of Transatlantic Churches. I would also admit, and would be humbled for it, that there has been much coldness, much formality, much of idleness and languor, and much of inactivity in many of our own: but, nevertheless, it appears to me that there has been a different administration, and a different dispensation of the Spirit at different periods to the two countries—that is, to America and to our own. America, you know, has been compared to the newly-fledged eagle, which has soared highly, and taken an extensive flight, and swept over an amazingly extensive surface; and our country has been compared to the lion, full of strength, which has marched onwards with firm step, and has put to flight many of those noxious creatures which have crawled forth from the dens and the holes to the injury of man. Or, without metaphor, has not our country been wonderfully distinguished by the vigorous and the voluminous and the conclusive works which have been put forth in favour of Divine Revelation, and in defence of the peculiar views of the Gospel? Has it not been distinguished by the impulse it has given to the inhabitants of the various parts of the world to disseminate the glorious Gospel of the blessed God? Has it not kindled many torches which have been carried by the hands of others to illuminate the distant parts of the globe? And has it not spread abroad for many years past especial light and holy influence through the four quarters of the world? Let us acknowledge, indeed, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto God be the glory;" but let us not overlook the dispensation of the Spirit which has been given to us.

Thirdly, we remark, that *there are circumstantialia often connected with revivals which are by no means essential to their general character.* I will prefer to express myself on this head, in the remarkably simple and conclusive language, of one who has written admirably on this subject, and whose work I consider the best on the topic—the Rev. Dr. Sprague. "It is no certain

indication of a genuine revival, that there is *great excitement*. It is admitted, indeed, that great excitement may attend a true revival; but it is not the necessary accompaniment of one, and it may exist where the work is wholly spurious. It may be an excitement produced not by the power of divine truth, but by artificial stimulus applied to the imagination and the passions, for the very purpose of producing commotion both within and without. Instances have occurred in which Jehovah, who has declared himself a God of order, has been professedly worshipped in scenes of utter confusion; and impiety has been substituted for prayer, and the wildest reveries of fanaticism have been dealt out, instead of the sober and awful truths of God's word. Here is the highest excitement, but it surely does not prove that the scene in which it exists is a genuine revival. It does but stamp confusion, and irreverence, and impiety, with the seal of God's Spirit. On the other hand there may be a true revival where all is calm and noiseless; and multitudes of hearts may be broken in contrition and yielded up to God, which have never been agitated by any violent, much less by convulsive emotions, nor even breathed forth a single sob, unless in the silence of the closet and into the ear of mercy.

“Once more: it is no certain evidence of a genuine revival, *that great numbers profess to be converted*. We are too much inclined, if I mistake not, to estimate the character of a revival by the number of professed converts; whereas there is scarcely a more uncertain test than this. For who does not know that doctrines may be preached, or measures adopted, or standards and modes of religious characters set up, which shall lead multitudes, especially of the uninstructed, to misapprehend the nature of conversion, and to imagine themselves the subjects of it, while they are yet in their sins? We admit that there may be genuine revivals, of great extent, in which multitudes may be almost simultaneously made the subjects of God's grace; but we confidently maintain, that the mere fact that many *profess* to be converted does not prove a revival genuine. For, suppose that one of these individuals, or by far the larger part of them, should finally fall away, this surely, we should say, would prove the work spurious. If then, their having originally professed to be Christians proved it genuine, the same work is proved to be both genuine and spurious. Does the fact that an *individual* imagines himself to be converted, convey any certain evidence of his conversion. But then if this is not true of an individual it certainly cannot be true of any number of individuals; for if one may be self-deceived, so may many. It follows that the genuineness of a revival is to be judged of, in a great measure, independently of the number of its professed subjects.”

Once more, then, I observe, on this part of my subject, that *there are facts frequently occurring among ourselves, which prove that the Holy Spirit of God has not forsaken our communities*. I might appeal, my dear hearers, to that order of effects which we know full well frequently takes place in the Principality of Wales; where considerable numbers have been known to be powerfully affected, and in fact truly converted, by a single discourse, and where large groups have been known also to attach themselves at one individual meeting to the church of Jesus Christ. I might appeal to facts which exist at this very time among ourselves; for we have recently heard of churches, not many miles from this spot, who have accepted at their church-meetings, ten, and twenty, and nearly thirty, at a time. Or, without alluding to these circumstances, I would wish you to observe, that, where insulated occurrences of conversion really take

place, they prove that the Spirit of God has not departed from us; they prove in every instance in which sin-sick souls are cured, that the power of the Lord must be present to heal them: for though we concede anything you desire as to the tendency of well-employed means to accomplish the result, yet never will that result be accomplished, never will the dark places be enlightened, and the grovelling affections be purified and refined, and dependence be driven from self to dependence on Jesus Christ—never will the man become a new creature, unless it be by the energies of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word of truth in the Gospel of our salvation.

Well, what is the grand inference which I venture to draw from these representations? It is this; that if the Protestant Churches, notwithstanding the imperfections they discover, did receive, at the time of their discovery, in other instances of membership, the gift of the Holy Spirit—if there is such a peculiarity in the dispensation of the divine Spirit that one aspect of revival may be exhibited here, and another aspect there—and if one of these aspects have been seen among ourselves; and more than this, if there be revivals without these circumstantial accompaniments to which I refer—noiseless, resembling their Master, whose voice was not heard crying in the streets; and, in short, if we have seen among ourselves unequivocal and substantial proofs of the presence and the Spirit of God by the conversions which take place—we are warranted to conclude, that if a given order of means be employed we may anticipate a copious effusion of the influences of the Holy Spirit; that we shall see brighter manifestations, and greater things in our Jerusalem than we have ever seen.

Come we then to shew you, that **THERE ARE PREPARATORY MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE HIGH AND GRA-CIOUS DISTINCTIONS.** And here I shall take up the enquiry which is associated with the text, that these preparatory measures are with respect to the promised agency of the Spirit of God. Receive then the five following directions.

*Cultivate a solemn, deep, and abiding conviction of the absolute necessity and importance of the Spirit's influences, to advance the cause of genuine religion.* To advance it in *your own* hearts; for without a supply of the Spirit there will be no improvement in your knowledge, your saving knowledge; there will be no advance in your graces; there will be no conformation in your holy habits; and there will be no substantial extension of a genuine and acceptable usefulness: nor will there be an abounding of your comforts and your joys, but through the power of the Holy Ghost. And as his influences are essential to the advancement of religion in your own hearts, so they are to the efficacy of the ministry in your *congregations* and in your *Churches*. What a humbling sentence is that—“Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” He it is who chooses indeed “the foolish things of this world to confound the mighty; things which are not, to bring to nought things which are; that no flesh may glory in his presence, but that he who glories may glory only in the Lord.” “The treasure is put into earthen vessels,” but “the excellency of the power is of God.” “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to do any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.” And all the personal success which we hope for is in close connection with the application of the Word to your hearts in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. And so the same influences are of course, indispensably requisite to the promotion of vital and genuine

godliness in the Churches at large, and throughout the world. Nor until the Spirit is poured out from on high will the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be accounted for a forest.

Then I would say, secondly, *Labour to put out of the way all those impediments which may tend to obstruct the descent of the Spirit upon our souls and upon our Churches.* Guard against trifling with prayer; guard against cold, barren, and inoperative speculations upon the essential verities of the Gospel; guard against formality, and all that tends to hypocrisy in religious worship; guard against those things which are hindrances to closet and to family religion, which are the immediate instruments and opportunities of growth in grace. "Be ye not conformed to this world," says the Apostle, "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:" and "this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Take care of trifling with conscience, not only in matters of religion, but even in the management and arrangement of secular affairs. Especially watch against that spirit to which, perhaps, we are tempted by the exciting character of the times—that spirit of strife, and that spirit of disputation, especially in subordinate points, which grieves the Holy Spirit of God. My dear hearers, if we would not impede the exercise of his operations, or the communications of his influences towards us, we must endeavour to breathe the spirit of which he is the author—the spirit of love, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of charity, the spirit of temperance, against which there is no law. Hear the charge which the Apostle gives in the Epistle to the Ephesians on this subject, where he says, "Put away from you all enmity, anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Thirdly: *Acknowledge with thankfulness what God has been pleased already by his Spirit to effect in the midst of us.* I conceive, my dear hearers, that there is a very wide difference subsisting between a humble and a lowly consciousness of our own imperfections, and a morbid kind of discontent with every thing and almost every body around us. There is a distinction between a murmurer and a revivalist; and one reason why we have not received larger measures of the Spirit of God, is, perhaps, that we have not thankfully and devoutly acknowledged our obligations to him for that supply of the Spirit which we have already received. For think what has been accomplished by divine power, and also by the peculiar and spiritual agency of the Holy Ghost in our land. Think of the deliverance of our country from the darkness of idolatry in which the inhabitants of it long dwelt. Think of our emancipation from the lamentable tyranny of the man of sin. Think of the removal of those oppressive laws which for a long time fettered and impeded us in the proclamation of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. Think of the wonderful multiplication of enlightened, talented, and devoted servants of God who are running to and fro that knowledge may be increased in our land. Think of the vast increase, (more than two-thirds) of the places of public worship which have been erected within the last fifty years: and think of the myriads of children who have been subjected, during that period, to religious education: or the billions and trillions of Bibles and tracts which have been freely circulated throughout our borders. Think of the numerous efforts which have been made, and which are still making, to spread the Gospel at home and abroad; to say nothing of the

almost countless minor institutions which are connected with the various Churches in our land, the great object of which is, either to mitigate the woes and sorrows of our race, or, in association with these, to communicate that knowledge that is to make men wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. I must say, that when we put things honestly, and fairly, and truly before the eye of our minds—whilst we must humble ourselves before God that much more has not been effected, there is enough accomplished, to bid us to thank God and take courage, and to renew our zealous exertions, that the savour of Christ's knowledge may be spread abroad in every place.

Fourthly: *Consecrate more time to fervent and to importunate prayerful intercession.* Now, allow me to say here, that I set a high value upon extraordinary opportunities which are embraced to pour out earnest supplications before God, in our social circles and at our prayer meetings, for an enlarged supply of his Divine Spirit from above. At the same time, I set a higher value upon the stated, and uniform, and habitual maintenance of a spirit of prayer in the closet, at the family altar, and at our regular meetings for worship. And here I think, that you and I, as a congregation and a Church, are lamentably defective: for although we have been pointed out by others as having our vestry crowded (and I am now speaking freely, for I wish to speak usefully) when we meet together for the important enjoyment of prayer; yet what are those included within such narrow walls compared with those who are accustomed to attend in the house of God? A very small proportion indeed. Whether it is from timidity, that is wrong; whether it is from a reluctance to the engagement, that is worse; or, without adverting to motives, which may influence individuals—whatever it may be which keeps us back from frequenting the house of God for one hour, or for two hours, in the whole of the week, apart from the Sabbath, to plead with him on topics of the most momentous concern, to call down the plenteous effusion of the Holy Ghost, without which all the preaching and the various ordinances which we attend, and the means which we employ will be little better than useless. Surely we must consider ourselves as guilty in this matter: and I do hope that one of the early symptoms of revival which I venture to calculate upon and anticipate within these walls, one early indication will be, a renewed determination to attend habitually on that minor ordinance, as it is called, only because it is badly attended, which however is closely and vitally connected with the growth and with the permanent prosperity of our religious society.

Now my dear hearers, be it your concern, then, when you enter into your closets to plead powerfully for the effusion of the Spirit of God. Pray, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit." For revivals begin in secret. When you bend your knees, with your wives and children, and your families, around the domestic altar, plead importunately for the descent of the Holy Spirit: for revivals progress and advance in the family circle. Then when you come forth into the sanctuary of God, plead fervently that God would pour down richer supplies of his Spirit than was ever known in days that are past. Say, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" "Revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known." If earthly parents, being evil, "know how to give good gifts unto their children," how much more has our heavenly Father promised to give good gifts unto them that ask him. When once, my dear brethren, the minister

of the Gospel consecrate their energies to devotional engagements ; when once our people, members of our churches, and others whose hearts are deeply impressed with the sense of the importance of divine things, but who have not yet come into the midst of us by a more public profession ; when once, like so many princes and princesses, they are taking heaven by violence, having power with God, and prevailing, saying, " We cannot let thee go except thou bless us ;" then we may hope, that there will be such a rich effusion of the Spirit's influences that the earth shall in due time be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Lastly : *Consider that the days are hastening on when there will be a more ample effusion of the Spirit's influences upon the Church than has ever been since the days of the Apostles.* If time would permit I should have enlarged upon this point ; but I will concentrate all which I should have advanced in this single observation ; that if the statements which were made to you in the course of our first sermon to-day, respecting the events which are to transpire in the millennial age were scripturally represented and were correct, then it follows, that that rich and glorious result which we are led to expect from the promises, and predictions, and representations of God's word cannot take place unless we have a larger supply of the Spirit of God than we have yet had. Nevertheless, my dear hearers, let us not suppose for one moment, that our prayers for the descent of his influences, and that our anticipations for the descent of his influences and of his gifts in richer measure, are to set aside other practical works. No ; you and I may judge I assure you, of the sincerity of our prayers by the subsequent dispositions that we shew, and the consequent demeanour that we display. Pray to God, in dependence for all your success, for those influences without which Paul may plant and Apollos may water in vain. Never attempt to set aside activity, but ever to brace up, to nerve, to invigorate the principles of that zeal which He discovered who said, " The zeal of my Father's house hath eaten me up." Therefore, while we would press upon you the importance of renewed intercedings for the Spirit of God, and the importance of a simple and entire dependence upon his agency for the success for which we long ; let me charge it upon your souls to be zealously affected in a good cause, and labour diligently as well as dependently, in the exercise of a holy zeal, wherever you have influence and opportunity, to extend abroad that Gospel which is " the saving health of all nations "

## THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE.

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REV. S. ROBINS,

PORTMAN CHAPEL, BAKER STREET, FEBRUARY 2, 1834.

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“ We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”  
1 TIM. iv. 10.

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A CAREFUL and a pains-taking consideration of this passage, and a comparison of it with other passages of a similar tendency, will, I think, convince us that it has no direct reference to God's dealings in his dominion of grace. It is said that he is “ the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” The speciality is to the believer; but, in some sense or other, the term “ Saviour” may be applied even to God's dealings with those who are unbelievers. But, we know there is not one covenant blessing to which they can lay claim: we know there is not one soul-blessing that belongs to them; because belief in God is the one single channel by which every spiritual gift comes to the heart of the people of God. Therefore the unbeliever can have nothing to do with these blessings, the sole ground of which is faith in those that accept it—faith which looks unto Jesus who made the purchase of those blessings with his own blood.

We come to the conclusion, then, that the word which in this passage we find rendered “ Saviour,” simply means “ Preserver;” and then we can refer the whole passage to God's dealings in his kingdom of Providence. We know full well that he causes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, that he causes the rain to descend on the just and on the unjust. It seems as if God were scattering the gifts of Providence with an equal hand upon all, as if there were no discrimination between the one class and the other—between those who render him the requital of thankful hearts, whose very souls gush out in affection for what the Lord hath done, and those who, with a flinty hardness, refuse to acknowledge God as the giver of his own bounties. Now, we know that, in the one case, every gift which the Lord bestows is blessed and sanctified to the soul; and, in the other case, that most fearful, that most tremendous saying is accomplished—“ God curses their very blessings.” The unbeliever, indeed, has God for his Saviour—that is, for his Preserver; he is upheld by him, he is sustained in the midst of an existence surrounded with danger: but every mercy he receives, every blessedness that God pours out upon him, is only another item written out on the page of God's account book; it only adds another item to the long catalogue of his neglected mercies. “ God is the Preserver of all men, specially of those that believe.”

This brings before us two points of consideration, and upon them I desire your present undivided attention. I pray also that you ask for me that God may direct me, that I may direct you—that he may teach your minister—that he may teach those who hear. First, I would speak of the doctrine of



Providence in its application to the natural and moral government of the world; and secondly, of the doctrine of Providence in its application to the interests and the concerns of God's believing people.

As to the first head of our discourse, **THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE AS APPLIED TO THE NATURAL AND MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD**—it might be a question not altogether devoid of interest, and not altogether without importance, how far it were possible that the unassisted intellect of man could arrive at the knowledge of this doctrine of a special Providence interfering in all our concerns, and directing every event that befalls us. I think it probable, by an attentive consideration of the theology of the Ancients, that we should come to the conclusion that man may work out for himself, by the mere unassisted effort of his own mind, some notion on the point: because we find that among the Ancients who professed some belief in a God, all, I believe, with the single exception of the Epicurean school, believed in the doctrine of Providence: and we can easily see why those who placed their highest earthly delight in pleasure and enjoyment, however intellectual and exalted they might pretend that pleasure was, would form to themselves such a God as would allow them to pass a dreamy existence and would wink at all the impropriety of their doings.

Since, then, we find that the belief of a Providence obtained amongst those who were not absolutely and avowedly atheists, we are compelled to believe that man's unassisted reason would find out and arrive at the knowledge of this doctrine. If he believed that there is a God by the mere deductions of his own mind, he would believe also that God interferes in the affairs of the creation he has formed. Nay, I think I might take the very institution of worship which has obtained so widely over the surface of the globe, as a proof that men believe in a Providence; for if they thought not that their god or gods interfered in the management and control of human affairs, why should they apply to them? why should they lay sacrifices on their altars?

But however we might dispose of this part of the subject, whether human ingenuity could teach or find out the doctrine, of Providence, we are quite sure that every page of the Bible teems with this doctrine and that it is the very key to the understanding all the contents of God's book. Take away the opinion that he has a superintending power—that he directs, and controls, and restrains, and curbs all human events—and I protest it is utterly impossible to understand a single page. If we had no other argument, the very existence of prophecy would be enough—the foretelling of events not only the largest and most palpably important, but even those which appear minute and are apparently most insignificant. This, then, is a plain and irrefragable argument that God possesses a superintendence over human affairs in bringing all these things to their exact and precise accomplishment. Nay, we will take the testimony of David on this head to be enough: he says, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts long before. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Yes, that God who exerts his Providence in the natural world—He who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, exerts his Providence also in the moral world, in the **controlling and the governing of human events.**

But I might turn from the testimony of the Bible, and I might rest sufficiently upon the experience of every one of you. That must be a very unobservant eye, and that must be a very cold hard heart, which will not bear its testimony that on the tablet of memory are written many records of God's interference, of God's so controlling events that they have been turned into blessings. Yes—from the first step that we took on earth, from the first breath of life that we breathed, God's eye has been constantly over us. It was not a mother's care, it was not a father's strength, that preserved us: they might have loved us and devoted themselves to us, but they could not have carried us through all their trials. And as we grew up from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, our path-way was lying through inconceivable dangers, and through hazards unseen and unknown by us. From all these the Lord preserved us: the pestilence did not smite us down, and the sickness did not destroy us, and all the exigences and contingencies with which we had to do were not permitted to blot out our existence.

But his Providence is not only exerted in blessing; it is exerted also, in punishing and in destroying. We have many instances within the circle of our own observation in which the sin that a man hath committed hath become the scourge wherewith he hath been lashed. I do not mean merely to say that sin generally speaking, hath brought about its own punishment, but that a special sin has been followed by a special suffering, and that the grief which sprang not out of the ground, and the affliction which came not forth from the dust, had its spring and its source and its rise from a particular transgression of the law of God.

If we want examples of this out of the Bible, there are a vast number which I might bring before you. Take the case of Pharaoh. He gave cruel orders that all the male children of the Israelites should be destroyed; and many a mother's heart was lacerated with anguish as she saw her little one slain before her eyes, as she saw the babe whom she would have died to save watering the earth with his blood. Ere many years had passed that very land was smitten with the same scourge; and the wailing, and the cry of anguish, and the agony was in every heart, and every heart in Egypt became heavy because the first-born was smitten.

We remember how the wicked king looked upon his neighbour's land; though he had ample domains and all that wealth could purchase, all that luxury could devise, and all that desire could covet, he rested not till he had wrenched from his weaker neighbour his possession: and in that very vineyard of Naboth did dogs lick the blood of Ahab.

There was in the king's court a man who had high power and influence, all that his ambition could covet; but Haman was not content so long as Mordecai sat in the gate: and he prepared a gallows whereon he would have had this innocent man executed; but God controlled his design, and sent on him the punishment appropriate to his sin; and he was hung on the very gallows he had prepared for his neighbour.

I bring another instance, perhaps less apparent and less striking than these. We read in Jeremiah, vii. 31, "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of

slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place." That which they had made the scene of their sin God made the scene of their bitter and their agonizing sorrow: that place wherein they had contravened the laws of God, and where they made their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, was the scene of their slaughter, and where the children's graves were so thick that no man could lie in the valley.

But I will not dwell on this part of the subject, which is too apparent to be denied, but I would rather grapple with some of the difficulties of the case: I would rather strive to meet some of the objections that are urged against the doctrine of the special and particular interference of Providence.

The first objection is urged in somewhat of this form: *It is a humiliating and a debasing thing to conceive of God, the Great, the Eternal, the Omnipotent, who settled the order of the Universe, and commands all created things, as intermeddling with what is apparently so insignificant and unimportant as the occurrences and events of human life.* Now, I will say at the very outset, that we have most inadequate ideas of magnitude: we know not, in fact, the relative magnitude of visible and tangible and apparent objects. "Great" and "small" are but relative terms. The globe we inhabit is a vast and mighty place to us; its horizon is wider than our eye can measure, larger than our imagination can compass. But the leaf that we tread and crush unheeded under foot is a world to the teeming multitudes that inhabit it. The very atom which is invisible from its smallness may be a universe to the insect inhabitants which the Lord hath pleased to place there. The infinity of God has the very same reference to the condition of space that it has to the condition of time. It is said that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" and so may it be said of him, that a world to him is as an atom, and an atom as a world.

But not only do we miscalculate the magnitude of objects, but we also misjudge of the importance of events. There are some things which we call important, and there are other things that we call insignificant and unimportant; and we rest satisfied with the conclusion, although in our blindness and ignorance we may have assigned precisely the converse terms. If a storm should rush in all its fury over the deep black waters, and engulf in its depths many a tall bark; if a family should lose its hope and its wealth; if the earthquake should lay a city level with the dust; or if the volcano burst forth, and pour its streaming fire over the peasant's habitation and the field of the vine-dresser;—these we say are mighty things; they have a record on the page of history, they go down from one generation to another, and are not obliterated from the recollection. Yet the first breath-drawing of a poor helpless babe may be inconceivably more a disastrous thing for the world. That babe grows up to manhood; he has a keen acute intellect; he consecrates himself with an undivided purpose and with entire devotedness to do the devil's work: and parents have to look on their children perverted, and spoiled, and spirit-ruined by such a one. Rather ten-thousand fold would they have followed them early to the grave than known that thus they were to become the prey of this deceiver. Such a one is ten thousand fold worse than the storm, or the earthquake, or the volcano: he is the blight, the curse, and the desolation of his kind. The tyrant who crushes crouching slaves beneath his control—or the blood-thirsty soldier who has overrun a whole country, who has rifled homes, and broken up family circles, and has spoiled and destroyed, has not been such an evil to

society as the infidel. Now, if God should stop the existence of that babe—if God should prevent that babe becoming a child, a youth, a man in succession, he has done a far mightier thing, he has conferred a far mightier obligation, than if he had saved a whole navy from ship-wreck, a whole city from being engulfed, a fair and smiling country from the inrush of the volcano's fire.

We have compared these two things, and a very little examination shows us, in the issue, that we have misnamed them—that the important is, in fact, insignificant compared with that which we might call unimportant. We know nothing about the issues of events; we cannot look into the dim, dark future; we cannot roll away the clouds of obscurity which shut in events to come in future years; we know not what a retinue of mighty and important consequences they are bringing with them. It may be that a friendship which we form, as it appears almost accidentally, may tell upon our everlasting condition. We have brought ourselves under the influence of example, it may be a powerful and a prevailing example, that will tend either to good or to evil; we are, then, under the influence of a holy or a sinful example. And so a friendship thoughtlessly formed, marks out our career upon earth, and tends to mark out the everlasting destiny of the never-dying spirit. Nay more than this—a single word lightly dropped by any one in the intercourse of daily life may have its influence on ages so far removed from us that the imagination cannot reach to that distance.

We might compare this with natural objects. We cannot look into the secret laboratory of nature: the seed is sown there; it rises up into the tree, and that tree is the germ of a forest that shall darken a whole land, and fling the shadow of its broad branches over the children of a hundred generations. Or we might stand and mark the little gushing spring in some green solitude of nature; that spring rolls onward gathering into it tributary streams, and swelling its volume as it goes from reach to reach, till it becomes a mighty and wide-spread river, and bears on its bosom the wealth of nations. Who that saw that little rill, as it sprang from its almost unnoticed source, could have conceived it would become so important to the country through which it flowed?

Now, we cannot well understand these things: from the level on which we stand we can see very little of that which is above us and very little of that which is below us; the one is inconceivable from its magnitude, and the other is invisible from its minuteness. Now, God, who stands at the very highest possible elevation, and who casts his eye at once over the whole universe that he has formed, and is able to decide the relative importance of all events, judges far differently from us; and therefore we read, not only that God's words are other than our own, but that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. We forget too often the immense superiority of the spiritual over the material. It may be that there is an external injury—that outward objects receive a shock and a concussion, but at the same time spiritual purposes may be accomplished: and if worlds and systems were wrecked, ruined, and destroyed, and blotted out from creation's catalogue—if the world we tread, and all the retinue of planets by which we are surrounded were gone, if they were no more remembered, in the catalogue of existence, it would not be so tremendous a thing as if one soul were to be destroyed. It was not to save the earth, it was not to preserve the external loveliness and beauty of nature, that the Saviour came down to suffer and to die. If nothing had been endangered by man's sin but the world that he had polluted, the Saviour would not have come to save it: but it was because

immortal spirits were in danger, it was because the never-dying portion of God's creation was at stake, that Christ took upon him our humanity and trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath.

This may serve to show us how inconceivably more important is the spiritual than the material. There may seem very much of importance which concerns only the material; there may seem something immaterial and insignificant which concerns the spiritual; and therefore God knows that the importance of the one is infinitely greater than the other. So would I dispose of the objection that is raised from the apparent insignificance of the objects that come under the notice and the controul of God.

It may be said by some others that they doubt this superintendence of Providence *because there is so much disorder in this lower world*: for, say they, if God were continually controlling and superintending there would be an end at once to the din and the tumult of conflicting interests, the contentions between good and evil, and between opposing principles, which we see around us.

Now, to this we answer that, of the evil, man is the sole and single author. We doubt not that God could in one instant put it down; we doubt not that he could put far away from him in a moment the very foot-prints of sin, and this his creation be as pure, as blessed, and as holy as when it first came from his hands. God will do this; God will purify the world that guilt hath stained: but he will do it in his own time. Meanwhile let us remember that God is restraining evil and curbing it. If it were not so, then the whole earth would be the stage whereon sin would triumph; this earth would be deluged in blood; man's ill passions would be let loose; rapine, murder, and violence—all that malignancy could devise, all that the evil heart could conceive, all that a powerful arm could execute, would be contested and acted on this theatre of earth.

But by and by God will show us how from evil and from present disorder he will evolve nothing but good; so that there shall remain on this sin-blighted world not a shadow of its former misery; so that there shall remain on this sorrow-deluged earth not a trace of all the evil that had held occupancy of it during so many ages: even sin shall be so controlled by God that it shall tend to his own glory. There shall be glory to Jehovah in his having put down the rebellious principles of Satan: there will be glory to the Saviour in that he hath gotten to himself the victory, that he hath led captivity captive, that he hath chained the conquerer to his own chariot wheels; and his people, his own chosen ones, those whom he hath loved from eternity, will be brought into the enjoyment of blessedness and glory which they never could have had if sin had not trodden this earth. We know that the redeemed will be in a far nobler condition than Adam in his innocent state; they shall be like to Jesus himself, and a bond of brotherhood shall unite them, to which neither angel, nor archangel, nor seraph can lay claim.

The last objection I would notice is one which may scarcely require an observation, but which I believe to be very prevailing. This is a day in which the discoveries of science have been justly extolled: philosophy and the physical sciences have indeed gathered large stores; their treasure has been amplified: the knowledge of former generations seems to be put to shame by us. But just in proportion as we have been watching the effect of external causes, in some minds, not deeply enquiring and not guided by the Spirit of God, all the exactness of the machinery and all the process of its operations have *only tended to shut out God from the view*. Men have seen how the system of nature rolls

on with its exactness from year to year, and from century to century, and they have concluded, unphilosophically, as well as unscripturally, that the machinery has itself somewhat of negligence, and that God interferes not with it.

Now, it seems as if God had intended to meet this very error; it seem as if God had, in his precious Word, given examples with which to resist this argument, and to tell the philosophers of our own day that, although God is performing his providential acts in an exact and precise system, yet that by the operation of the ordinary course of nature he claims to himself sovereignty over them all. We read that there was a time when his people were to cross the Red Sea. It was not according to nature, it was not according to the operation of ordinary causes, that the sea should divide itself; and yet it was parted, and the waves, instead of overwhelming the people of God, became a wall to them on the right hand and on the left, and they passed through on dry land. Philosophers have in vain endeavoured to explain this: they have told us that the Israelites passed through at low water; but we marvel very much why the Egyptians did not pass through at low water also; we marvel why the Israelites, strangers, should know when it was to be forded, and why the Egyptians, who were the very natives of the land, who had long watched the tides of the Red Sea, knew not when to pass.

We read again, that, when God's vengeance was to be accomplished, the very sun in the midst of the heavens was to stay his chariot and stand still and witness the deed of vengeance. Here God again asserts his own sovereignty, and sends down in the volume of his Book the testimony that, though he may apparently slumber, from period to period, yet that he can assert himself the God of Providence as well as of creation.

We read again, that, according to the prophecy of one of God's own seers, for three years and upwards it rained not in the land; rain was withheld, and famine was in their borders: as if God would speak the lesson never to be forgotten, that the former rain as well as the latter rain are the gifts of his Providence, and the blessings of his own ever-watchful superintendence. In truth, this is a topic so full and interesting, a matter on which argument so present themselves on every side, that it would be more difficult to know where to cease than where to find materials for proceeding.

#### I pass on to THE APPLICATION OF THIS MATTER TO THE INTERESTS AND THE CONCERNS OF GOD'S OWN BELIEVING PEOPLE.

Now, some persons, calling themselves Christians and professing to take the Word of God for their guide, may doubt at the very outset whether God has a peculiar people; they may doubt the very testimony of his own Word that he has chosen those who shall be vessels of honour. Oh, doubt it not. I pray God that not one amongst you may be led to doubt this precious truth. However the carnal mind may object, and however prejudice may raise up opposition, I pray you to search your Bibles with prayer and simplicity of spirit, laying aside pre-conceived opinions, content simply to be taught by God; and then tell me whether you will not find election written on every page of it.

If we believe that God has a people chosen from all eternity, and whom he has given in covenant to his dear Son, we cannot question for a moment that all the dealings and all the doings of Providence are speeding onward the Lord's designs for his own glory in their everlasting blessedness. This is very strongly marked in their conversion: I do not speak of ordinary conversions, in which

God by the secret silent operations of his own Spirit, or by a blessing on the ordinary means of grace, may change the heart and bring that heart that was once hard and rebellious, that was once unyielding and unsubmitive—bringing it in deep humility to receive God's mercy: I do not speak of the ordinary instrumentality of the Word of God, or the ordinances he has established in his house; but I would speak of those in which a special interposition of Providence is made to tend to the further diffusion of grace. Such for instance as the case of Naaman the Syrian. It was a very remarkable Providence that sent into the household of that great lord a little maid brought out of Israel, and that, in the extremity of this nobleman, he could find no other one to speak of the cure of his loathsome disease but this humble one: and yet the Lord put a word in her mouth which caused Naaman the Syrian to go to the prophet of the Lord to obtain that which was for the conversion of his soul.

We take again a case in a far distant region—a case which in all its circumstances is just as marked. One of the chief councillors, one of the most honoured servants of the Queen of Ethiopia, was on his way home. He had indeed the Word of God, but it was to him as a sealed book: he read a glorious passage in the prophet Isaiah, and he knew not whether the prophet was speaking of himself or another. Just then did the Lord cause his own faithful servant Philip to pass on the way; he joined himself to the eunuch by the direction of the Spirit, and he went up to him, and opened the Gospel; he shewed him the fulfilment of the word, led him to the feet of the Saviour, and introduced him into the faith of the Church of Christ.

The woman of Samaria went down at the mid-day hour to the well; and just at that hour, by the direction, and by the clearest design of Providence, Jesus was at the well; and he would drink of the water, and spake to the woman on a subject of the greatest possible importance. But not only was the word blessed to her soul, not only was she brought to acknowledge Jesus as the Saviour, her townsmen were brought in also; there came many flocking around the Saviour, and because of this Samaria had its converts.

Your own observation, if you have not been very negligent observers, will show you many instances that you may have marked on the page of your history, when God has, by his Providence especially interposing, led to the conversion of his people. Mark how the very same specialty of Providence is applied to their preservation. Each of God's servants is immortal. The enemies may band themselves together, they may do all that in them lies, to extirpate the people of God; but it cannot be; the Lord is with them, and the Lord by the direction of his Providence will control all adverse events, so that they shall not be harmed or hurt so long as God hath aught for them to work on earth. Mark the case of Elijah. There was a season of great drought in the land, and where shall the prophet go for help, and where should he look for assistance? If there be aught of assistance in the land it shall be gathered to the rich and the powerful, and the noble. But the Lord was with him, and he sent him to the banks of the brook Cherith, and he drank of the water of that brook, and his thirst was quenched: ravens also were appointed to feed him. But the brook was dry. Did God fail his servant? No; he had prepared a home for him, and a kind heart to receive him; and as long as the scarcity prevailed, he was provided for: though we doubt not that these days of famine opened many a grave in the land, and that there was many a dying creature who walked that land. The Prophet was preserved because God had more for him to do. And

how did Obadiah hide the prophets of the Lord, those of the same standing with Elijah? He hid them by fifties in a cave. And when one of God's prophets by the subtilty of his enemies had incurred a tremendous sentence, did not God close up the lions' mouths, and preserve him in the midst of the most appalling danger?

We see God continually permitting the most malicious devices to help forward the designs of his grace. The brethren of Joseph, in the bitterness of their malignity might sell him to the merchants; but by selling him, they were setting forward God's designs. Pontius Pilate, and all the Jews, might crucify the Saviour, and do whatever the bitterest vengeance suggested to them; but in all this they were only doing that which the counsel of God had pre-determined to be done. Take the case of the martyrdom of Stephen: it would seem to be one of the most disastrous occurrences that could happen; it would seem as if the infant church must be almost destroyed, and as if men's hearts would fail them on account of it, and as if the name of Christian would be almost obliterated. But no: this very circumstance was, in the specialty of God's providence, made to carry forward his everlasting designs; and the disciples who were "scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." St. Paul of all the servants of Jesus, was, perhaps, the most eminent, the most accomplished, the most distinguished, the most successful. The enemy laid hands on him, and he was put in bonds, and shut up in a dungeon at Rome. It would seem that his presence was more wanted at Corinth, or Athens, or Ephesus; but God had work for him to do in Rome, and this apparently adverse providence was suffered to happen to him, in order to the furtherance of the Gospel; so that, in writing to the Philippians, he says "my bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

I take one more instance, and that is from our own land. There were times when God in infinite mercy, in undeserved grace to England, put away the clouds of black superstition that had long over-hung the faith of our forefathers. He caused the Reformation to dawn on this land; he raised up a king who should be as a foster-father to the church, and the church was built up under him. But he died; and what would seem to be more calamitous than that, he who so strenuously defended the faith should be cut off at so early an age, was, that a bitter and relentless persecutor came into his place. It would seem of all things the most injurious, that men whose hearts were strong for Christ—that men, faithful for Christ, who were going forth the prime champions of his Gospel, should be cut off, and that Protestantism should be left, as it should seem, altogether uncared for, and unguarded. And yet the very martyrdoms of those days were the cradlings of Protestantism, the very martyrdoms of those days were the seed of the church; and if we enjoy aught of spiritual good in our land, if there is aught of Gospel truth that has escaped perversion and error, if there be aught to which we cling as dearer than our own heart's blood, we may trace it to the martyrdoms of the days of Queen Mary. We cannot help remembering the words of Bishop Ridley:—"Be of good courage, Brother Latimer, for this day we shall kindle such a fire in the good realm of England, as shall never be quenched." Thus hath the Lord by wisely ordering the most apparently adverse circumstances, proceeded in carrying forward his great designs.

In the considering of this, as well as the preceding part of our subject, we are met by apparent difficulties and discrepancies in the carrying forward of God's



designs. We look around, and we shall see perhaps, that the worthless, the men who have no one point in their character but what is vile, and low, and debased—we shall see these rise up to station, and wealth, and influence, and consideration in society; and we shall see others—the deserving, the excellent, the kind, and the benevolent, those who are engaging all hearts, and binding all affections to themselves, becoming poorer and poorer, more and more involved in worldly distress; they labour for themselves and their little ones, but every step they take seems only to sink them lower and lower; while the enjoyments of their unworthy brethren are at the flood-tide. This is the precise difficulty which David had to encounter years ago. He said, that he was troubled at the prosperity of the wicked; that he had “cleansed his heart in vain,” and “washed his hands in innocency:” “When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” But God so set the matter before him that he confessed, “So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.” And so does God shew to us that he places the unworthy, the rich, in slippery places, and casts them down; that he makes their gold and their silver to be cankered, at the very time that he blesses the adversity of his own dear chastened ones, that he blesses the furnace through which they are brightened; so that the little they enjoy, is far better than the abundance of the unrighteous. They see that to wealth, ill-gotten, there adheres a curse; that there is an entail of sorrow that never shall be cut off. A man may have got rich by using the scant measure, and unjust weights; and he may show, week by week, and day by day, large profits on his balance sheet; but the remembrance of this his sin, though he stifle the words of conscience now, will rise up by and by, and will come upon him with crushing and overwhelming weight, at the day of account.

Or again: We see God's people, those who were eminent in their day, who were setting a fair example to others, and constantly enlarging the sphere of his influence, more considered, and more cared for; more recommending the Gospel every day he lived; we see such a one in the midst of his usefulness suddenly removed. It may be mysterious; but yet we see in it some of God's designs; they are taken away from the evil to come. Or, it may be that one eminent in his day—one who possesses high mental endowments—one who has a heart to feel the precious mercy of his God, and a tongue to tell it out to others—one with strength of argument, to cope with the antagonists of his Master, whose powers adapt him to watch over those who oppose; and such a one in the mid-career of his activity is taken from hearts that love him, and from souls that were hanging on his instructions. It may be that God caused him to preach from his death-bed as he never had preached before; it may be that his dying breath is spent in such a manner as to reach the hearts which never before were touched; or it may be that God is setting in their view an example that comes home of the uncertainty of all earthly things.

There is yet one more circumstance that may seem to be even yet more hard to understand. It is when one, who had walked for a long course of years consistently and carefully, is permitted to fall into great snares; or, what perhaps is still more mysterious, when such a one is permitted to promulgate erroneous opinions—as in truth, and unhappily, we have instances in our own day, without endeavouring to pry into the secret of the divine counsels. We would say this is taught us—“Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

If, then, Providence has been watching over us all our past years—if there has been an Omniscient eye marking our pathway all our life, and if there has been an ever-liberal hand to supply all our wants; if, as we look at the experience of the days and years that are gone, we find that we are never forgotten and never forsaken; then we will say with David in the fulness of faith—“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives.” There may be much that is dark and mysterious in the dealings of God; but we will say in all such instances, “It is the Lord; he doth all things well.” We will not murmur, we will not repine, we will not impugn the Holy Spirit of Jehovah; but will reverently lay our hand on our lips, and our lips in the dust. By and by we shall know these things better; by and by God will advance us, if we be his people, to a far higher state of being: then our faculties shall become ennobled; then indeed will they be able to grasp mightier things; for heaven itself would be no heaven if it were not a place of intelligence, unless our best and brightest faculties were employed for God. And I believe they will be continually increasing in their energy, and that all our knowledge shall be laid at the foot of God’s throne as an offering to him. The purity of our knowledge will be such that we shall look upon our past existence; and there we shall see, drawn as upon a map, how many a danger we have escaped which we never dreamed of, and how many mercies we received which we were never thankful for. Let us be content to look forward to that state. If there be aught here below difficult to understand, the Lord is saying to us, “What I do, ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter.”

## ETERNAL LIFE.

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EAGLE STREET CHAPEL, RED LION SQUARE, FEBRUARY 16, 1834.

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“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”—EPISTLE OF JUDE, 21st verse.

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I HAVE come up this morning, my dear brethren, to condole with you on the loss of your beloved pastor. I knew him from the commencement of his ministry in this place; I loved him, and most sincerely sympathize with you in the removal of him from the scene of his interesting labours. I have had intercourse with him for nearly thirty years, and certainly never anticipated the scene which now presents itself to me. Never could I have imagined that I should ever be called to such a service as this to which I am now called. I appear before you, brethren, in pursuance of the dying request of my departed brother; who also selected the words which you have now, and repeatedly heard. The selection of these words, it appears to me, and probably it appears to you also, indicates the tone and temper of his mind in the last stage of his pilgrimage, and in the near prospect of eternity. When he was drawing nigh to the close of all the services in which he had been occupied, was he looking for the divine reward as a matter of debt? Oh no, he was “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Was he like the actor, retiring from the stage, and looking around for the plaudits of the spectators? Nothing at all, my friends; he was “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

The Lord grant unto you and me, brethren, that we may enter into the spirit of the sentiment contained in these few words, which very plainly teach us three things:—In the first place, that the ultimate object of our faith and hope and love must be, “eternal life.” In the second place, that this life is to be ascribed to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. And thirdly, that for this life we must be looking and waiting.

In the first place we are taught by these important words, that **THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH AND HOPE AND LOVE, MUST BE ETERNAL LIFE.** “Eternal life;” that must be a life of honour and enjoyment; of enjoyment in the best society, and crowned with this glory—that it will never end; it will be eternal, or everlasting.

*This life will be a life of honour.* What think you, my dear friends, of being raised to a kingdom? Did not our blessed Redeemer say to his little flock, “Fear not little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom?” What can you receive more than a kingdom? The metaphor is borrowed from

\* Funeral Sermon for the Rev. J. Ivimey, Minister of Eagle Street Chapel.

the highest dignity that is known on earth. Who can be higher than a king? Or if the metaphor be borrowed, in other parts of the Scriptures, from the Sanctuary, who can be higher than the priest—God's representative? But it is promised to all the disciples of Christ that they shall be kings and priests. What think you, brethren, of those mansions of glory which our Lord declared to his disciples he was going to prepare for them? "In my Father's house," said he, "are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Oh wondrous work! It will be a life of honour; a honour which conquerors obtain. Crowns of victory are in reserve; a crown of righteousness; a crown of life; a crown of glory that fadeth not away. How will you raise up your thoughts brethren, to these wonderful words of our blessed Redeemer respecting these conquerors, when he declares, as you have often read, that he will give to him that overcomes, to sit down with him upon his throne; "Even as I have overcome," says he, "and have sat down upon my Father's throne." That lofty throne; that wide throne; in which he will make room for all that have fought with him, for all that have conquered with him; all shall enter into the joy of their Lord.

*This life will be a life of enjoyment.* Of rich enjoyment. It is represented, you know, by a *feast*. "Many shall come from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" at this feast. It is represented in the last book of the New Testament by a *marriage supper*. Oh glorious prospect which our Saviour has opened—the prospect of sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb! Allow me to read a few words, which you have in the nineteenth chapter of the book of the Revelations. "I heard,"—the holy prophet of the New Testament says—"I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, "Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Are these great swelling words of vanity, that mean nothing? No, brethren, for it follows—"And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

This life, allow me to remark again, will be a *life of enjoyment in the best society*. Man was originally constructed on the social principle; and in Paradise even it was "not good for man to be alone." All the children of God are taught to look forward to the society of "just men made perfect;" the society of an "innumerable company of angels;" the society of "God the Judge of all, and of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant."

And the crown of all is, that this life of honour and enjoyment, and in the best society, will be an *everlasting life*. There will be no termination. Oh the thought, were it possible that such a thought could enter into the minds of the blessed above—"That ghastly thought," as Dr. Young has expressed it—

"That ghastly thought would drink up all the joy."

But they know that it is eternal life; that from that Paradise they shall never be expelled; they shall never see any forbidden fruit, there shall be no subtle serpent there; no danger of losing that inheritance, that glorious inheritance, which has been "prepared for them from before the foundation of the world!"

We proposed to shew you, in a few words, in the second place, that **THIS ETERNAL LIFE IS ASCRIBED TO THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

And here I do call upon you to remember, my brethren, that this is very properly ascribed to him, because, in the first place, *it is he that announced it.* He has announced it to the sons and daughters of death and condemnation. Witness those memorable words in which he said, "God so loved"—that is, so pitied—"the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." That they who have all deserved to perish should not perish, but have eternal life. "Eternal life!" "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have life." In accordance with this, you may remember, that the Apostle Paul himself says, concerning Jesus, that "he has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." He has brought life and immortality—immortal life—into a clearer light; he has poured a flood of light upon those dark things. It was not Socrates, it was not Plato, it was not any one of the admired sages of Greece and Rome;—alas, they were dreaming, they were groping in the dark; it was our Lord Jesus Christ, who has illumined these obscure and dreadful things, and opened them in the light of heaven; and the good news of the kingdom will make this known; we rejoice in the assurance, that ere long it will be made known in all the languages and dialects that are spoken by the children of men, in all nations, and in every part of the earth. Oh, may the time speedily come when all men shall have the Gospel which our Lord Jesus Christ in his own ministry made known.

This life is ascribed to his mercy, because, I may observe again, *he has procured it.* "I am come," said he, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." So the Apostle John, who always echoes the sentiments, and often the very language of his beloved Master, says, "In this was manifested the love of God; God sent his only begotten Son that we might have life through him."

But I must not dwell upon this; allow me to say, it is ascribed to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and most appropriately, *because it is he that bestows it.* Eternal life is his gift. Here I may call to your recollection what he said to the woman of Samaria: "The water," said he, "that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Then Jesus becomes the beginning of eternal life in regeneration, and this regeneration is carried on in sanctification. But the disciple of Christ must die. Certainly; "it is appointed unto all men once to die;" he who is "the Resurrection and the Life," has not forgotten this. He knows that his children must die as well as others; "One event happeneth to all." But he will take care of his children; rejoice over them, and do them good. There must be a separate state for the body; the body returns to the dust; the spirit returns to God that gave it. Jesus our Lord, into whose hands all things are committed, hath not overlooked this. The earthly house must fall into decay, must fall down into the dust. It was a very fine thought expressed by one of the ancient Fathers as to the death and the separate state of them that believe:—"It is as if Jesus said to his disciple, The earthly house must indeed decay, and it will fall into the dust. I intend, however, to rebuild that earthly house, and in the meantime come and live with me." That is the separate state, that is the state of blessedness; the blessedness of our departed brother: the blessedness of millions more who are absent from the body and at home with

the Lord. Whilst they were at home in the body they were absent from the Lord; but they are gone to live with him until the proper time shall come, when the earthly house shall be rebuilt, and all the glory of the second house shall be seen in them. Yes, it is the mercy of our Lord Jesus that bestows eternal life. There will be a public manifestation of this at the last day. I say, there will be a public manifestation of this at the last day, brethren, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice. And are we not looking for mercy there? Are we not hoping for the memorable sentence? We know who the Judge is—that he is Jesus Christ the Righteous. We are conscious of innumerable imperfections and defilements. The Apostle Paul knew that such was the case with the best of men upon earth: and the dearest friend he had, when he referred to him—Onesiphorous, an eminent Christian, a man of great boldness and valour in the Christian cause, who had dared to shew kindnesses to the persecuted disciples—you remember in what manner he prayed for him—“The Lord grant unto him by faith that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.” Deeply impressed with the solemnities of that day, he implored mercy for his dearest friend. He was asking for that mercy himself—the mercy of the Lord the Judge in that great day.

Again, I would just remark, it is most appropriately called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, for, in truth, *he is himself that life*. The more you examine the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, the more you will see it is confirmed by the sacred writers that Jesus Christ is himself that eternal life. And the enjoyment of eternal life is the enjoyment of his love, is to be conformed unto his likeness; to be drawing water from the wells of salvation in him; to drink at the fountain-head which is in him. Therefore he said, you may recollect, “I am the way, the truth, and the life:”—the life!—“no man cometh to the Father but by me.” And the Apostle John, who always echoes, as I have said before, the sentiments of his beloved Master, has very strikingly expressed this in the first Epistle that bears the name of John, as you may see in the beginning of the first chapter, where he speaks of Christ “the Word of Life;” “For,” he adds, “the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” Our Lord Jesus Christ, you perceive, is called by the name of “Eternal Life.” And again he says, in the closing part of this first Epistle, “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” Jesus Christ is “the true God and eternal life.”

But I hasten to remark, in the third place, that **THIS ETERNAL LIFE IS TO BE WAITED FOR**; is to be looked for. Thus it stands in our text—“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” The word which is here translated “looking for,” frequently occurs in the New Testament, and is often rendered by our own translators, “waiting for.” Thus you remember reading the account of Anna the Prophetess, and good old Simeon, Joseph of Arimathea—a counsellor and member of the Sanhedrim, the great court—all these were looking for, were “waiting for” the kingdom of God and the redemption of Israel. Our Blessed Lord himself is represented as a master expected to return on a wedding; and he charged his disciples to be like those servants who were looking for their master’s return; to be in readiness, like

those servants, that when he appeared they might immediately open to him. The same word, or a word of the same root, is used in many other places which I must not now attempt to repeat: only let me remind you, for a moment, that it is the common description in the Apostolical Epistles—it is the common description of all true disciples of Christ—that they are waiting for Christ. Well, infidels care nothing about him; perhaps scarcely believe that there ever was such a person; but the disciples of Christ are “waiting for him;” and they were renewed by the Spirit of God for this purpose—to wait for the Son of God from heaven, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come. They are “looking for,” the Apostle Paul says, they are “Looking for and hasting unto, the appearance,”—the glorious appearance—they are “Looking for the appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

I will only say further here, for I must not enlarge, that *this waiting implies hope*. Hope is the union of expectation and desire. There may be expectation where there is no desire, and there may be desire where there is no expectation; but hope is the union of both. Now this hope implies faith, and again faith implies that there is some promise. Faith must be built upon a promise, or some divine declaration, whatever form it may assume; otherwise our faith is presumption. But this promise is recorded, and you have often read it, my brethren, and you have, I trust, rejoiced in it; you have partaken, in some measure, of the sentiment of the high and heavenly exclamation of the Apostle John, when he said, “And this is the promise”—including all promises in one, all the exceeding great and precious promises, putting them all together, binding them all up in one—“And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”

Well, it was this promise, my dear brethren, that supported your beloved pastor: it is this promise which, we trust, he is now richly enjoying in that glorious state to which I have now been referring you; while we, with all our sinful imperfections about us, are worshipping in this sanctuary below. Oh, brethren, it is very refreshing to remember that the Lord graciously supported him. It is very delightful to you and to me to recollect, that we have good evidence concerning him, how he was carried through the storm and the tempest, the battle and the conflict of life, and how he was brought at length to enjoy that peace, that divine peace, that peace which the Lord of Peace himself gives, and which never could be taken away from us.

I shall not stay to expatiate on the integrity, the intrepidity, the zeal, the disinterestedness, and the benevolence, that characterized him in his career.

His *integrity* was unimpeached and unimpeachable; it was undisputed and universally recognized. His *intrepidity* was that of a lion; as it is said, “The righteous is bold as a lion.” Had our departed brother lived three hundred years ago, he would have been a fit associate for Martin Luther or for John Knox. And his *disinterestedness* every one acknowledged. He was highly exemplary in this; probably there never was a man in this city, or in any other city, that was more exemplary than he was in the feature of the Christian character, to which I am now for a moment calling your attention. He never was, that I am aware of, accused of any thing contrary to these; and if he had been, he would have repelled the accusation with scorn. In the disinterestedness of his character I have often thought our brother was indeed a very bright and shining example to all those who are engaged in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As to his *zeal*, you all knew, my dear brethren, that it appeared to be an inextinguishable zeal. It appeared to be in him a burning fire, by which his own mortal frame, his own body was consumed: his zeal did eat him up. I acknowledge, and you are all willing to acknowledge, such was the native impetuosity that belonged to him, the ardent temperament of his constitution, mixed, alas, of late years, with a very large portion of morbid feeling, that he was sometimes betrayed into a style of language and comment that gave pain to his dearest and warmest friends, and then afterwards much more pain to himself. Yet every one saw, and could not fail to see, that he was pressing on with all eagerness to accomplish what he believed to be true and just, and right, and worthy of all regard.

He appeared to be an unquenchable man. However, his life is terminated: you will never forget, my dear brethren, the *benevolence* by which it was characterized, no doubt for ever and ever. Our departed brother I shall never forget. Although he did sometimes appear a little severe, yet those that knew him, always knew that he had a very warm and tender heart. He always had a tear for the widow; and therefore he was among the most zealous to bring up our "Baptist Magazine" from Tiverton to London; and every body knows, I presume, that he had a very large share in carrying on that periodical work, for the sake of the widows of our departed ministers, that something might be raised for the consolation and support of the widows of our ministers. You are aware, also, that he was for a considerable time an active member of the society of the three denominations, which we call "The Widow's Fund Society." Our deceased brother discovered great benevolence. I often admired him, you also must have seen it perpetually, and must have admired it—in the kindness and the encouragement he afforded to the young disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherever he found them. And in his own church, in his own congregation, numbers who are now living, and great numbers who are no longer living, there are those whom he first encouraged to devote themselves to the service of our adorable Redeemer. Perhaps there is no minister now living who can look around on such a circle as that upon which he could look were he now living;—the students now studying in our colleges, or itinerating in our villages, or presiding as pastors over stated congregations, or labouring in the missionary field in the East or West Indies: in his conduct towards all these, the benevolence of his heart was greatly conspicuous. My dear brethren, I am speaking what you must well know. But some, perhaps, are disposed to say, but how did he finish. It is a good thing to make a good beginning; it is a better to make a good progress; but it is best of all, it is the crown of all, to make a good finish. "That is well," the proverb says, "that ends well." How happy are we then in being able to reflect, that our brother finished his course well. The last time that I had the privilege of seeing him, now about three or four weeks since, I congratulated him on the tranquillity of his mind, and also on the ease of body which he appeared then to be indulged with. I congratulated him that he appeared to be happily exempt from all the annoyances of Satan's fiery darts. "Oh yes," he said, most serenely, referring to the Prince of Darkness—"I have not seen him; I have not heard of him: I suppose the God of Peace has bruised him under my feet." I congratulated him that he was going apparently into the King's presence chamber; and that he was to go first. Others will soon follow after, but it was a great privilege to be admitted into the presence chamber of him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.



But I am glad I have the opportunity, my friends, of communicating a larger account of the last experience of our departed brother, with which I have been favoured; and which I am sure it is impossible to read without admiring the grace of God flowing upon him. After two or three lines of introduction, our highly esteemed friend, the mourning widow, says:—

“It was my duty and privilege, to attend him constantly; I had an opportunity of witnessing his calm submission to the divine will, and steady reliance on the atonement of Christ, for justification in the sight of God. You are aware that his health had been gradually declining for more than twelve months past, and that, consequently, he felt obliged, though very reluctantly, to withdraw from his usual active engagements of a public nature; still he continued to preach occasionally, though with extreme fatigue, till December 8th, when he preached his last sermon from 2 Tim. i. 12: ‘I know whom I have believed,’ &c. For several months previous to this time, he had an impression that his work was nearly done, and spoke as one who was ready to ‘depart and be with Christ.’ It will be recollected by his people, that his subjects were chiefly experimental; and on one occasion he said, ‘If you wish me to preach, you must be satisfied with subjects which I can make my own.’

“December 22d, he took to his bed, with an impression that he should never go down stairs again; his mind was then perfectly calm, and he appeared to be in a waiting posture; the fear of death, which had on former occasions caused distress of mind, was now entirely removed. He once said to me, ‘I have nothing to do; I am quite safe and perfectly happy. Satan has shot his sharpest spite at me in former times, but now he is restrained.’ During his illness he often said, he was quite willing either to live or die; and that if it were in his power to turn the scale, he should be afraid to do so. This appeared to be the general state of his mind; he experienced however, a short interval of uneasiness and distress, about the 20th of December, when the fear of death returned, with some doubts of his safety: about two days afterwards he requested me to read the first chapter of the first Epistle of John; and when I came to the 7th verse he exclaimed, ‘Ah! that’s it; that is the foundation; there’s my hope.’ This portion of Scripture removed his doubts; and on the evening of the same day, at his request, I read Bunyan’s account of Christian and Hopeful passing the river; which he enjoyed very much; ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘I feel the bottom, like Hopeful, and it is good.’

“Thursday, December 26th, he appeared considerably revived, and conversed freely with several friends, expressing a good hope, through grace, that all would be well with him at last; but he passed a restless night; and on the morning of the 27th, after being much exhausted with coughing, he said—

“Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

But this is not a downy pillow.’ I replied, ‘But he can make it so; and you know death is the gate of endless joy to those who believe in Jesus, and who are washed in his blood.’ ‘Oh! yes,’ said he, ‘I lose sight of that; and not that I have any doubt about it, but I have not the enjoyment; I can’t beyond the gate; the gate is not open.’ Shortly after this he said, ‘I can’t last long; but absent from the body’—pausing through weakness, I finished the sentence—‘present with the Lord.’ ‘Oh yes,’ said he, ‘I have not believed in vain, for though I have not the enjoyment, the distress is removed.’ I

observed it was 'encouraging to us to see him supported, in such a trying hour, by the truths of the Gospel;' to which he replied, 'I am glad that my dying experience does not contradict the doctrines which I have preached.'

"Alluding to the visits of his people, he said, 'It is something like the parting of Paul with the Elders of the Church at Ephesus: Acts, xxii., "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake; that they should see his face no more, and they accompanied him to the ship;" they went as far as they could with him, and these good people would accompany me to the grave; they cannot go farther.' He several times remarked that he had never had such a view of the evangelical spirit, and Christian character of the people of his charge, as during his affliction; said he 'They are among the excellent of the earth; I have known many of them these twenty years; I have wintered them and summered them; I have been accustomed to look at them in a body, now they have come before me individually.'

"January 3d, a neighbouring minister called to see him, to whom he said 'I am very low, but then the end is the best part of the journey.' He conversed very freely on the state of his mind, and his views of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ; spoke of the first chapter of the first Epistle of John, as being full of encouragement to guilty, self-condemned sinners, but having nothing in it for the self-righteous person; referred particularly to the 7th verse as the foundation of his hope, and added, 'I am looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.' Upon Mr. — remarking how useful he had been made in the conversion of sinners, he replied, 'I am thankful when others remind me of my usefulness; though it is what I never think of myself, "not unto me, not unto me, Lord, but unto thy name be the glory; at the best I have been but an unprofitable servant."'

"January 5th, after a most restless night, from almost incessant coughing, he said, 'Here I lie, a perfect wreck on the shores of mercy; why my life is prolonged I cannot tell, nor is it needful for me to know; it is sufficient for me to know that it is my Heavenly Father's will;' he then requested me to read the two last chapters of the Revelations; saying, 'I want to know more about heaven.' He then engaged in prayer with us, in a most solemn and affecting manner; first praying over the chapters which had just been read, and for patience to bear the Lord's will, then for a blessing on the public services of the day (it being the Sabbath), then for the Church, for Mr. Overbury\*, for all the members of the family, and for the Societies with which he had been connected; particularly 'The Irish Society.' In the course of the day he was visited by several friends; and addressed each one separately, in a most appropriate and affectionate manner.

"January 6th, on one of the family asking him how he had passed the night, he replied, 'Wonderful, I have slept soundly and sweetly the whole of the night.' After a pause, he continued—'I have been confined to my bed for more than a fortnight; but it has been a fortnight of mercies; and it is surprising that I have been permitted to speak (as I suppose) more to the edification of God's people than ever I did before. Oh! the goodness of Jesus Christ, it is all wonder!' To a friend who enquired if he was any better, he said, 'I do not expect to be any better till I get rid of this tabernacle.' He replied 'It's a mercy you are ready to enter the gates of the city.' 'Oh yes,' said he, 'I hope so, through the atonement of Christ; I find the promise of the Gospel support

\* Assistant Minister of Eagle Street Chapel.

me; he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.' To another friend he said, 'I enjoy perfect peace, only differing in degree, I suppose, from the peace of heaven; through mercy I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.' Addressing another friend, he said, 'I am extremely weak; but shall a living man complain for the punishment of his sins? It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. It is good for a man to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. I am called to wait, and through mercy I have no concern about it.' To another, 'I have no distress, Sir;

" Not a wave of trouble rolls  
Across my peaceful breast."

Mr. — then alluded to the late Abraham Booth, whose last words were, 'A sinner saved by Grace,' to which he replied, 'My experience is like his; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' To another, 'I have no distressing fears of death, I trust in the divine faithfulness, and say, with Job, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him."'

"His weakness increased so much during the last fortnight of his life, that he was unable to converse much, or see his friends as before; still his mind was kept calm, undisturbed, and undismayed; he appeared to be much in prayer, and frequently uttered ejaculatory sentences; such as 'Lord help me;' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;'' 'Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, Oh, Lord God of Truth, keep me to the end; O keep me to the end;'' 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee;'' &c. The day before he departed, he said, 'I die, I die; but

" Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of Love sees fit."

"The same day, after suffering severe pain, he said, 'Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?' During the night he occasionally rambled a little, but appeared quite conscious of it; and at one time, being in pain, he said 'I feel thankful for this, because I know it is reality; but my mind has been full of vagaries.' About five o'clock in the morning he said, 'Hold out faith and patience,' and on my expressing a wish that I could do something to relieve him, he replied, 'You can do nothing, my dear, but commend me to God, and the word of his grace.' I assured him that I did not fail to do so; he then said 'You can do so now,' and requested me to read the 32d Psalm before prayer; at the conclusion of the Psalm he said, 'Beautiful! oh, for faith to apply it.' About 8 o'clock he said 'My struggles will soon be at an end. Dr. Ryland said "Oh for the last groan"—Oh! for my last groan! the wicked never have a last groan;' pausing a little, he added 'I will never leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Oh! come quickly.' About 9 o'clock he said, 'I have waited for thy salvation, Oh, Lord, and now I only want the promises to be fulfilled;' and then, as if a momentary cloud passed over his mind, he said, 'I don't know that there is anything in the Word of God which should forbid me to hope, and yet my fears are not entirely removed.' He continued to speak for a few minutes, quoting different passages of Scripture, concluding with 'Behold! God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid.' After this, he laid very quiet till near 11 o'clock, when he had a fit of coughing, but not so severe as many times before; he requested to be raised up, we did so, and, turning to me, he said 'It's all over.

These were his last words; and in about ten minutes the emancipated Spirit quitted its clay tenement without a groan."

Now my dear friends, surely I may appeal to all of you, to all and every one of you, that this was an instance of the Lord's saying to his servant "Go in peace." Surely I may appeal to you that our beloved brother who is gone, departed in peace, having seen God's salvation. You knew him in his strength; you saw him in the heat of the battle; you saw him and you observed, in the paper I have now been reading, he thought of Ireland in his last prayer. You saw him, and you well knew, that for that benevolent object, "the Irish Society," he devoted himself with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. And very recently, in the great slave question, you know how exquisitely he felt, how intense was his feeling; so that it may be reasonably apprehended that the excess of his feeling on that important subject, contributed in no small degree to hasten the crisis which has now removed him.

My dear friends, what shall I say to the surviving widow and children? You will all, I am sure, unite with me if I say, in reference to the surviving widow may the Lord richly reward her, and graciously reward her, for all her kindness to the deceased; may that God reward her who is the Judge of the widow, who is the patron and protector of the widow, and who has made more promises to the widow than to any other class of persons in affliction.

And with regard to the children, you will all join with me if I express my hearty wish, that they may receive a full and gracious answer to all the prayers their honoured father ever presented at the throne of grace on their behalf.

And you, my dear friends, who are members of this church, there is a voice to you from the tomb of our brother; there is a voice that speaks loudly to you in the circumstances by which you are now surrounded. I came up to condole with you; and I most sincerely condole with you on the loss you have sustained. Nor can I refrain from reminding you of the merciful circumstances in which you now stand. I have heard, with very great pleasure, that my excellent young friend, who commenced this service, has been highly acceptable in his ministry to the deceased pastor, to the congregation, and to the members of this church, and others who have been attracted to this spot: you will long continue, I trust, to hear from him the word of eternal life. This circumstance, I consider as a token for good; and you will, I trust, see that it will be followed by many other tokens for good, that shall unite you together more closely than in any former period of your history. I would say, therefore, as the apostle Jude says, in his address, from which our text is taken, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." Dear brethren, let the prayers at the prayer-meetings be fervent. Let every member of the church now know his place, fill up his place, and be content with his place. Let every member of the church be greatly concerned to extract some spiritual benefit from the solemnities of this service. Let the worthy deacons, who are the officers of your own choice, see, brethren, that you are all of one mind and one heart, all prompt to aid them, and give them your countenance and your hearty co-operation, in the measures that are now to be taken. Let it be seen, my dear friends, that you are indeed very earnest with God that his blessing may continue with you.

There are in this assembly, I have no doubt, some members of other churches, who have come to sympathize with you to-day. To such I would say, in two or three words, it is well, my friends, that you have come; these brethren at Eagle Street may return the same kindness ere long. Remember that your

pastors are mortal men, and that they cannot continue long for the same reason which applies in other cases—they cannot continue long by reason of death. Let it be your study, therefore, to derive all the spiritual advantages that can be derived from your pastors' labours while they are living; endeavour to strengthen their hands, unite with them in the work of the Lord, to the very utmost of the ability and opportunity which he may supply.

There are those present, probably, who often have heard the voice of our departed friend, and yet seem to hear in vain. Oh, that it may please God to make his death eminently a blessing, as his life was eminently a blessing. Permit me solemnly to remind you, my friends, if there should be such persons among those whom I am now addressing, that though the Pastor is dead—he is not gone for ever; and you must meet him again in that great day, for which all other days were made. You must meet him again; oh, think in what spirit, under what circumstances, with what emotions, you shall meet him in that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open. The Pastor is dead, he is gone before; and you will certainly meet him again: the Pastor is dead: but “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” He dieth no more: death shall have no more dominion over him. “Wherefore to-day if ye will hear his voice,”—if ye will now at length hearken to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, “harden not your hearts” any more; hew out no cisterns for yourselves; betake yourselves to the fountains of living waters. Remember how important it is to have the peace of God in life; to have the peace of God that passeth all understanding in death. Oh, we are ready to say with the poet—

“Life take thy chance, but oh, for such an end.”

Who does not wish to die the death of the righteous, and have peace in his latter end? Who can listen to such a record as that I have now laid before you, without lifting up his heart to God in earnest supplication, that he may have peace in life, peace in the prospect of death, peace in the prospect of judgment, and peace for ever through our Lord Jesus Christ?

But I must not detain you further. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before his presence with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ZION.

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REV. J. BURNET\*,

TOTTENHAM COURT CHAPEL, MAY 9, 1833.

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“ And the Highest himself shall establish her.”—PSALM, lxxxvii. 4.

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THROUGHOUT the Book of Psalms, we find Zion and its surrounding circumstances, constantly introduced to our notice in the inspired prayers, the inspired praises, and the inspired meditations of the Psalmist. But perhaps on no occasion is Zion more strikingly brought before us, than on the occasion referred to in the passage which I have just read. It is exhibited as having its foundation among the holy mountains: it is held up as the subject of many a celebrated prophecy; “glorious things” are said to be spoken concerning it: it is held up as “established,” as in the expression before us, by God himself: and it is, finally, considered as the great end of every benefit, and of every blessing.

Now, if we find Zion thus strongly introduced, we naturally ask upon what grounds Zion becomes a subject of such importance, and why it furnishes so many, and such striking illustrations? Zion was at first a fortress belonging to the Jebusites; and after the settlement of the people of Israel in the land of Canaan, it still continued to be held by that division of the ancient nations. From the time of Joshua, to the reign of David, it still continued a strong hold of the enemy, on the confines of the territories of Benjamin and Judah. It was besieged by David, and after a strong resistance, was at last by stratagem carried. Recommending itself to the adoption of the Psalmist, and approved of God, as the spot which should henceforward form the grand centre of his worship, it became the place where David erected the tabernacle, that had previously been fixed in Shiloh, that had previously to that been moved from place to place, until this permanent residence was chosen. From that moment the glory of God that shone about the cherubim, took up its residence in Zion: and hence the different allusions to that particular spot, in connexion with the illustrations afforded of the character of the Church of God; and hence the appropriate, and by the Jews, well-understood epithet, so often applied to that Church under the term “Zion,” by the Psalmist.

It was looking at Zion in this view of its then circumstances, that induced the Psalmist to inscribe this description of its beauty and excellence in the passage before us; and it was in connexion with Zion’s spiritual glory, of which Zion of old was a type, that the Spirit of inspiration directed the inscription. Uniting, therefore, the view which struck the Psalmist himself with the intention of the Spirit of God in directing his contemplations—the stability and glory of Zion—we have before us the meaning of the Psalmist’s

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expression, "The Highest himself shall establish her." The Psalmist may be supposed to have taken a distant view of the mountains of Zion, (for they were a cluster of mountains:) he may be supposed to have considered the valleys that surrounded them, and added to their strength: he may have felt his heart burn within him, when he reflected that on the top of that elevation dwelt the God of all the earth, the Protector of the people, the shield of the energies of Israel: he may be considered as comparing this view of the children of Israel of old, in this, the spot where the God they worshipped visibly manifested his presence, with the idolatrous nations around them: and then, though he might have mentioned, as he tell us, of the glory of Rahab, and Tyre, and Philistia, and Babylon, among his acquaintance, and those he knew; and although he might speak of the men born in them, as possessing a certain species of honour by their citizenship; yet still he would regard Zion as rising in splendour, and in importance, and in purity, and in privilege, and stability, above them all, and thus would be led to pronounce concerning her, "The Highest himself shall establish her."

Taking this view, then, of the feelings of the Psalmist, when he recorded the expression before us, we may apply them as they were obviously designed by the Spirit of Truth to be applied, to the circumstances of the Church in the future ages of the world, and consider them in connexion with the object for which we have now come together; and regarding Zion as typical of the Church of God, (and without these typical allusions, the passage before us is only an extravagant description,) we may inquire, first, **WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY THAT CHURCH, WHICH THE HIGHEST HIMSELF SHALL ESTABLISH.**

A Church, like every other community, consists, in the first instance, of individuals stated to form a part of a general membership, of which it is finally, in its perfectly organized condition, to consist. If we were to assemble all the grandeur and glory of the universe; if we were to collect the courage of all the mighty of the earth; if we were to accumulate the wealth of kingdoms and of commonwealths; if we were to bring the intellectual and mental power of the philosophers of every name, of every school, and of every country; if we were to unite with this mighty and imposing group every thing that we could find connected with the progress of pure morality, so far as humanity can purify morals; if we could invest this imposing body with all the attributes of unity, of which they could possibly, in such a state, be made capable; if we could rule them by the wisest species of laws which their combined wisdom could invent; yet still there would be found a lack of that community, of that spirit that is absolutely essential to the constitution of a Church; and we should consider every effort on their part, at forming a special community, wholly vain. We should look at the light of the Word of Truth, as an attempt to show how far all these elements, however excellent, considered apart, were calculated to repel one another, and increase the general confusion. There must be a community of character, there must be a oneness of spirit, there must be a community of view, of fellowship, and of feeling, before we can, under any circumstances, contemplate even the materials, out of which a Church must necessarily spring. We must, therefore, regard the elements out of which the Church is to be formed, that God is to establish, before we can view these elements in their combined operation, towards the final glory implied in Zion's establishment.

We may consider an individual, in the first instance, as a single stone, dead in trespasses and sins, but capable of a spiritual quickening by the great power of God, before he can be added to that temple which God is to establish as his own Zion on the holy mountains. We must regard his understanding as illuminated; we must follow up that illumination in its power on his moral faculties; we must see it diffusing its light, and beginning to engender its energy; and we must see that energy growing up by the power of constraining love; and we must find the man's attachments begin to quicken to the spiritual things from which he was originally alienated; and then we must find the soul exhibiting the first symptoms of vitality before we can consider it as having so changed its nature, as to make it fitted to the spiritual edifice which the Highest himself is about to establish. To establish a temple of dead stones, unfitted for such a building—to establish a temple unfitted to sustain the worship and the adoration of the God who is intended to dwell in it, would be to establish an empty form, an unmeaning show, and, in the end, would exhibit nothing of the “ manifold wisdom of God,” which even the angels learned by the Church.

If, therefore, we regard the very first materials, out of which the Church of God is to be formed, previously to its establishment as living stones, then no one is within the limits of this sacred territory upon which Zion is founded, and which forms a part of Zion's temple, unless he has been made the subject of this enlightening, this quickening, this new-creating power, of which we have been speaking. Each individual connected with the temple of the living God, should himself be living; each individual, forming a part of this great edifice, must sympathize in spirit and feeling with the whole: and unless this vitality is found within, no fashioning without, no operation of man's hand, either upon the chief corner stone, or upon the foundation stones—no squaring of human systems, or fashioning of human schools—no diffusion of human knowledge, or imparting of human energy, can, in a single instance, much less in the many that must constitute the spiritual members of the Redeemer's body, create one specimen of that life, and power, and godliness, in which Zion is to be built up, and by which the Highest himself is to establish her.

We speak thus of single individuals, that we may carry the view that we offer of Zion's materials to every one of you; that we may press on you, while we speak of the heathen, the vast importance of asking each for himself, Am I a living stone in this great spiritual temple? For, my friends, unless we are, our Missionary Society will move on heavily, the wheels of her motion will be intercepted, her energies will often be paralyzed, her counsels will be often turned into confusion, her strength will often become weakness, and her wealth become poverty. But let those who profess to be the instruments, the humble, but willing instruments, in the hand of a righteous, but powerful and mighty God, be found ourselves the subjects of the living power that we carry out among the heathen; and then we may expect that the Lord himself will, by them, establish his own Zion.

If we could for a moment suppose, that the materials were thus fashioned, and that spiritual power was thus imparted; if we could suppose, that a great number of individuals had been actually called out of darkness, into God's marvellous light, and had been spiritually quickened by the great power of God; we should still come short of the idea of a Church established by the



God of Zion. for the expression "Church," signifies an assembly, a congregation; and as Zion is intended to exhibit that congregated body as on the mountains of holiness and stability, established by the Highest, we must seek for a congregation of the strength and might which we have now been considering in the individual, materials that constitute the elements out of which Zion is formed. The man who is found in the enjoyment of his own spiritual privileges and ministry; the man who is found, like the ascetic in the desert, seeking to serve God alone; the man who despises the world, and lives away from it, because he hates it; the man who professes to have communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, while he has no fellowship with the brethren, may be considered as a living stone, (for such individuals, thus ill-judging, have there sometimes been among the people of God,) but he cannot be considered as a living stone forming part of a compact building, which, knit together by joints and bands, edifies itself in love. And hence, although he is a member of the body of Christ, he cannot be considered as a part of that Church which the God of Zion is here said to establish. He is one of the stones that has fallen from the building, or one of the stones that has never been lifted to its place; and though, insulated and alone, he may exhibit, perhaps, some of the finest strokes of the chisel, yet, unconnected with the whole, the carving he displays is imperfect, and the skill manifest in it, is unconnected with the wisdom which pervades the general plan of the whole edifice.

In order, therefore, to make this individual really, ostensibly, and efficiently, a member of the Church of the Living God—the Zion that God will establish, like Zion of old, on the holy mountains, it is necessary that there should be a fellowship with the brethren. In order to constitute a community, there must be a community of feeling; the sinner's views are directed to God first; his sympathies are directed towards him; he is lost in the blaze of his glory, and thrilled by the first feeling of the influence of his power; and beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: he forgets that there is a world; he forgets time, and space, and every inferior object; and he is lost in the contemplation of the one grand object, thus first making manifest the splendour of his attributes. But after the vision with which he has thus been blessed, has become, in some degree, familiar to him, and after the power he thus felt, became a part of his being, his spiritual and living nature, he looks around him for community of feeling and enjoyment; he has affection for his fellow men, and he has affection especially for the people of God; and in loving the Father of the family he is ready to love the children also: and after he has recovered from the first information of his guilt, and the first intimation of God's mercy, he looks around him, and he seeks for others, to whom he may tell what the Lord has done for his own soul, to whom he may tell the love that there is, and the light he enjoys, among a family growing in energy and numbers: and thus he finds scope for his faculties, lifted up from their degradation and directed anew; and as they expand, he finds in the meanest of his brethren the image of Christ, on which those faculties can dwell with increasing rapture; and thus, while he exchanges the sympathies of kindness with them, he finds that they and he become helpers together of each other's faith and joy: and thus laying the foundation on the holy mountain, Zion will be found to be a temple of living stones, each finding its fellow,

until all form a common mass, having a common circulation passing through them, and finding that they were originally intended to be deposited in the very spot in which they had been laid, to constitute a portion of the beauty and the strength of an edifice, to which they all in common belong. Thus the Church of God constitutes a spiritual fellowship, while it is constituted of individuals who themselves are enlightened and renewed in the spirit of their minds, after the image of Him that created them.

But we should consider Zion as established by the Lord, as incomplete, if we were to proceed no further in viewing this great and imposing structure. It was imperfect when we viewed it in the insulated elements out of which it arose: it will be found to be imperfect when we find it built up of the lively stones to which we have been directing our attention. What, my friends, would be the value of Zion thus set up and thus beautified, if there were not a fellowship of enjoyment and mutual edification—if there were not a community of feeling and of sympathy? Would there not be in this communion, were this the consummation of the design of Zion, as decided a selfishness as marks any of the parties of the present world? The community of the men who hold common views in politics, is a community of selfishness; and they are alienated from their brethren: the community of the nation which seeks only its own aggrandizement, is a community of selfishness; and it despises others: the community of a religious denomination that seeks not to carry its sympathies beyond the limits of the circle it has drawn around its members, is a community of selfishness, while it withholds from others the blessings it enjoys within itself; and the community of the whole people of God on all the face of the earth, standing aloof in the enjoyment of all their privileges from the world lying in wickedness beyond them, would be a community of selfishness, as decidedly condemned by the Word of God as any of the associated fellowships of human selfishness which we have been considering. If, therefore, we condemn the spirit of party in the single class, we must condemn the spirit of party in the union of all classes, under some general name. Hence, if the whole Christian body rested satisfied with the voice of its united supplications ascending to heaven; satisfied with the blessings its petitions might draw down: satisfied with the aid its brotherhood might be found to furnish, each to each, we should condemn that satisfaction as the satisfaction of a decided and unworthy selfishness.

In order, therefore, to set before ourselves the Church of God as it is exhibited in the passage we are considering, as established by him as his own Zion, which he will be ready to acknowledge, we must regard that church as holding a communion of operation also. The Church is bound to strive together with one heart, and with one mind for the faith of the Gospel: the Church is bound to make the truth sound out into all the regions round about. We often speak of missionary societies as voluntary institutions: contrasted, it is true, with the constrained institutions of the present world, the application of the phrase is correct; but viewed in connexion with the obligations that rest upon us by the profession which we make, it is altogether inaccurate. We are not volunteers in this service; we are unworthy of the name of the Church of God, if this service does not necessarily grow out of our fellowship. It is a service to which we are bound by the constraining love of Christ. It is a service to which we are bound by the gratitude which should respond to the benefits we enjoy. It is a service to which we are bound by the command of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is a service to which we are bound by the high and solemn anathema

invoked by the Apostle on himself: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel of Christ." We are left no choice on this subject: we are not only urged to it by the considerations I have now stated, but we are not the Church of God in the loftiest and purest sense of that phrase, until, in an act of common fellowship, we are thus found striving together for the defence of the truth as it is in Christ. Let no man therefore say, when he unites himself in such a service as this, that he has taken a step in which he has been a volunteer. It is essential to the very existence of the Church of God, in the highest characteristic that church can put on; and that church is marred in its beauty, and the lineaments of its features are imperfectly developed, and its powers and its faculties are in a frightful state of paralysis, unless it is found thus engaged in a spiritual co-operation for the extension of the limits of the Redeemer's kingdom. True it is, that the members of the Church of Christ have fellowship with one another, and with the Father, and with the Lord Jesus, within the pale of their own spiritual territory: but it is equally true, that whilst, like Zion, they are lifted up on the holy mountains, and planted as on the tops of the hills, if they should look around them with indifference on the territory that lies beneath, the darkness which settles at the base of the mountain to which they have been raised—they are unworthy of their lofty elevation, and they are in danger of having the clouds that are disposed beneath them, rise in frightful death around the summit upon which they have all their glory; they are in danger of losing the defence thus thrown around them by the indolence with which it is enjoyed.

Such appears to me to be the character of the Church of God. It is composed of converted and spiritual individuals: it is composed of a Christian fellowship, having communion one with another in all the privileges and enjoyments of the Gospel; it is composed of spiritual persons, stirring together in duties that extend, like ancient prophecy, from the rising to the setting sun, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and if the affections, if the exertions if the desires of the people of God, are more limited than are the promises made to them, then the Church comes not up to the standard at which it must finally arrive, and the outlines, enlarged as they are, which she is commanded to fill up, are forgotten and neglected. She is satisfied with a small and contracted territory, while the earth is the limit that God has given to her; and, like Israel of old, she lingers on the mountains of Amalek, safe from the sons of Anak that were great and tall, and the walls of which were built up to heaven, while the promise of the Lord is before her, and his command is, "Go on."

If such be the character of the Church, this is a Church, the establishment of which is worthy of God; it extends to all the wants of man, proper for the removal of his darkness, the sanctification of his impurity, the healing of his feeling of alienation, the restoring of his fellowship with the whole of his kindred, and finally, the extension of the blessings of his communion to the whole world.

Now, in the second place, let me direct your attention to THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CHURCH; for obvious it must be to every observer in the Church and the world, that, up to the present moment, the Highest himself has *not* yet fulfilled this prediction in the establishment of his Church. If we inquire into the first step of the establishment of the Church of God (and in this light it is often brought before us in the Word of God) it is the diffusion of its principles. The kingdom that is intended to be established by force requires no principles.

It is only necessary that despotism should seize the vacant throne, and lift the vacated sceptre; it is only necessary, that, having been thus placed in the seat of power, it should issue the decree of its will, and find a sufficient number whom circumstances may have made the instruments of its designs to carry those designs into execution; and the prostrate mind of an ignorant and uncultivated multitude will be ready at once to yield to the power that has thus rushed like a phantom before them; and without the diffusion of any principles, or the establishment of any institution, there will then be fashioned a certain species of community, and that community will have this description of power in its dominancy as the element of its establishment. But, if a community is to be established in the midst of light, there must be the enjoyments not only of kind and generous co-operation and sympathy, but the enjoyment of common principles; there must be a diffusion of principles in the promulgation of laws founded upon them; there must be the exercise of authority growing out of these acknowledged principles, and these promulgated laws; there must be a people satisfied to enter into the national compact, and to acknowledge the convention which is intended to preserve the safety and privileges of the whole: and these enlightened subjects, led by an enlightened legislation to the enjoyment of the privileges of the constitution, founded on common principles, will exhibit a community that we may expect to grow and rise in national importance, till they have set an example to the nations around them, and have been the means of extending the blessings they themselves enjoy, to all the communities of the earth.

Now, just so is it with the Church of God. If God himself is to establish that Church, the establishment is not of a power that is felt without the recognition of principles that are not acknowledged; it is not the establishment of an energy which sheds no light in order to illustrate its excellence. The establishment of the Church of God, in the general view I have taken of it (for I view it as including all that have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, that are acting in Christian co-operation for the renovation of the world) the establishment of a Church in the general view of it, which is what is sought by missionary societies, must be connected with *principles* which will involve every step in its spiritual progress. It will summon no country to surrender, without laying down at the threshold of the summoned territory articles of treaty that will prove to the satisfaction of the surrendering community that it is their interest to surrender. It will never lift its standard in the bosom of the enemy's forces, without having the confidence of the enemy amongst whom it has thus lifted its colours. It will never seek the acknowledgment of its sceptre amongst any people, but those who have been made willing by the power of principle. It will never seek to enrol amongst those who have been born within its confines, any that are not proud (speaking in the best sense of that term) of the citizenship of Zion.

If we thus regard the principles of the Gospel of Christ, as diffused amongst the nations of the earth, we find the first step towards the establishment of Zion. Look at this my friends, in the actual history of missions. Look at the Morai of the South Seas; see the gods before which the people laid themselves prostrate to do dark and untutored homage; and will you find one of the gods thrown away without the principle that exhibits its insignification? Will you find one of the Morais deserted, without the principles that lead to the temple of God? Look at India: will you find one of the temples of Budha deserted by those who once

worshipped at its shrine, till they have seen the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing on his wings? Look at Africa: will you find the Hottentots, or the Bushmen, turning away from the grossness of their former idolatry, unless they have seen the spiritual refinement of the Gospel of Christ? Look at any part of the heathen world, where missionary testimony has been lifted up, and you then trace through all the changes that that part of the world may have undergone, the diffusion of light in connexion with the progress of the change: and thus you find, that the very first step towards the establishment of Zion, is the diffusion of principles in which Zion glories, and which constitute her great spiritual character.

But, we must not only look at the field of missions as it now is; before we can thoroughly ascertain the character of this first step towards the establishment of Zion, we must look at the field of missions in the past. Look at the Pagan world, and tell me what it was that first overthrew its fastnesses, and exterminated its votaries from their strong holds. It was not the decree of Cæsar, it was not the power of the Roman armies, it was not the light of the Pagan philosophy, it was not the enactments of Pagan senates: all these might have perpetuated their application to the affairs of men until the heavens were no more, without extending the limits of Zion's territories, or establishing Zion on the holy mountains. But the Gospel went out from Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord from Mount Zion; and from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, the Apostles fully preached the Gospel of Christ; and churches arose only where the darkness was chased away, and the true light was found to shine; and fellowship was formed only where sinners were quickened and instructed: and if we look to the disciples who went everywhere after the persecution in Jerusalem, we find their employment was preaching the Word; and like so many lights lighted up in Zion's sanctuary, they went out amidst the surrounding gloom; and while each looked through the darkness in order to trace the wake of his fellow, all were found acting in common unison, and strengthening each other's hands by letters, by epistles, by messengers, carrying the glad tidings of the faith and patience by which the drooping hands were held up, and the feeble knees strengthened; and all acting in common concert, upon common principles, without the duplicity of worldly design, unfolded the great tidings till they threw out a light that eclipsed the splendour of the establishment of Paganism, and proved the spiritual establishment of Zion.

But we must not only consider the establishment of Zion as including the diffusion of light, the diffusion of the principles upon which Zion was established; we must consider the establishment of Zion as including, further, *the enlargement of her territories*. A kingdom is not established when it has led the way in the mere diffusion of light, and has again returned to its former condition, without being affected by the light that it has been diffusing: but let a kingdom diffuse its principles, and follow them up in their diffusion; let it commend the institutions under which it lives, and has its national basis, to those that are around; and there is at once a fraternity of feeling, by which the intellectual territories of that kingdom are enlarged; and if the darkness of the territory to which it has been carrying its light, refuse to yield in practice to its principles, there very frequently follows the ruin of the people who were once held by the sceptre.

It is so exactly with the Church of God. It extends its principles; but they are not, like the *ignis fatuus*, intended to blaze for a moment, and, after exciting

our admiration, disappoint us by expiring for ever, leaving the darkness as dense as they found it. The light and the principles diffused by the Church of God, are like so many suns: taking up their regular motions in their orbits, they are intended to become centres of systems upon which they reflect a steady and a useful radiance: and they are intended to keep the possession they have thus taken for the purpose of holding a paramount dominion over the dependencies that move around them. Thus it is with the Church of God itself: it is intended, by the extension of its principles, to include every man within its pale. When God writes up the members of Zion's community, he will say of every man to whom its principles have extended, "This man was born there." His citizenship is at once traced to Zion: he is considered no longer to belong to the God of this world, or subject to the Prince of the power of the air: the title of the father of lies does not now include him; the truth has been communicated to him, and the yoke of falsehood has been broken; and casting away the allegiance which he once held under him, who is at once the enemy both of God and of man, the individual who has received Zion's spiritual principles, claims the perpetuity of its fraternity, and intends to live and die, and again revive, in the full acknowledgment of the right of Zion's sovereign to hold unquestionable influence over his interests and his condition.

Now, if we regard Zion as thus enlarging her limits, while she is diffusing her principles, I take this as another step towards her establishment. Let us see how far this establishment of God's Zion interferes with the affairs of the present world.

It must not be said, that because the individual who has been enlightened spiritually, acknowledges the sovereignty of the King of kings, who reigns in Zion, that he has learned to speak evil of dignities, despise principalities, and dominions, and empires. As well might we say, that, because our moon has received her light from the sun that shines beyond her, she has refused to acknowledge her duty to attend upon our globe, and has ceased henceforth to communicate to us the aid she was formed to give; as we may hold that a single individual, enlightened by the spiritual principles of the God of Zion, should admit it to be his bounden duty to cast away his connexion with the just and the honest affairs of the present world. He is bound by those very principles he has received, to an attachment to the allegiance he owes to the sovereigns of the earth; whilst at the same time he is bound to retain a spiritual reserve—which, were it not retained, could not be his earthly sovereign's—he is bound to maintain a spiritual reserve in his allegiance to the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The homage he would give to the sovereigns of the earth would be repudiated as form by the God of heaven, and the homage he would yield to the Sovereign of the skies, would add nothing to the strength of mortal government: the temporal allegiance paid to the rulers of this world, is not the service which God requires; and the spiritual acknowledgment of the affections and the heart, is not the species of acknowledgment which a sovereign of the earth would accept at the hands of his subjects; it would neither strengthen the arm that held the sceptre, nor the pillar that supported the throne: it would neither give energy to the executive, nor wisdom to the legislative administration of the land, if all its subjects were to offer their united spiritual acknowledgment, and their homage to the power of earth; it would tend to corrupt and vitiate that power, and to inflate it with the pride which a homage so fruitless would be calculated to produce.

There is, therefore, a difference between the species of acknowledgment owed to the God of heaven, and that which is required by, and which ought to be paid to, the princes of the earth: and therefore, whatever might be the sovereignty of a country, whatever the character of its constitution, and however exalted the moral excellence of its subjects, the spirituality of the heart, which belongs only to God, never can be yielded to man without injuring and blasting the honour and the power of the earthly sovereign to whom they are yielded. Herod gave not God the glory, and Herod was eaten of worms: but the word of the Lord grew and multiplied.

But in the establishment of Zion, we must not only regard the diffusion of its principles, and the enlargement of its territories; we must consider also *the consolidation of its powers*. This is another mode by which a community becomes established. To enlarge territory and diffuse knowledge, while power is not consolidated, is only to increase the hazard of anarchy and of revolution. The enlargement of territory, without the consolidation of its strength, is always regarded as a proof of a weak and ill-devised policy; is always the proof of an ambition forgetting to calculate on the results of its unbridled expectations. But let power be consolidated, while principles are diffused and territory enlarged, and we have a different state of things before us; and this, then, is another part of the establishment of Zion by the Highest himself. Let us look, for a moment, at the enlargement of Zion's territories. While her light is diffused through the world, every addition to the number of her subjects is an addition of some sort to correspondence of feeling, sympathy of mind, the same love, the same faith, the same hope, the same grand object, the same common interest, and the same common morality. And upon the holy mountains, consecrated by the blood of the Son of God, the people whose territories are thus enlarged, will be enlightened by the wisdom that cometh from above; while the going out of the Spirit of the Most High shall consolidate the power which has been increasing by the enlargement of Zion's territories, and the scattering abroad of her light: and thus, while its territories are enlarged, there is no difference connected with the enlargement, no difference of essential views, associated with the diffusion of the principles in question. And hence, when the Church continues to increase and to fill, there will be found throughout the whole of the body that unity of power which pervades, notwithstanding the distinctness of the billows, the oneness of the ocean itself. The same spirit dwells in every heart, and offers the same intercessions, with the same "groanings that cannot be uttered;" and the same prospects are looked forward to; the same death-bed scenes are occurring; and the same flight is taken to the same mansions, prepared by Him who died and rose again, that his people might find in him the centre of common union. And hence in this case, the diffusion of light and the extension of territory are not disconnected with the condensation of power; but we find the energy of Zion consolidated, and its strength enlarged; and it will be found as easy, when Zion thus enlarges her territory and spreads abroad her principles, to disunite the waters of the ocean, and to form a conflict between its materials, as to oppose the spiritual advance of enlarged and enlightened Zion, in the elements of which she is composed.

But the passage before us reminds me that other kingdoms and other communities besides Zion, have had their glory. The Psalmist tells us, that he would make mention of Rahab, and Babylon, to them that knew him, and were amongst his acquaintance—that he would speak of Philistia, and Tyre, and

Ethiopia, "that man was born there." He would tell his acquaintance around him, that there were great and mighty communities upon the earth. He would tell them of Rahab, the ancient name of Egypt, directing their attention to Egypt's first efforts in the creation of science, and the diffusion of knowledge and of the arts. He would tell them of the Pharaohs that were born there, and the extent of their conquests by which they had covered themselves with their glory. He would tell them, then, of Babylon—of her towers, her walls, her trenches, the multitude of her inhabitants, the extent of her conquests, and her Nebuchadnezzars; he would tell them, that these great monarchs were born there. He would tell them of Philistia, and the giants of Gath, and the mighty men that were born there. He would tell them of the commerce of Tyre, and the Phenicians that sprang from their bosom: he would speak of the honour of being denizens of these great and mighty territories. But he would turn from this view, that he might be disposed to take, when considering things in the glass of this world, and he would think of the superior honour and the higher glory of the men who had been born in Zion: he would tell us, that when God should write up the number of his people, he would speak only of those who were honourably born in Zion. The great and the mighty monarchs of antiquity—the Cyruses, the Alexanders, the Nebuchadnezzars, and the Cæsars, the men that shook the thrones of earth, and then ruled them at their pleasure, will all be forgotten, and covered with the insignificance which belongs to this world's affairs, when the Church shall shine forth in the habiliments which Christ shall throw around her, and when those subjects that are taken up, as the ground-work of our most splendid poems, and that are treated as the matter of our chief historians, and that are regarded as constituting the very outworks of the records of our policy, will all be yielded to the grovelling dust on which they laboured; and the men who belonged to Zion—the Abrahams, the Isaacs, and the Jacobs, the Isaiahs, the Jeremiahs, the Ezeziels, and the Daniels, down to Malachi the last of the prophets—and beginning again with the Apostles, and reckoning up the martyrs of every age—will stand out as the lights by which the Church will be directed through the dark journey of her pilgrimage, while the men associated with this world's glory shall be forgotten for ever.

Let me direct your attention, in the last place, to **THE GREAT CAUSE OF ZION'S ESTABLISHMENT.**

Is Zion to be established by the power of man? Then let every man put on his armour, his sword, his shield, and his buckler: then let every man employ his wealth, his talents, his intellect, his philosophy, and let the things of the present world be employed, for the purpose of carrying out the conquest of the Church, and let there be thrown around us, in the efforts of our powers, the proofs of our earnestness that Zion should be established.

But we dare not speak of Zion as established by the power man: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," said the Lord of Hosts, when he was about to establish literal Zion of old, after the return from the Babylonish captivity. Such principles will apply to the establishment of Zion still; and *the God of providence*, let me observe in the first instance, *presides over the means by which Zion may thus be established.* We are not to suppose, we have nothing to do with the establishment of Zion. We have to do with the providence of God, we have to do with the promises and encouragements of God, and whilst, my friends we are engaged in all the ordinary means by which we



can cultivate the missionary field, we are looking up to the providence of the Highest himself, for their application to the grand purpose of the establishment of Zion. We must bring the seed with us, like the husbandman, cast it into the ground, look up to heaven and acknowledge our helplessness, pray for the early and the latter rain, that they may descend on the earth, and see, as the issue of their descent, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; whilst we have been only applying means, in themselves inefficient, yet devolving on us as a solemn duty; and the providence of God, with all its presiding energies, has been affecting and influencing all the movements of the earth and its nations, for the accomplishment of the object in which we have been engaged.

The providence of God, however, my friends, is not the only channel through which the Highest will establish Zion: we must look also to *the Spirit of God*. If there is no nation that rises without the divine permission, no nation that falls without the same permission—if God putteth down and lifteth up kings—then we look to all the movements of the earth as his. But if we are asked whether these improvements would affect the grand end, and erect a spiritual palace for the Lord, we answer no. The Spirit of the Highest is essential to this grand object; and, therefore, we look for that Spirit, to give power to the word in the hearts of those amongst whom we sound out the glad tidings of the kingdom. We are come to the work, conscious of our powerlessness, but strengthened by the consciousness of the power of God. We come to the work, having the means clearly laid before us, and the obligation devolving upon us; but we come to the work, confiding in the strength of Omnipotence to assist us.

It is in this way, then, that God gives establishment to his Church, and it is in this way that the Highest will himself continue to advance his great work. We are, therefore, in perfect keeping with the design of Zion's final establishment, while we are employed in sending out those who testify the glad tidings of the grace of God. The two grand instruments by which the Highest operates, are Providence and the Spirit of God. Before the former, kingdoms melt away and kingdoms rise to light; before the latter, spirits lost in darkness, are enlightened; and affections alienated from God, are brought back to the exercise of his love. In the hand of Divine Providence, counteracting circumstances are changed, barriers are broken, stumbling blocks are lifted up, walls are thrown down, languages are learned, the Scriptures are translated, commerce opens the way to their circulation, and sometimes even the blood-stained tide of war is subdued by the oil of the good word of the kingdom, and followed by the importation of the word of truth; and thus proves, that though the destroying sword of man was in the front of the battle, the glory of God was in the rereward; and though the sinful passion of earthly ambition laid the design and executed the plan of proud innovation, God was waiting the result of man's achievement, to prove that the God of battles had been watching till the strife of war should yield to peace on earth and good-will to men.

To conclude: let me direct your attention, for a moment, to the difficulties that may lie in your way. Do you still find, even while you have before you the certainty of Zion's establishment, and that, by the Highest himself—not difficulties from God (he is omnipotent and unerringly wise) but difficulty from man? The directors of your missionary societies are all men; your missionaries are all men; your subscribers are all men; the spectators of your doings are all men; and that very humanity which has sometimes, perhaps, with

unexpected ardour, swelled the gale and filled your sails, may finally turn round and counteract your voyage, and probably hinder the work of your hands. Is this matter of surprise? Is this like the abruptness of a ball from the clouds, unexpected till it struck the wanderer dead, who had not the opportunity of aiding his head from its fury? Are you not aware of the words of Him who cannot lie—"It must needs be that offences will come?" Difficulty was not unanticipated, nor is it now; it belongs to the history of the Church in all the ages of the world. "Abstain," said the Apostle, "from all appearance of evil:" "Let not your good be evil spoken of." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." There is the history of your exposure, and there is the record of your duty. If difficulties should arise from this quarter, they are associated, not with Zion, but with the weakness of Zion's sons. Meet them just as an embodied few would meet the hostile many, that would overthrow their strength, or forbid their advance: redouble your energies as your difficulties may press; increase your watchfulness in proportion to your exposure; put out a larger measure of wisdom as you may be likely to become entangled in your path. Look around you; there are those who, with an evil eye, are watching for your halting; and learn tactics from the enemy to whom you are opposed, but with this difference—that, while they lean on their own wisdom, and their own strength, your resting place be the arm of the Lord your God: and then, if you believe that providence is one pillar of your cause, and the support of the God of providence the other, while the wisdom of the Lord Jesus sits at the helm, and directs the storm—while both are assailed, is there any ground upon which you have reason to doubt, or on which you should hazard a fear? "All these things are against me," said the patriarch of old, when he for a moment forgot to seek the directing wisdom of the divine Spirit, or rely on the presiding care of a watchful Providence: but when he reasoned thus, he reasoned behind a clond, beyond which there was a brilliant sun; and the return of the messengers from Egypt, was only wanted to dissipate the gloom, and to lead him to that view of a kind and interfering Providence, which brought down his grey hairs, not with sorrow, but with joy to the grave—that enabled him to say, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."

From these views of God's establishment of Zion, and of the difficulties that stand in your way, but which must be overcome, while this is your motto, "The Highest himself shall establish her"—then I would say, go forth in the great cause in which you have embarked. Look at your Missionary Society, not as the perfection of beauty which the fulness of the divine dispensation has fashioned, but look on the Missionary Society, as the first streaks of that day, which is finally to break on the benighted world. Turn not away from them to the darkness you have left behind you, because these rays exhibit no luminous centre, to which they all converge, in order to give a condensed glory and beauty. Wait till the moment shall have come, and hasten it on by your humble, dependent, and united labours, when you shall be destined to behold the King in his beauty, in the land that is afar off. And if victory is not at once connected with your effects, lose not the patience that perseveres to the end; for "they that endure to the end," and they *alone*, "shall be saved." Cloth yourselves, therefore, with the feelings and spirit of them that fight: quit ye like men: be strong. Say not the cause is feeble, and the issue doubtful; but let every mind be encouraged and every arm nerved: and while the passions of men may hiss around you, pass on, like the vessel in the storm, conscious that the Pilot is on board, and that the haven is near.

## LIFE A STATE OF DISCIPLINE FOR ETERNITY.

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CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, MARCH 2, 1834.

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"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—*COLOSSIANS*, i. 12.

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You will often meet, in the perusal of Scripture, with references to our present state of being as most strictly preparatory to another. The general representation of the Bible appears to be, that this earth is not only a scene of probation, but that it is, yet further, a scene of moral discipline, and that by the schooling and training of which we are here made the subjects, we become fitted for the business and enjoyment of a higher sphere. And there are few points in theology which, for practical worth, deserve more to be impressed on men's minds than this—that, over and above the obtaining the right of admission to heaven, there must be obtained a meetness for its possession. It is quite evident, that, whatever the scenery and characteristics which we ascribe to the future home of the saints, we must suppose ourselves endowed with just those organs and faculties which shall be effectual for appropriating the beauty and the blessedness; otherwise (to use a common expression) the whole would be thrown away on us, and we could be nothing advantaged by the splendid things and the lovely which might girdle us around.

The most casual and thoughtless observer must often be struck with the adaptation of the earth to the creatures who inhabit it, or the adaptation of the creatures to the earth which they inhabit. It is this adaptation, which makes the eye, for example, a more powerful witness to the existence of a God than any one, or all, of those magnificent worlds which we see travelling the firmament. It is perfectly clear, that the eye has been constructed with a wise reference to the properties of light, or that the properties of light have been regulated with a view to the mechanism of the eye. If you did not think it incredible that the eye might be a chance production, or that light were a chance production, you would require an infinitely greater degree of credulity before you could think that same chance production might be exactly fitted to the other chance production. The proofs which we search for when wishing to demonstrate from the visible creation the existence of a Creator are, evidences of design, seeing that, in proportion as we detect evidences of design, we charge absurdity on the theory that the world around us is not the work of an intelligent Creator: and it is impossible to imagine a greater evidence of design than is put forth by the eye, inasmuch as if an organ were to be constructed which were adapted to the properties of light, the eye is precisely that organ; so precisely indeed, that if in the least respect altered, it would become unfitted for the purposes of vision. Thus in the mechanism of the eye, a mechanism which distinctly shews that the

eye was intended for the light, or the light for the eye, you have a greater witness to the intelligence of the Creator, and you have a greater evidence of design, than astronomy can ever find in all her marchings over unlimited space.

But our business is simply with the adaptation of man to his present dwelling-place, or the adaptation of the dwelling-place to those who inhabit it. This adaptation must force itself, we say, on the most unobservant. You will all admit, that man seems to have been made on purpose for the earth, or the earth for man. If our organs and feelings were not exactly what they are, or if the objects around us were not exactly what they are, we must believe, that in either case we should be quite unfitted for a residence upon earth. There must be the adaptation of the dwelling to the inhabitant, or of the inhabitant to the dwelling; otherwise, however the bare existence may be possible, it is evident that enjoyment would be wholly out of reach. And certainly, observing how the adaptation has been attended to in our present state of being, we might naturally conclude that it will not be neglected in our future state; that, whatever the blessedness of heaven, we shall be required in some sense, to be made meet for its enjoyment. If heaven at all differ from earth, it is clear that man would gain little or nothing by the being transferred from the one to the other without the passing of any change on his powers and dispositions. You may tell me, that I am to be translated at death to another planet, and that I am there to mingle with another and a nobler order of beings; but unless you also tell me of some great alteration which shall be passed upon myself, there is nothing to allure me in the opened-up prospect. If I were suddenly placed on some far-off star, with exactly that apparatus of organs, and faculties, and feelings, which fits me for dwelling upon the earth and for companionship with men, the likelihood is that I should be so completely and in every sense a stranger, so altogether out of my element, that it were not easy to imagine a greater dreariness and wretchedness than would fall to my portion. To the natural inhabitant of the star, its landscapes might be those of an exquisite and unrivalled loveliness, but possibly mine eye would be quite unadapted to the scenery, and there would be presented to me nothing but a blank or deformity: the natives of the planet might be charmed with the sounds which enchant them with their melodiousness, but mine ear would not be constructed so as to receive these modulations, and the music would be to me only harshness and discord: and however there might be circulating through all the hosts of the inhabitants the charm of a choice and intimate friendship, there would be nothing in common between me and them, and the difference in nature would prove an insurmountable barrier to all that is pleasing and profitable in intercourse. Thus it is only so far as with change of scene, we suppose change of organs, there can be any thing attractive in the prospect of removal from the earth to a wholly different habitation. The idea of happiness pre-supposes necessarily that adaptation of the being and the sphere on which we have spoken, and which is so clearly to be traced in our present existence, that unless there be this adaptation, you must all perceive, that the dwelling to which we are transplanted might be one on which God had expended far more of the riches of his might and contrivance than on that which we left, and that its tenantry might vastly out-do human kind in glory and intelligence; but that, in place of being advantaged by the exchange, we should just pass into a condition of desolation and misery, such as we have never experienced while inhabiting this lower creation.

Now though we have sketched our illustration from the adaptation of ou

bodily organs and senses to the scenes in which the Almighty hath placed us, it will readily be admitted, that if the discourse turn on what may be called the moral adaptation, there will be equal force in the argument. There must be a correspondence between the dispositions and the pursuits; the objects presented as the sources of pleasure must be exactly those which the desires solicit; otherwise it were absurd to speak of happiness, or to expect anything else than uneasiness and dissatisfaction. If an unholly man were translated, with no assault made on his unholiness, to a state of being whose enjoyments were those of holiness, he would be in a position of the same kind as that of an individual who might be removed to another planet with the organs and senses which are only constructed for this. There would be manifestly just the same want of adaptation between the powers and objects of enjoyment, and consequently just the same feeling of having passed into an uncongenial element, and of the thorough incapacity for entering into the employment, and sharing in the joyousness of those who were at home in the new and strange territory. And thus it ought to commend itself to our minds, as one of the simplest of truths, that if we are to be admitted into heaven as the place of happiness, we must be subject while on earth, to the processes of a strictly moral discipline; and that inasmuch as, on our calculation, the occupations of the saints in their everlasting home would be such as required cleansed and remodelled dispositions—such, in short, as could never be pursued, unless there be a renovation of nature, it must be essential to Paradise proving anything else but a waste and a wilderness, that, in the language of our text, we be made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Now, we think it our business, in addressing a mixed congregation, to bring to bear on the subject-matter of discourse a variety of argument, so that if possible there will be something to interest the different classes of the audience. If we could believe of this present assembly, that it were wholly composed of individuals receiving and acting on the scriptural doctrine, that this life is designed as a state of discipline for the next, we should feel that we had nothing to do but enlarge on St. Paul's words, and explain what that meetness is of which he makes mention. But we cannot put from us the conviction, that there are numbers of you who never regard the present world as a school in which men are to be trained for another; and we feel that it would be vastly more a moral benefit to each of our hearers if we could so place before them this fact, that it should commend itself powerfully to the understanding and conscience. We shall, therefore, in the first place, pursue yet further the train of thought which was opened by our introductory remarks; in other words we shall examine the fairness, or rather the necessity, of the supposition that our present state of being is one of discipline and preparation for our future. We shall then, secondly, enquire into the justness of St. Paul's statement, that he had been made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Now we have spoken of the adaptation which must subsist between the capacities of a being and his condition, in order to his being fitted for occupation and enjoyment. We suppose you will readily admit, that if our nature did not correspond to our external state, there would be no possibility of any such thing as human life, and human happiness. We will recur to our former illustration. We consider that no one will deny, that a man translated suddenly to another planet, and carrying with him only the organs and senses which are

constructed for this, would be incapable of enjoyment, and, in a very high probability, incapable of life. Whether or no his powers would accommodate themselves by degrees to the new state of being, we are clearly unable to determine; but if there were a difference between the planets, it is most evident that, unless thus accommodated, his powers could not qualify him for residence in the scene to which he had been transplanted. And when you admit this, you admit all which we are concerned to make good, namely, that previous discipline is necessary in order to the fitting the individual for the supposed change of habitation. If it be allowed that at death they must pass into a new state of existence, may it not be said, that we shall then occupy circumstances similar to those of the man thus compelled to shift his dwelling-place to another planet, and that unless, therefore, we have been in some way prepared for the scene upon which we are to enter, we shall be as unfit, whether for its joys or its business, as though transported without any change in our nature, to a world which is void of all objects answering to our appetites, senses, and affections?

We press this consideration on you as one which, if you will only allow it to have its just weight, is strikingly calculated to make you pause in your career of levity and worldly-mindedness. You will hardly so degrade yourselves as rational creatures as to profess a belief and expectation, that the future is to be in every respect like the present; so that hereafter there shall be the same objects of desire and pursuit as here allure and engross the great bulk of mankind. You never think of an avaricious man carrying with him across the border-line of eternity the passion for accumulation; at least you never think of his carrying it with him as a passion in the gratification of which his delight is to lie: though it is far enough from impossible that he will carry it with him as a passion whose unsatisfied gnawings shall constitute one grand item in his torment. You never think of the voluptuous man as following that pleasure in the next world which he is seeking in this. If his voluptuousness go with him into the future, you think it must go, not as a principle in the obeying of which there shall be delight, but in the denying of which there shall be agony: and if you find yourselves necessitated to admit, that there must be at death such a change in human capacity and human condition, that present objects and desires will be no longer attractive, or, at least, no longer attainable, you cannot deny that, unless you experience a thorough alteration or renewal of character, you will be as distinctly incapacitated for the particular life of those who gain happiness hereafter, as you would be for a sphere of existence constructed for beings of a different nature.

And what we wish you yet further to observe is, that over and above the ascertained necessity for a renewal of character, you are surrounded by evidences in the whole analogy of nature, that the present life is designed as a state of discipline for the future. You observe men are not born into this world with all that equipment of energies which they will need when arrived at maturity: on the contrary, their infancy is a state of thorough weakness and feebleness; and all the early years of life serve only for the culture and development of those faculties, both physical and moral, which they are to bring into exercise when taking their due place in human society. We are so accustomed to this appointment of Providence, that we give it not the attention which it equally deserves. But you may at once perceive, that if there were in any case a deviation from this appointment, so that the human being were sent into

the world in the full perfectness of manhood, so far as there be consciousness, such a being, in spite of all the energies with which he is endowed, would be well nigh as helpless and bewildered, and unfitted for the business of matured life, as though born an idiot. It is not enough that he possesses a certain amount of power, whether of mind or body, unless he has gone through the training of infancy and childhood, so that the power has been gradually acquired, or gradually brought out; he would be, for a long while at least, nothing better than a nursling as to all the affairs of a stirring community, and be no more qualified, but far more dangerous, than the palsied in body, and the vacant in mind, for any of those offices which devolve in mature age on the ranks of society. Is it not then a most fair expectation, that, for as much as our present life may be considered to bear on our future exactly that relation which the infancy of this state of being bears to its manhood—is it not, we say a most fair expectation, that we are placed on earth in order that we may be prepared for a higher place in creation; yea, and that if there be a frittering away of the opportunities of that which we are bold to call the childhood of our immortality, so that we pass into eternity uneducated for its lofty concerns, we shall be just in the condition of the full grown man launched upon life, without any of the teachings of instruction, or habit, or experience, and thus be fitted for no other part throughout the broad ages of the immortality of our species, but that of furnishing an exhibition of moral shipwreck, and telling out to the intelligent universe, that the attempt to set aside God's ordinance of discipline would issue in nothing but everlasting ruin—perfect in one thing, but that one thing wretchedness.

We think it thus a simple, as well as a just idea, that our being placed in this life in a state of discipline for another, is a providential dispensation, just analogous to that in which, throughout infancy and childhood, we are placed in a state of discipline for mature age or manhood. The arrangement is wonderfully similar; and even if we were devoid of direct information on so important and interesting a matter, it would be something better than an ingenious conjecture, if, from observing how in the first years of life, we are disciplined for the after, we suppose it to be the design of the Almighty, that the present theatre of our being will serve as the school-house in which we may be trained for another and a nobler.

And we cannot pass on from this illustration of our subject without endeavouring to bring it more home to your feelings. It is quite true that children, are made dependent on their parents, so that the parents instruct the children, and not the children the parents. But there is a beautiful reciprocity in this matter which ought not to be overlooked in Christian households. If you would only look on childhood as presenting an exact image of our race, viewed relatively to the after-state of being, you might yourselves be educated by all those processes of education which you either apply or observe as you watch the development of powers, as you prescribe and enforce rules for correcting the judgment, improving the memory, and strengthening the principles, and thus labour at preparing the yet feeble and uncultivated mind for the duties and pursuits of the full-grown man. You may well consider that all which goes on under your guidance and inspection is just what ought to be going on with regard to yourselves. Infants as ye are, who have yet to come of age, you need the very same development of powers, and the very same strengthening of principles, in order that, in the yet unreached maturity of being, you

may be fitted for that station in the grander state of the universe which God in his mercy designs for mankind. And, therefore, while teaching children, you ought to be yourselves taught; there should flow in upon your soul from all that business of instruction by which you affect to fit the young for the counting-house, for the bar, or for the pulpit, a continued memorial of your own moral position: and, viewing in the discipline which is needful for childhood, an accurate monitor of that which is requisite for yourselves, as still only at the outset of your being, you should be stirred by the machinery of schools and universities to examining whether you advance in the training for immortality. It is thus that the benefits you confer would tell back upon yourselves, and that the children whom you instruct would act as your instructors.

We cannot but think, that whenever God sits in judgment on the families of this earth, one aggravating circumstance in the long catalogue of sins shall be fetched from the constant exhibition of their own state and their own wants which is presented to men in the daily history of their households. Yea, we are bold to think, that with hundreds and thousands the books which are opened, and out of which they shall be condemned, may just be the school-books of their children; for, if it be of the first moment to our well-being hereafter, that we receive and act upon the truth that our present life is designed as one of moral discipline for the future, then whatsoever in the arrangements of Providence is calculated to present this truth to our notice, and to force it on our attention, will undeniably prove the stoutest witness against us at the judgment. If we pass across this scene of probation without any striving after meetness for the inheritance which may be expected in the ripe years of existence—and if childhood, in all its imperfectness and in all the apparatus which it needs for the educing latent powers and forming right principles, be an image the most accurate of man's estate in this life, when taken in conjunction with the sentiment of the text—who will pronounce it an over bold thought that education (we mean education in itself—the dealing with young years as the time of preparation for maturity) that the education of sons and daughters may bring down the very sternest of condemnation on the parents; so that just because in applying himself to the education of the young, the man has had constantly before him a memento of what he ought to do as the heir of eternity? Why, sirs, the equity of his being given up to torment may be demonstrated from the fact, that he gave attention to the opening days of his offspring, and the simple, common-place circumstance that he sent his children to school, prove to the on-looking universe the thorough justness of God's dealings, when, as having neglected his own discipline for an endless hereafter, he is sent down to the prison and the fire at last.

Now, it were not difficult to add other strong reasons why our present state of being should be regarded as one of discipline for our future. We ply you with facts, which, if the Bible were never put into your hands, give, at least, a high probability, that you are placed on earth as on a stage of preparation for the perfect life of good men hereafter. You plainly admit the force of the argument that, when the truth has been enforced by variety of methods, we shall be held the more inexcusable if it never become influential on our practice. We might then pursue yet further our train of enquiry, and, multiplying our proofs from the analogy, that this life is the discipline time of the next, leave you more and more bound, as calculating beings, to strive after preparator for the full manhood of our being.



But we are pressed by the remainder of our subject, and have only time to apply practically our remarks on the adaptation which subsists between the nature of man and the world in which he dwells, just as we have done those of the child in the season of education. We have not feared to introduce your children's books into the solemn proceedings of the judgment, and neither shall we fear to introduce your corporeal senses, and to assert you condemned by your taste, and your eye-sight, and your hearing. We dwelt on the correspondence which subsists between our organs and the objects which answer to them in the surrounding creation. If light were not exactly what it is, the eye would be useless; and if the air were not exactly what it is, the ear would be useless: and from this correspondence we deduce a great moral lesson, even that there will be needed in our future state of being the same adaptation of the nature to the scene, which is so essential in our present to enjoyment, or rather to existence; and that consequently, forasmuch as we all expect a great change in scene, we are bound earnestly to seek a great change in nature, if we would not throw ourselves into eternity unprepared for all except its fires, which are quenched not. And what then shall bear a stronger testimony against us than the eye or the ear, if we strive not to be disciplined ere ushered into the new state of being? We can imagine to ourselves the man questioned at the judgment, as to his means of ascertaining whether God had placed him, while on earth, in a state of moral discipline. He may have had slight opportunities of what is termed instruction; but we can believe him compelled by the apparatus of his senses, to hold that he might have ascertained the character and design of his earthly condition. These senses assured him that he was constructed with a distinct view to his residence on earth, and that, if differently constructed, such residence would have been impossible: they told him, therefore, in language which, if misunderstood at all, must have been wilfully misunderstood, that if he were to find happiness in a different sphere of being, he must enter upon it with a different state of powers; and thus they urged him to enquire after the mode of a moral renovation, that thorough change of nature, apart from which they seem to tell him, he must look for no enjoyment in a thorough change of dwelling. It is enough then, in order to his being brought in as guilty of wilfully throwing away opportunities of discipline if unprepared for eternity, that the ear shall tell how it received the modulations of the air, and gave him notice of varieties of sound, and the eye testify how it gathered the rich showers of the sunlight, and enabled him to take the sweep of the panorama of creation. And thus when he stands in his resurrection body before his Judge, the organs of that body, however altered by the process which has made them imperishable, and however abused whilst he lived neglectful, shall witness so strongly to the fact of warning having been given as to our present state being a state of moral discipline, that, with the approval of all orders of intelligence, he will be condemned as having neglected to seek meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

We turn now to the second division of our subject. Up to this point we have been engaged with the shewing the fairness, or rather the necessity, of the supposition, that in this life we are in a state of moral discipline for the next. We are now to assume, that such is the character and design of our present condition, and briefly to examine into the justness of St. Paul's statement with respect to himself and the Colossians, that God had made them "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

We generally speak of preparation for heaven as a gradual thing; and, without question, there is a sense in which in the proportion that they grow holier, and more full of God's love, true believers become more fit for the enjoyment of the kingdom. But since St. Paul speaks of the meetness as already acquired—"Who *hath* made us meet," we cannot well understand our text as referring to that gradual preparation which is effected by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. We are confirmed in this idea by observing, that it is not to the Third, but to the First Person in the Trinity that the Apostle here ascribes the preparation: "Giving thanks to *the Father* who hath made us meet." Undoubtedly the same thing is often in Scripture referred promiscuously to the three persons in the Trinity. Thus, though it is especially the office of the Spirit to sanctify, we find St. Jude addressing his epistle to those that are "sanctified by God the Father." And, indeed, whilst holding the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, we think it nothing more than a natural consequence on the unity of these persons, that, in some places, the Bible shall speak of a thing as done by one of these persons, and yet in another place ascribe that same thing to another. We do not, then, conclude on the mention of "the Father" in our text, that the Apostle had allusion to the gradual preparation which is the work of the Spirit. But when we combine this mention of the Father, and not of the Spirit, with the use of the past tense, with the assertion, in other words, that the work is already done, and not still in progress, we seem warranted by the two circumstances, if not by either one singly, in considering the meetness here spoken of by St. Paul, as not that which is the result of continued sanctification. And the truth of this matter will appear to be, that as soon as a man is effectually called of God, he is made meet for the inheritance; but that, by remaining on earth after conversion, and advancing in the graces which belong to Christianity, he becomes—we do not say more meet for the inheritance, but fitted for a higher station, and a more distinguished blessedness among the children of the first resurrection. If the man die so soon as justified, he would possess the inheritance; and, therefore, it must follow, that in being justified a man is also made meet. But this statement in no degree militates against the worth or necessity of sanctification; inasmuch as if there be, as we believe, varieties in future happiness, the several portions of the heirs of the kingdom shall be adapted to the scale of their present attainments. We suppose, then, that the meetness for the inheritance is acquired at the same time with the title to that inheritance: the Apostle, in fact, makes the two things contemporaneous, for while he speaks of "the Father who hath made us meet," he adds, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Now, unquestionably, the "deliverance from the power of darkness," and "the translation into the kingdom of Christ," are immediate results, or rather constituent parts, of the change which we define as "conversion," or "renewal;" and whereas St. Paul places the meetness for the inheritance, even before the deliverance and the translation, we shall clearly not be warranted in considering that meetness as acquired long after, but must at least regard the fitness for heaven as wrought out at the same time with the renovation of nature. In simple truth, it is by having our nature renewed as it is at conversion, that we are "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." The change effected is precisely similar to that which would be effected on the body,

if the organs and senses which are adapted to this earth were so remodelled and modified as to become adapted to another section of the universe. The unconverted soul can understand, and feel, and taste, and enjoy, the things only of this world; the converted soul can see, and feel, and taste, and enjoy the things of another world. Sin was a delight to him, but now it is loathed; God was forsaken, but now he is sought; holiness was disliked, but now it is desired; there was no form nor comeliness in Jesus, but now he is "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Thus the result is the same as if you supposed a complete change in the whole apparatus of powers, and senses, and affections; and the communicated organs are manifestly those which will be required in order to enjoyment, if not to existence, in the inheritance of light. They are the organs which enable men to discern the beauty of that heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness, and to hold communion with beings who delight in performing God's will. They qualify their possessors to find pleasure in those exercises of praise which constitute so much of the future employment of the saints, and to feel love towards all who bear the same image, or who possess the same kingdom. We do not indeed say, that at the instant of conversion these organs will come into full play and exercise; we only say that these organs are then imparted, or that the old organs are then so renewed as to become adapted to the scenes and occupations of heaven. And this is all that is required in order to the making good the assertion, that the Father has made us meet. The infant, as soon as born, is meet for residence on earth, seeing that it brings with it an equipment of senses and powers, which, though weak and undeveloped, are those that are needed by the dwellers in this terrestrial creation. And in like manner, the justified man, so soon as justified, is meet for the inheritance in heaven, seeing that the renewal of nature of which he has been the subject, implies or includes the communication of spiritual affections and faculties, which require, however, to be drawn out and strengthened, and are precisely those which were always to be found at home in the scenery, and amongst the inhabitants of the invisible world. We still keep fast to the illustration of which we have availed ourselves through the whole of our discourse. If one of us were about to be translated to a distant planet, where the light, and the air, and the rain, and the gravitation, and the tenantry, were all broadly different from what they are in our own, the senses and the powers of such an individual must undergo a great change ere he could be fitted for the new and far-off dwelling-place. And if there be given him, through some supernatural operation, in exchange for his present apparatus of organs, just that state of powers which would enable him to appreciate the grandeur and loveliness of the distant domain, and to enter rejoicing into the pursuits and pleasures of its unknown relations, we should not hesitate to say of the individual, that he was made meet for the planet, and that he was ready for the translation: and it is precisely the same with reference to the fitness for heaven. We look on the unconverted man, engrossed and delighted with what is earthly and perishable, and we feel that the transferring this man to heaven without a renewal of nature, would be transferring him to a new world with organs and senses adapted only to the old. If he could exist he would find no enjoyment in heaven, any more than the man whose eye-sight, and hearing, and touch, and scent, and taste, had nothing correspondent to them in the creation which he was sent to inhabit. But let the man be converted, and old things are passed away; he has new hopes, new fears, new desires, new feelings. He sees a beauty in holiness, and therefore he has the eye-sight of heaven; he

hears a melody in the Gospel, and therefore he has the bearing of heaven ; his hand handles the word of life, and therefore he has the touch of heaven ; there is fragrance to him in the sacrifice of Christ, and therefore he has the scent of heaven ; he hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and therefore he has the taste of heaven. Thus all his senses—if it be lawful to define the spiritual by the corporeal—all his senses are adapted to the inheritance of the saints. And if now translated to that inheritance, he is not a man removed from one world to another, with a set of powers belonging to the old, but not fitted for the new : he is indeed a man whose dwelling-place is shifted, so that all around him differs from his original home ; but he carries with him organs which are demanded by the residence, and therefore will feel himself in his element so soon as ushered on the inheritance. And since it is the very meaning of conversion, that a man is so born again, that the powers with which the soul is equipped, passed from adaptation to this life, to adaptation to the next life—from all that fitness to the earthly, which lies in the holiest attachments, for a fitness to the heavenly—and since, we say, there is necessary to conversion all these changes in our spiritual organs, may we not contend, that, as soon as a man is called and justified by the Father, he is prepared for the invisible world, just as the man who has fresh apparatus and senses for another and a wholly different planet ; and might not then St. Paul, speaking of himself and other renewed men, say with perfect accuracy, “ Giving thanks to the Father who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light ? ”

And now there remains nothing, but that we associate the two parts of our discourse ; and that having shewn you in the first place, that you are to regard the present as a state of discipline for the future, and, in the second, that the required fitness for the change is found in the renewal of our nature by conversion, we exhort you to improve the day of probation, by seeking to be made new creatures in Christ. We began with assuming the thorough reasonableness of the expectation, that we are placed on earth in order to gain fitness for a higher stage of being ; and we have now shown you, that this fitness is imparted to all who submit themselves to the conditions of the Gospel.

The inference from these shewings is clear and unavoidable, that, perceiving ourselves in a state of moral discipline, we close thankfully with those offers of mercy ; and ensure, what we cannot elsewhere find, such improvement of the estate, that we shall be schooled for immortality. The Christian's life will, indeed, as we have already observed, be throughout a course of preparation for heaven ; but he is made meet at the outset, though in all after stages the moral discipline will be so powerfully applied, that he shall work out “ a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” It is then only requisite that the man be converted ; and, whilst immediately prepared if the change were immediate, he will pass his days in that training which is the design of his present condition ; and thus living as an immortal creature, fulfil that great end of his being which he is able to ascertain as a rational.

Let those, therefore, who would give great weight to the suggestions of reason, hearken to those suggestions as they admonish them to submit to Revelation. Reason confesses our state to be one of moral discipline ; but she cannot master the problem—how may we so pass through it, as to be fitted for a state of happiness and joy. Baffled by the disorders and intricacies of the existing dispensation, she can discover no mode by which the corrupt can be schooled

into purity, and the depraved prepared for the enjoyment of righteousness. And when, therefore, Revelation comes forward, sustained by the evidence which reason approves, and presenting the intelligence which reason solicits, let it not be thought that you act as disciples of reason unless you thankfully submit yourselves to the discipline enjoined by Revelation. Believing in Christ so that you receive him into the heart by faith, thus, and thus alone, can fallen creatures hope for meetness to partake the inheritance of the saints in light.

May we all seek this meetness; knowing, that if not sought, and if not found, we must be landed in eternity meet only for inheritance of the reprobate in darkness. As born of the flesh we are meet for the heritage of cloud and tribulation; but it is only as born of the Spirit that we can be meet for the heritage of sunshine and gladness. Beautiful are the words (would that their beauty might be recognized and felt by all!) "Partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." "*Partakers.*" Nothing of solitude, nothing of loneliness: it shall heighten our bliss that we share it with a multitude; that we walk not the magnificent outspread, a scattered few, an inconsiderable remnant of the mighty tribes; but that, surrounded by a company which no man can number, in our every joy myriads have companionship, and our every note of praise is echoed back by ten thousand times ten thousand voices. "Partakers of *the inheritance.*" "If children," says the Apostle, "then heirs, heirs of the Father; yea, joint-heirs with Christ." Admitted into the fellowship of God by adoption, we become possessed of all the privileges of sons. And now, though undoubtedly undeserving, having no merit in ourselves which we can present for a title; we have so inalienable a right as members of Christ to the glories of immortality, that we have only to wait till death awaken us to joy, and we shall enter, like the undoubted heir who has completed his minority, on the vast and splendid possession. "The inheritance of the saints in *light.*" "**Light.**" The shadows of the temporal dispensation shall have passed away, and the whole plan of the Creator's dealings be spread before the admiring saints, one blaze of beauty. "**Light.**" The discrepancies of Providence, the seeming contradictions in God's government, the obscurities which are caused by our knowing only in part—all these shall have been removed, and, while appearing on the lustres of eternity, have left no dark spot in the map of time. "**Light.**" It shall not be the brilliancy of the material sun which makes the future landscape indescribably radiant: the future hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. "**Light.**" The saints themselves, purged from all that is corruptible—the purified soul in an imperishable body, shall be wondrously luminous: even now, as St. Paul expresses it, they shine as lights in the world; but hereafter perfectly conformed to the image of Christ—of whom we are told, that at his transfiguration (which exhibited what humanity shall be when glorified) his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light—they shall be conspicuous amongst all orders of intelligence, transformed into glowing and beaming likenesses of Him whose radiations occupy the universe. "**Light,**" says the Psalmist, "is sown for the righteous:" and the seeds of the sparkling harvest are deposited in their souls while working out salvation. Holiness is the moral light, and the germ of heavenly purity is the element of heavenly splendour. Let it now then be our endeavour to walk as children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. but rather reprovng them. There must be (and we press this again and again

on your notice,) there must be a correspondenee between the scene and the creature. The inheritanee is one of light, and therefore, the heir also, in the words of St. Paul, must be "light in the Lord." We will aim, then, God willing, so to improve this state of discipline, that, casting off the ignorance and corruption in which we are naturally enveloped, we may at length be called with those righteous of whom Christ said, they shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father."

## THE EXCEEDING ABUNDANT GRACE OF GOD.

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REV. G. CLAYTON,

YORK STREET CHAPEL, WALWORTH, FEBRUARY 23, 1834.

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“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”—1 TIMOTHY, i. 14.

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It is the most difficult thing in the world for a man to speak in a becoming and consistent manner concerning himself. Wisdom and modesty in ordinary circumstances would lead him to choose another topic of discourse, and would prevent him from adverting to himself or his own immediate history. But there are occasions in which it may become a man's imperative duty to speak of himself; as, for example, when he is misrepresented and misunderstood—when the shafts of calumny and false accusation are directed against him; it is then most fit and proper that he should speak in the language of explanation, that he should vindicate his principles and clear his character from injurious imputations. So when he speaks with a view to glorify God, either as the God of providence or of grace, having taken occasion from his peculiar circumstances to illustrate and develop his own divine character; and so also when he aims to encourage others by a particular reference to what he may have been and what he may have experienced; in order that they, cheered and animated by a consideration of his peculiar experience, may lift up their heads with joy. If a man thus speak of himself to rebut slander, to glorify God, to encourage his fellow Christians, he does well, whatever may be his own repugnance to the thing—he does well pointedly and plainly to allude to himself.

This we find the apostle Paul doing in the immediate context of those words that I have read. But let it be noticed that he speaks of himself *very thankfully*: “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” He gives glory to his Divine Master for having entrusted to him the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and counted him worthy of the high honour of displaying, announcing, and recommending that Gospel to others.—He speaks of himself *very humbly and penitently*: “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” You are not to suppose that the Apostle means to diminish aught from the guilt of his conduct when he says that he “did it ignorantly and in unbelief.” It is true that he did not act, even in the days of his unregeneracy, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience: but he does not mean to extenuate his offences, he admits them in all their full amount and aggravation; but he represents that he obtained mercy because he acted under the influence of a blinded and ignorant mind, and under the guidance of an unbelieving heart.—He speaks also *most encouragingly to others*: “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first,” or in me

principally, "Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." As if he had said, "Let no sinner despair when he considers what I was and what I am: but by the grace of God I am what I am; and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

From these words I purpose, First, to direct your attention to "the grace of God" as the only source of hope and salvation to guilty and apostate men. Secondly, I shall take occasion to show you, from the circumstances of the Apostle Paul's conversion and salvation, that towards him this grace was "exceeding abundant." Thirdly, I shall notice the character which this grace will form in those who are really the subjects of it.

Let me direct your attention, first, TO THE GRACE OF GOD AS THE ONLY SOURCE OF HOPE AND SALVATION TO GUILTY AND APOSTATE MAN.

The very terms of this proposition suppose that *man is in a guilty and apostate state*. He has transgressed the law of his Creator; he has failed in his allegiance to his Maker; he has trampled on the authority of God, and has thus become obnoxious to the sentence of death. The whole world is become guilty before God. Who can pretend that our nature is in the precise circumstances in which it came from the hand of Deity, when God surveyed his creatures—both as the effect of his own skill and power, and as wearing his moral likeness—and pronounced it "very good." "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way:" and it is a dark, it is a guilty, it is a destructive path which we have chosen.

We are not in a condition, seeing that our state is that of apostacy, to work ourselves out of this state by any meritorious deeds of our own, or any service or struggles which can conduce to this end: there is no way of escape for us but that which divine grace has provided. There can, in truth, be only one of two ways of acceptance and salvation; we must be saved either by law or by grace. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law:" but "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

There are two passages to which I would refer you on this part of the subject. The first is Romans iv. 4: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And again in the same Epistle, xi. 6: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

By "the grace of God" we mean *his free, unmerited, and unsolicited favour*—a gratuitous exercise of divine mercy on behalf of guilty and apostate men. This is the source of our salvation: the motive by which the mind of Deity was employed to provide for man's regeneracy was a purpose of free and unmerited favour. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." The contrivance upon which the whole scheme of our salvation is reared was the



contrivance of grace: not according to our works, but according to his mercy he saved us; he hath "saved us, and called us with a holy calling;" not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace which he perfected in Christ Jesus before the world began.

The effectuation of that great scheme into which the angels desired to look, the contrivance of infinite mercy, is of grace: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." It was grace which brought him to the manger of Bethlehem, conducted him into the wilderness, led him to the agony in the garden, inflicted upon him the stripes of the Romish scourge, and the indignities of the multitude: it was grace which led him to the cross, which led him to bow his head in anguish there, when he said, "It is finished; the work is done, the great transaction is accomplished, redemption is achieved."

The application of the divine contrivance for man's recovery is of grace. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the glorious Trinity, stands engaged in the economy and covenant of mercy, to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us," to apply the blood of sprinkling to the conscience, to grant release and emancipation from the thralldom of guilt, misery, and corruption. And this is all a gratuitous operation. "Uphold me," says the Psalmist, "by thy free," thy princely, thy munificent "Spirit." The gift of God is not to be purchased with money; it is not a bestowal communicated as the reward of human merit and deserving; but the Spirit's influence is poured out, like the freely descending showers, like the dew that waiteth not for man, nor tarricth for the sons of men.

The completion of this great and glorious work is of grace. Were we to trace the whole process from the commencement to the perfection of it, it would be seen that in every step the grace of God is manifested to be "exceeding abundant:" "Where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound." It is grace that carries on the work till the spiritual edifice has attained its utmost elevation, and the top-stone shall be placed with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it."

Now, my brethren, do consider that this is the only source of hope and salvation for guilty man. Tell me of any other if you are able. Will you talk to me of penances, and pilgrimages, and bodily austerities? Will you talk to me of a man's giving the very life of his heart as an atonement for his sins? You must be aware, that all these plans of human device are utterly ineffectual. Nothing that we can do, nothing that we can suffer, can avail to atone for the least of our sins, or to procure for us the smallest favour from heaven. It is utterly of grace; this is the sole source of hope and salvation.

Secondly, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT UPON THE CONVERSION AND SALVATION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL, THIS GRACE WAS "EXCEEDING ABUNDANT."

This will appear, in the first place, if you consider *his previous character*. He was before, an impious blasphemer, a treacherous persecutor, an injurious reviler. There was no profligate immorality, in the ordinary sense of the word; he was what we should call a moral and irreproachable man; you have his own testimony for this in Philippians, iii, 4—6: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching

the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." But though his course and his character were not deformed by any of the grosser immoralities, yet he was a blasphemer, and he compelled others to blaspheme; he was a persecutor, and he dragged men and women to prison and to death for the name of Jesus; and he was "injurious." This word signifies "a reviler;" he was a man who knew no bounds in pouring abuse and contempt upon those who were the despised followers of Jesus of Galilee. When pleading his cause before Agrippa, he related some striking circumstances of his own history, which tend to throw much light, I apprehend, on the subject under consideration: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Galilee. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem. and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Oh, with what a sorrowful note does he pour out this confession, and acknowledge himself to have been guilty of the greatest of all crimes in the sight of God—the blaspheming of his Son, and the persecution of his Son's disciples.

What does this prove? That where a man is not chargeable with gross immoralities, yet the sins of the mind, the intellect, the temper and disposition of the heart, may stand out in the sight of God in the most odious, the most culpable, and in the most guilty form. This is precisely the argument of the Apostle, that "the grace of God was exceeding abundant," upon this very ground—that to him, who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, the free grace and mercy of God was shown. Thus it is that God magnifies his grace in the selection of objects, who, according to all the methods of human calculation, seem to bid less fair for the enjoyment of his favour and the communication of saving mercy.

In the second place, the grace of God was exceeding abundant toward this Apostle, if you consider *the period of time* at which he thus became the subject of renewing and converting mercy. It was at the very moment when, with impetuous fury, he was proceeding to Damascus under the authority of the high priest to make havoc of the Church of God. In the very journey which he had taken for the purpose of exterminating the followers of Christ, and, if possible, the expunging the name of Christ from the living records of the sons of men, did the hand of God arrest him, and the voice of expostulation reach him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And while on the road for the destruction of others and his own destruction, the grace of God rescued and saved him.

In the third place, the exceeding abundant grace of God was conspicuously manifest *in the completeness of the change which was produced on his condition and character*. It was a very remarkable change, because Paul the disciple presents a contrast so direct, so strong, and so striking, to Saul of Tarsus. The moment that the grace of God effectually reached him, he fell down to the earth, trembling and astonished, and exclaimed, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" The transition was so apparent from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to God, all the points of the change are so pre-eminent to the view and observation of every one who seriously contemplates them, that we must acknowledge that herein is the finger of God, this is his mighty power, **his** is the effect of his transforming grace: that grace is "exceeding abundant,"

for you see, that the lion was changed into the lamb; that individual who, under the influence of a mistaken and malevolent heart, was breathing out threatenings and slaughter, now breathes out the language of prayer; he who was aiming a deadly shaft at the very heart of the Redeemer now crouches at his feet, in order to receive a commission from his lips, and to devote all his powers and faculties to the service of him whose cause he had laboured to destroy. Was not the grace of God then "exceeding abundant" in the accomplishment of this glorious change?

Once more, the grace of God was exceeding abundant toward him if you consider *the subsequent employment to which he was appointed, the eminent qualifications with which he was endowed, and the great success which attended him in his Apostolic career.* The grace of God having selected a man of such a character, and having reached him at such a time, and having produced on his mind a change so extraordinary and so complete, that grace now employs him: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. I have sent thee to the Gentiles, and to the people, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me." The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant in calling the Apostle to the work to which he was appointed, eminently qualifying him for that work, honouring him with great and extraordinary success in its prosecution, making him the honoured instrument of proclaiming the Gospel before kings, and before rulers, and before the people at large. And who that reflects upon the usefulness that marked his career in life, who that reflects upon the honourable testimony he bore to Christ by his martyrdom, who that reflects upon the long train of advantages that accrued to the Church and to the world in every succeeding age from the writings and example of this holy Apostle, will not immediately acquiesce in the representation, that the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant?

There is yet one point to be considered, in the third place, which I shall touch upon briefly, **THE CHARACTER TO WHICH THE GRACE OF GOD WILL ALWAYS FORM THOSE WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS OF IT.** "With faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The two grand characteristics of the Apostle antecedently to his conversion were, his unbelief and his malignity. Now the character to which he **was** wrought by the operation of divine grace on his heart, exhibits an entire contrast to these two characteristic qualities; for you find in him faith taking the place of unbelief, and love taking the place of malevolence; he becomes an entirely changed man, the principles of his whole conduct are completely altered, and therefore his character is metamorphosed, as we say, that is, entirely and completely changed. This is indeed the case in all other instances: wherever the grace of God takes possession of the heart, it forms a character, and that character consists of these two constituent principles—faith and love; the faith which annihilates self, the faith which brings a man to Christ, the faith which unites him to the Redeemer, as his glorified Head, and enables him to draw out of his fulness, and to derive supplies out of his plenitude; the faith which purifies the heart; the faith which overcomes the world, and which triumphs in the dying hour. We might as well talk of a sun without light, as of a Christian without faith; it

is the grand fundamental principle. "Now the just shall live by faith." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Wherever this principle of faith is engrafted in the mind, and is productive of these fruits in the character and in the life, the principle of holy love and religious benevolence will be found equally operating. Having by faith obtained justification, pardon, and acceptance with God, through the righteousness of another, I shall love the God who saved me, love the Redeemer who died for me, love the children of God's family who are partakers with me in the inestimable benefits of redemption; I shall love all mankind for the sake of Him who has assumed that nature into union with his own, and has taken the pattern of my humanity to the throne of the Godhead. Wherever I discern a fragment of human nature, I trace that nature in some degree of relationship to the Son of God, and for the sake of the divine Redeemer I love those whose nature he wears. And thus you see the comprehensive principle of Christian love will embrace all, according to the relative degree and peculiar claim they may have upon us; all will be embraced in one fervent grasp of Christian charity: "Faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." And I beg to say, that this meets that which is commanded of God; and that commandment is the rule of all duty: for this is the commandment of God, that we believe on his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

In closing this subject, in the first place, *it offers hope to the most hopeless*; I say hope to the most hopeless, because we have discovered that the grace of God is the spring and the source of man's salvation. My dear fellow sinners, if it depended upon your own merit or discernment to extricate yourselves from the thralldom, and from the miry clay into which sin has plunged you, you might have remained until now; but a voice has been heard from on high—"Deliver them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom." When there was no eye to pity, and no arm stretched out for your relief, then did the eye of God glance on your forlorn condition; then did the heart of God pity you in your distress; then from a motive of mere grace did he form that contrivance which grace has effected, which grace supplies, and which, when carried into active detail, grace will complete. Here then is the door of hope which the Gospel opens for you; and though you may have been among the vilest of mankind, though you may have been numbered among blasphemers and persecutors and revilers, yea, though among the scum and the offscouring of all things; yet, let me tell you, there is no depth of misery from which God's grace cannot deliver you, and there is no height of sanctity and perfection to which God's grace cannot lift you: thou hast fallen by thine iniquities, but God thine helper is great. Therefore let none despair; let none say "I have no hope." "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; for to-day I declare unto you I will render to you double for all your sins;" "Where sin did abound grace shall much more abound;" "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But while this subject excludes despair, it does not encourage presumption. If there are any who should be disposed to abuse this subject, and to say, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound;" if there are any here who shall dare to deal in the unwarrantable language which we sometimes hear, and with infinite pain, "The greater a man's sins, and the more flagitious his enormities, the greater will be God's glory in saving him;" let me tell him the Scripture knows

nothing of a doctrine like that. There is an exhibition of God's free and undeserved, and unsolicited favour to the chief of sinners, that none may despair; but if any sinner thinks in his evil heart that he will add iniquity to iniquity, in order that thus the grace of God may be more magnified in his salvation, that man draws down redoubled guilt and condemnation on his own soul; the Lord will not bless that man, for how shall we escape if we neglect, if we abuse, so great a salvation?

Secondly, let us examine, pointedly and seriously, *whether we know any thing of the grace of God* which we have seen exemplified in so remarkable and transcendent a degree in the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Has this grace reached your heart? Has it transformed your character? Has it made you a new creature in Christ? Can you say that old things have passed away, and that all things have become new? To what does the grace of God form you, as to your character, demeanour, spirit, and conduct? Is it "with faith and love in Christ Jesus?" Dost thou believe on the Son of God? And has the faith which you profess opened your heart in sentiments of kindness, generosity, compassion, sympathy, and affection towards your fellow creatures? If you could remove mountains, if you suffered martyrdom, without this divine charity, you are nothing more than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. Oh Lord, let me not be deceived on a question of so great solemnity. Let me not be given up to think or to preach lightly on the subject of the grace of God. May I have its deep and powerful and transforming influence "with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus!"

Thirdly, *what gratitude do we owe for the manifestation of this grace* for the revelation of it to our sinful world. If the sun could be extinguished and blotted out from yonder heavens, it would be a less calamity inflicted on the natural world than if the doctrines of grace were banished from the Christian system. They are the only principles upon which we can live—the only principles upon which we can die. "A sinner saved by grace!" It is the highest stile to which we can aspire. God be praised if we have any hope of interest in his mercy, and any prospect, arising through the merit and sacrifice of his Son, of the perfection and blessedness of a glorious immortality.

Let us close therefore by considering the animating and exhilarating prospect which the grace of God opens beyond the grave. Here we know something of those proofs and fruits of divine grace to which our attention has been directed; and there is another and a brighter and a better world where the grace of God will be found to be "exceeding abundant" in the rewards which he has to bestow and the immunities and felicities to which he can advance all who are the objects of his grace. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." Behold heaven open to your view as the throne of God and of the Lamb. See the innumerable company of angels. Listen to the harp of the blessed, the melody of the songs of the redeemed. Think of a state of perfect knowledge, a state of perfect purity, a state of perfect enjoyment, a state which will exclude the possibility of a contact of moral impurity; sin and the plenary evil of it completely abolished: and then imagine yourselves to be the inheritors, the partakers of this blessedness, and remember that you owe it, and will owe it, entirely to the grace of God. Will you not then feel that it has

been "exceeding abundant" in having raised you from a state of misery and associated you among the principalities and the powers in heavenly places, and with the whole multitude of the redeemed who shall be your companions in the service and blessedness of heaven for ever. Then will one song employ the whole assembled throng, while they cast their crowns before the throne of God and of the Lamb, saying, "Grace, grace, unto it." May you all bear a part in that ascription of praise through the merits and intercessions of the Redeemer!

## THE DEATH OF STATESMEN

REV. J. BENNETT, D D.

MARLBOROUGH CHAPEL, OLD KENT ROAD\*, AUGUST 26 1827.

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For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the Counsellor, and the eloquent Orator."—ISAIAH, iii. 1, 3.

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WHEN you are called, my dear hearers, to guard against a worldly mind, does it imply you are to take no notice of what is passing in the world? that you are blind, deaf, and insensible to mortal affairs? Is this possible, unless, as the Apostle says, "we would go out of the world?" for while we are in it, objects strike our eyes and our ears, and our hearts too. And is it possible, is it desirable, would it be religious, to have a heart of stone? Does not religion take away such a heart, and give in its place a heart of flesh—tender, warm, lovely, generous, full of noble sensibilities? The Christian is not built on the ruins of the man, the brother, the neighbour, the patriot, the philanthropist. No, my dear hearers, we have never so tender, so generous, or so extensive sensibilities, as when the grace of God makes us new creatures. This only is implied in the charge to guard against a worldly mind: where others see worldly revolutions you should see divine dispensations: your citizenship being on high, you should see Him who is invisible, riding on the storm and managing the whirlwind, and making all things work together for the good of his Church. Therefore God reproaches some with their insensibility, when it is said, "When the hand is lifted up they will not see: but they shall see and be ashamed at the envy of the people;" and while the great and the mighty fall, and "the Lord of Hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and Judah the stay and the staff," let us behold the works of God, and learn heavenly wisdom.

First, then, my dear hearers, learn from the late mournful event in our country—the death of a great statesman at the head of the government—learn **THE WEIGHT OF GOVERNMENT IN A FALLEN WORLD**. For when the mightiest minds that our country has produced—a Fox, a Pitt, a Liverpool, a Canning, one after another taking the weight of government upon them, and dropping under its weight into the arms of death; can we avoid thinking of the mighty mass of care that has pressed them down? Would it not be affectation and obstinacy to say, It is mere sequence and not consequence, it has no relation to cause and effect? Were you to see a vast load laid on the shoulders of many strong men successively, and were you to see them drop one after another, till at last the load was lying on the ground waiting for some one to take it up, would you not say, How heavy it must be? And what else do we now see, but the great weight of government lying on the ground for some mighty mind, some

\* Funeral Sermon for the Right Honourable George Canning.

Herculean shoulders strong enough to bear it? Let us remember that in ordinary times, when we expect that success is the natural order of things, we know not how many heads have ached that ours might be at ease, and how many breasts have been agitated that ours might be calm. We wake in the morning, having passed a quiet night; and you may say it is natural for the night to be quiet: but we forget that the watchmen watched that we might sleep. When troublous times come then we are taught this wisdom, for we then discover that quietness, and calm, and ease, are not so natural in a fallen world as we imagine. On the contrary, man having fallen from God, he has perverted the moral order of the universe; and when he is deranging his relation toward his Creator, can we expect any thing but derangement with his fellow-creatures? When the great tables of the law were broken at the foot of Mount Sinai, it was not only that table which said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," but also, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," that was dashed in pieces. Were a band of robbers to conspire together to set the government at defiance, however harmoniously they might seem to move, every wise man would say, Wait a little, and they will quarrel among themselves, and a wise government will soon crush them all. And when we have fallen from our great Creator, can you wonder that it is a mighty task to manage fallen creatures? For the very selfishness which reigns in all parties, the governed and the governing, would be avoided, were they wisely loving their neighbours as themselves. Lines drawn from the circumference to one common centre, will not cross or disturb each other; but now that every one has a mighty self of his own, now that self is his god, and his all, all is thrown into confusion in the government. They that are in power can hardly be supposed to be pure in their motives: they are men, and are we pure? Among the governed there are unreasonable expectations excited: they look for from man what God alone can do; and they lay to their charge the badness of the seasons; and because the weather is too wet, or too dry, they will pour on the governors blame for the variations in the very elements. And when we behold this discord, we may conceive how hard it must be to bear the weight of the toil, and to manage such a mass. And there is another cause of difficulty in the management of the state, which must never be lost sight of; for since the rise of popery, subsequent to the professed conversion of Constantine, the governors of the world have not been content with governing it alone, but they must govern the Church also, the soul as well as the body. Religion must be taken on their shoulders; though I know not the shoulders but of One, and he more than mortal man, that is able to bear the vast weight of the eternal interests of the souls of men. Hence the cares of government have doubled, and trebled, and multiplied beyond calculation, and who can wonder that the weight of this mass should crush the Atlas that attempts to carry two worlds?

Secondly, we are taught this evening, by the event we attempt to improve, not only the weight of the burden, but **THE WEAKNESS OF THE SHOULDERS OF MORTAL MEN.** However mighty his shoulders may be, he must be a bold man that would venture to take up a burden that has crushed so many: and yet there are many that will venture on it; for there are those who delight in danger, who sport with difficulties, and who delight in doing what no one else can do. And it is well for society that there are men of moral courage; not merely the physical and animal courage of the bull-dog, which will rush fearlessly into danger;



nor the daring courage of the soldier, that would seek glory in the midst of desecration and blood; but those that love to meet with moral difficulties, and to contend with the contradictions of men, and sway the passions of the multitude. But if all preferred the comfort and quiet of domestic life, how could the affairs of government go on? Yet there are some burdens, the weight of which will crush any mind: for the sons of Anak are not omnipotent.

In ordinary times, these men serve to shew our littleness; but there are times coming which will teach us how little we all are; and how feeble the mightiest, when he meets with his match, and more than his match. When great difficulties come on the most extraordinary minds our age has produced, they will find that the spring of the mind may be strained too far, and the most buoyant spirits sink down languishing; for the mind acts upon the body; the liver begins to feel the effect of continual thought; the night yields no rest, the sweet balm of sleep is never thrown into the veins; and rising in the morning still more fatigued, the day shows new difficulties; till the spirits fail, and the men drop. Thus, if we learned before how great the man was, afterwards we hear the voice that says, "Man is but vanity and dust, in all his power and pride." "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

And how knows any man how near he is to this point, when he shall be overwhelmed with his own duties, distracted with his own cares, become a prey to the very thing in which he delighted? No man knows but that he is at this moment on the very verge of the grave. Therefore, let no man glory in man. "Let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the wise man in his wisdom, nor the rich man in his riches, but let him glory in this, saith the Lord; that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the world: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Let it be your bliss to say, "In the Lord I have both righteousness and strength: in all my weakness and guilt I am in the hands of an omnipotent friend, who will sustain me, and make me more than conqueror."

Thirdly, let us learn by the lamentable event we attempt to improve, *THE UNCERTAINTY OF ALL HUMAN AFFAIRS*. We have heard of this before, say some, that is one of the common-places of old time, on which any one can declaim. You have heard it before—Have you believed it? Have you felt it, and have you lived under its influence? What, all dumb now? Then you must hear it again, for you have it yet to learn. "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get again: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." We need to be taught this with a strong and iron hand; for this warm piece of moving clay that is bustling about the earth, ready to drop to pieces every moment, and to be scattered to the winds, is so swoln with vanity that it would fain fancy it is made of adamant. Therefore God supplies us with strong lessons, at certain seasons, to teach us the contrary. When the French Emperor, Napoleon, had gained the battle of Jena, he received some blasphemous congratulations, ascribing omnipotence and omniscience to him, and he received them as though they were his due: I said in my heart, that man is doomed to a downfall, he hath provoked to jealousy the

Lord of Hosts, and he will teach him how different earthly thrones are from eternal crowns. But little did he expect a humiliation so public and so mortifying; little did he expect a downfall such as he after experienced; to be flung on a distant land, an island alone in the wide sea, and there to pine away with a secret disease,

“ His fate was destined to a foreign strand,  
 A petty fortress and a humble land:  
 He left a name at which the world grew pale,  
 To point a moral, and adorn a tale.”

But we are supplied with another lesson, in one who weathered the storms of political life to grasp the helm of the state. Often he thought of the uncertainty of arriving at the object of his ambition, but seldom thought of the uncertainty of remaining there, or if he did, it was by the recollection how many there were struggling to displace him. Little did he think of another foe that was lurking in secret, aiming a blow that was death. For Death lurked behind, just waiting to let him be seated, to let him be warm in his seat, to allow him to be secure in his post, to gather his friends around him, to commence his arrangements, to have the whole prospect in view, then, springing like a tiger, tore him down from his seat, and consigned him from his seat of glory to the bed of death. There lies the nation's pride and glory; there lies the mighty counsellor, the eloquent orator, whose thoughts were lightning, and his words thunder. There he lies prostrate in the dust. No more brilliant conceptions glance across his fertile brain, no cares of government now swell his mighty mind; but Death, that ruthless conqueror, is trampling him in the dust, and the very worm feeds on his cheek fearlessly.

But ah! our thoughts are also full of mighty cares, busy with the pursuits of pleasure or commerce, building up a mighty fortune, rearing a house that shall last to all generations, which the wind will blow down perhaps the next breath. Remember, thou hast only to change the name of Canning to thine own, and the tale is told of thee, and “thou art the man:” thou art the next moment, perhaps, a tale for mortals to learn wisdom by. Oh, then, my dear hearers, let us proceed to the next lesson, and learn,

**Fourthly, OUR ABSOLUTE DEPENDANCE ON THE SUPREME GOVERNOR.** When we behold the profound counsellor, and the mighty orator, and are entranced with their talents and execution, we grow idolatrous, and think these men are more than mortal, and that society could not go on without them; little thinking that he who made them as they are, to be employed as he pleases, and to be laid aside when he pleases, can raise others equally fitted as they are. When Moses was called in Horeb, to become a sort of king to the children of Israel, and when he shrunk from the task, saying, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue,” the Lord said unto him, “Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?” And he that raised up mighty men, and formed their gigantic minds, has he exhausted his resources, has he no residue of spirit, or power, or talent left, that he can form men equal to them that have been before? When you see the ripened corn, the beauteous harvest, waving in the field, you will never say, When this is cut, when shall we see another?

and when this is consumed, where shall any more grow? You will surely perceive that he that promised these shall not fail, will not fail in his promises. In the Church we are accustomed to such reflections, when the accurate expositor, the mighty preacher, the watchful pastor, are taken away. If for the moment we say, help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from the midst of us; we recollect ourselves, and remember "the Lord liveth, and blessed be our rock, exalted be the God of our salvation:" the government rests on the shoulders of Jesus; he hath promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church, he has founded it on a rock. Is not this equally true of the Church and of the world? Jesus is King of saints, the Lord of all the princes and kings of the earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords, of low men, of wise, and of the unwise. The holy and the profane are under his government, and he doth what he will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Let us, then, remember, that the great Governor of the world shall manage his affairs well, and that he will raise up others to accomplish his purposes, in the stead of those whom he pleases to take away. And let us not be driven from this reflection, as if it were hard fate and dire necessity, that we must come to cast ourselves on his power and faithfulness. It shall be our joy to see him presiding over the nations, and we shall sing with joyfulness, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Fifth, another lesson which we should learn from the late event is, **THE SACRED DUTY OF PRAYER FOR KINGS AND ALL IN AUTHORITY OVER US.** For thus saith the Apostle; "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." So also says Paul to Timothy; "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." You see how wide the duty extends—not merely to "kings," but, "to all in authority under them," deputed by them to administer the affairs of nations: for no man, though a king, can do every thing himself; and in our government, constituted as it is, it is manifest, great importance is attached to the king's ministers: for the responsibility is taken from the king, and laid on his constitutional advisers; that, on the one hand, they might have the greatest motive for giving wise counsels; and on the other, that the nation may be preserved from the violent convulsions that would be one result from calling kings to account. Therefore, it is manifestly proper, that prayer should be offered for the king, that he may choose wise counsellors. But can he choose them where there are none to be chosen? If death crush one mighty mind after another, what shall the king do? He cannot choose wise men out of a number of fools, or mighty men out of feeble. We must be left with that sad lot with which God threatens his people; "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them: they shall be left with the refuse, because death has left none else." Therefore we should make our supplications that councils may be assisted; that the cares of government may not overwhelm and destroy—that there may be a reasonable spirit prevalent in the public; so that it may be rendered less oppressive. For it is a very alarming thing if the country cannot be governed but at the risk of the lives of those who are at the head of affairs. Seek, then, of Him by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, that he teach our counsellors wisdom, and guide our senators in judgment. I ask this of you, therefore, my dear hearers, who are

men of prayer ; you, who are the salt of the earth, to keep it from corruption ; you, who are the pillars of the world, to bear it up from ruin ; you, who have power with God, the mighty omnipotents of faith ; you, who when God draws out his sword to slay a guilty nation, may interpose, and he will say, "See, I have pardoned them, according to your word : and they shall not die." Go you, therefore, to the mercy-seat, and pour out your soul before your God, and entreat him to shed blessings on your country, from the king on the throne, down to his meanest subject.

Sixthly, I ask this of you, in the next place, that you should, IN YOUR SUPPLICATIONS, ESPECIALLY REMEMBER ZION, THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD. The Church has been compared to a building, and the world to a scaffold placed around it, in order to assist in rearing the edifice. Now, admitting this imagery, what do we learn from recent events ? That the affairs of the world interest the Church, and that, if the scaffolding be shaken and deranged, the carrying on of the building may be retarded ; and that if one of the poles fall, who can tell what damage may be done to the edifice, or what obstruction may be thrown in the way of carrying forward that glorious work ? You say, it must prosper, it is founded on a rock, it is erected according to the Divine plan, and heaven has decreed that they shall bring out the top-stone with shouting. I grant it ; but take this also into account—that the means by which this shall be accomplished are ordained also ; that a vast apparatus is provided to produce this happy result ; and that the throbbing of anxious hearts, and the fervent prayers of the people of God, pleading night and day with him for Zion, are to be brought into the reckoning, and must be employed to accomplish the end. Give the Lord, therefore, no rest, till he establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the earth : and when political events arise which affect the Church of the living God, then do you arise, and plead with God in the critical moment, that it may be well with Zion. For, think how our country has been affected by political events. The death of Henry the Eighth opened the way for a Reformation of that malignant species of religion which he adopted ; in which he hung men for being reformed too much, or burnt them for being reformed too little. This passed away at his death, and his son, Edward the Sixth, introduced a greater Reformation. His death overthrew all again ; and the bloody Mary succeeded with her reign of persecution. Her death made way for Elizabeth, by whom the work of Reformation was again carried on. And when James the Second was preparing despotism and bigotry for our country, then the glorious William interposed, and the happy Revolution brought civil and religious freedom too. And civil freedom is necessary for religious liberty. Find me a country where religion is at liberty and there is no civil freedom. If, therefore, we enjoy the advantages of religious freedom by means of God's overruling civil events ; let us remember Zion, and pour our solicitudes into the bosom of our God.

Eli's death was the best part of his life, though he died under a cloud, and his death was the execution of divine threatening upon him for honouring his sons more than God. Yet, at last, he shewed that the calamity that had befallen him had cured him of that sin ; for when the news of the death of his sons was brought, he bore this with a calm and equal mind ; but when it was told him that the ark of God was taken, "he fell back from his seat, and being an old man, and heavy, his neck brake, and he died." But, let me die the death of the

righteous ; though he die under a cloud, the sun will shine brightly on the other side. Let me, then, bear Zion on my heart ; let my heart be solicitous for the Church, whatever events shake and convulse the world : and be assured that whatever consequences may now arise from the death of the late minister of state, the Lord God will take care for the interests of his Church, and that no weapon formed against her will prosper.

And now let me entreat you, my dear hearers, to listen to the last lesson which the recent political event teaches—**TO PREPARE FOR OUR OWN DEATH.** “Prepare to meet thy God,” is the language of this event. Death is so important that we should make the most of it. We ought to take care that we do not live for ourselves, and we should not die for ourselves. We live to teach others how to live, and we die to teach others that they must die. We ought to live always learning this great art, which is the last we shall have to practise on this stage of being—the art of dying. We can die but once ; and if we die badly we cannot come back again, and say we will do it better next time. It is done once and for ever. Therefore we must learn to do it well, or be for ever miserable.

For this reason God furnishes us with lessons and teachers. These are our own friends and kindred. They die, as it were, within our own doors : we cannot escape from the scene—it is under our own roof ; and we are obliged to stand by their beds. The lessons we there learn, so take possession of our whole souls, that we say we shall never forget it. But that was fallacious : nothing promises us more, and performs less, than the death of others. Some, perhaps, have often been taught this lesson ; and who will deny that he has almost forgotten it, because it is a long time since he lost a friend. All the mighty impressions he thought would be eternal, seem to have vanished and gone. Therefore we have to be instructed again. But it is merciful in our God, that he is not always teaching us by the death of our nearest relatives ; life would be too bitter if it were so. It is true we often wear mourning—some of my audience remind me of this ; but others remind me that we do not always wear it : God mercifully spares us a little breathing time from these calamities. But if the escutcheon does not always hang over our doors, we are always in want of instruction. Therefore God provides a public teacher, to read a lesson to a nation, and not merely to a family. When those die who are in power, it is losing a sort of relative ; and the king calls his counsellors, his “ trusty and well-beloved cousins.” We feel a sort of relationship to those who govern well. This political relation has fallen, and the whole nation has now to learn heavenly wisdom. All classes of people have been interested in this most afflicting event : the mighty and brilliant extinguished, and gone out in perpetual night. Come, then, and let us lay our hand on our heart, and say, “ I see that Thou wilt bring me also to death, and to the house appointed for all living.”

Let me ask you, Are you prepared to die ? You say, Why, no ; really I have been so busy, I have had no time ; I have been so occupied with my own personal duties, and the cares of my family, the concerns of business, and more public callings, that I have not had time to think of it. But are you aware that death will find time to think of you, if you do not find time to think of him ? All your cares will not delay him one moment, but, perhaps, accelerate his march ; the very anxieties of your mind may consume your spirit, and perhaps destroy your body. Then what madness it is, to neglect the immortal soul ! It is a heart-withering sight, and our soul sickens when we think of a fine brilliant spirit,

a man full of important duties, anxious to do them well; a man at the head of a fine family: and when we think, with admiration, of his talents and genius, and see him so occupied as, seemingly, having no thought for heaven. Are you aware what you are doing with that spirit of yours, binding it with thick clay, and seeking to plunge it in everlasting night? Remember, he that is cruel to his own house, is like the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the sand, and forgetteth that the foot of the traveller may crush them. But he that is cruel to his own soul—where shall we find language to describe him? All nature has no imagery horrible enough to describe the murderer of his own soul—a creature formed for immortality, in holiness and righteousness, after the image of Him that created him, fallen, depraved, and guilty. But a hand is stretched down from the skies to help him: Almighty mercy has interposed; a Saviour has appeared among us, who came to seek and to save that which is lost: he has lived for us, he has bled for us, he has died for us, he has risen for us, he has ascended for us, and he ever lives to make intercession for us. He says, “Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” but calls in vain. He says, “Why will ye die? As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner. Turn ye—why will ye die?” And shall he plead in vain? “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, to-day is the day of salvation.” Death is at thy heels—flee for thy life, and bear that trembling, guilty spirit to the bosom of Jesus Christ. Commit it to his hand; he will receive the deposit; he will blot out your transgressions; he will justify you freely through his righteousness; he will transform you into his image; he will mould you by his mighty hand, and make you meet to live in immortal glory.

Let Christians who have known the grace of Christ, learn the benefit of that calm and equal mind, that casts its care on Him that careth for us; that we may be preserved from the cares and solitudes that destroy men. Therefore, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

## THE DIVINITY AND GRACE OF CHRIST.

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REV. T. BINNEY.

KING'S WEIGH HOUSE, LITTLE EASTCHEAP, FEBRUARY 6, 1824.

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“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”—2 COR. 8, 9.

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THIS passage obviously contains a very explicit statement, both of the dignity and the condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will form a very suitable subject of meditation this morning, when we have the prospect, and when we are to enjoy the privilege, of commemorating the event to which it represents us to be so deeply in debt. I take the words as they stand before us, in their obvious and plain sense. The meaning of the Apostle, I think was, that our Lord was rich, that he changed his condition, and became poor, and that he did this with the view that we might change our condition, and become rich. Now, believing this to be the meaning which it becomes us to attach to the words of the Apostle, of course it is this meaning I shall attempt to illustrate for your use and advantage. I might, with strict propriety, proceed immediately to that illustration, as if this sense of the words had never been questioned: but as it seems useful, not only to preach the truth, but to prove it—to establish it to the conviction of the judgment, as well as to enforce it on the passions and the heart, I will occupy a few minutes this morning in attempting to shew you, why we regard our interpretation as the true one; and why, therefore, none other—but especially any directly opposite interpretation—is, in our view, entitled to the epithet of error. I know this is not the place, either for criticism or for controversy; and, in general, I think I can appeal to you, that I studiously avoid both. I do not design, at present, to introduce either to any extent: my remarks shall be very brief, and, I trust, very plain.

It is evident, that, if our Lord Jesus Christ were nothing but a man, a partaker of mere humanity, one whose nature was on a level with our own, it is evident that some other meaning must be attached to these words than that we have given, and which, in every age, has been the sentiment of the universal Church. Accordingly another meaning *has* been attached to these words, of which the following is the expression: “Ye know the gracious goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, while he was rich, yet for your sakes he lived in poverty”—that he was rich and poor in the world at the same time. To this it might be objected, that the particular manner of expression which is here employed by Paul, is used in other parts of Scripture, in the translation of the Seventy, to express a change of condition; and therefore it is to be considered as expressing such a change in this passage. We read in the Psalms, “We are exceedingly impoverished,” or, “We have become exceedingly poor.” There is another “The rich have become poor.” In the Proverbs we read, “The glutton and

drunkard shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." All these have just the same turn of language employed, as in the passage before us; and, therefore, the language of the text must, as we think, express likewise a change of state. I do not, however, dwell upon that; I like to go upon plain, common sense principles; and I will endeavour now to do that.

Observe, then, it is here said, that Christ, while he was rich, lived in poverty; and that, by doing so, he displayed such grace as deserves to be perpetually celebrated by the whole Church. The question here arises. When was he rich as a man? or, How was he rich as a mere man? The reply is, He was rich in the possession of miraculous powers, which he might have employed to his own advantage and profit, by which he might have gained money, or power, or secular dignity. But he did not do that: instead of employing these powers for the purpose of getting money, or worldly advantage, he lived in poverty, and he died in poverty. Here I make three remarks, on the plain principles of common sense.

First, it seems very improbable that miraculous powers could be so conferred on, and enjoyed by a man, as to be capable of being perverted to ambitious purposes. The power is never, properly speaking, man's; it is always God's, and in God's hands. It is God that puts forth the power to do the work; the man merely appears as its agent, or selects the occasion of its exertion. It is incredible to think that a prophet should have been able to use it for his own objects. The power of performing miracles was in the hands of God; it was to be put forth for a particular purpose, the establishment of truth: but to think that the prophet might violate all his obligations, and turn his official distinction to secular profit, and to think that God would continue to put forth his power for these purposes, at the request of this man, appears utterly incredible. Paul had the power of performing miracles; but he could not heal his own companion who was lying sick by his side. Why? Because there was no object to be answered with respect to his apostolical message or office, or with respect to the establishment of truth, as it would be to be done in the chamber without any witnesses on whom it might have a desirable effect. Miraculous power was not an optional thing, which the Apostle had the power of putting forth when he pleased, but only when certain purposes were to be answered by it. And I think that would be the limitation under which Jesus Christ would have held these powers, had he been a mere man, and would not have used them for the purpose of getting money, or for any secular profit.

In the second place, admitting that Jesus Christ as a man and a prophet did act thus—that he really, as a prophet of God, instead of employing his powers for getting money, or by distinguishing himself by any secular advantages—that he did employ them as a prophet of God, I do not see that he is as a man to be exceedingly praised; I do not see that there was in it such virtue as thus to demand the feeling excited in the Apostle's mind by the contemplation of the fact. Let us suppose a prophet sent by God to perform certain works, and furnished with powers for their accomplishment—that he attends to this work, and that he does not use his powers for other ends. Is there any thing very praiseworthy in such conduct as that? Is such virtue so very prodigious? No. It would be terribly base, and cruel, not to act so. To any man who believes in a Providence, who looks to the world around him which carries with it perpetual proofs of God's existence, and who is aware of the honour of being employed in his service; the motives are so powerful to stimulate his



virtue, that we do not take so sublime a view of it. It is a general principle which we can apply to all characters, and to all virtue—which we can apply to our own character, and to our own virtue, and to the character and virtue of any prophet—that we only praise that conduct where the temptations to disobedience are extraordinary and strong, and where the motives to self-denial are inconsiderable and few. And it is always the contrary in the case of a prophet invested with powers to the service of God: there the temptation urges the contrary; all the motives are leading the man to virtue, and the temptations to use his power to another purpose are few and inconsiderable. Allow me to use a rather homely illustration. You do not praise me because I do not steal, and never was tried before a judge at the bar of a criminal court. You do not point me out to your children as an example, and tell them to take pattern by me as never having appeared as a criminal in a court of justice. It would be exceedingly vicious in me if I were justly to be placed in such a situation; but it is not praiseworthy in me that I have never been so situated. All the motives and influences that operate upon my mind make it absurd that I should commit an act that would bring me into such a situation; and there is no great virtue in refraining from so doing: but if I could be brought into such a condition, it would be far more criminal. We do not celebrate the virtues of the Apostles while they lived in poverty, because they did not employ their power for worldly advantage. When Simon Magus offered the Apostles money to have the power of conferring the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of employing that miraculous power to advance his own ends, the very idea of it filled the Apostles with virtuous indignation: they called him “the child of the devil,” and “the enemy of all righteousness;” and directed him to do that by which *peradventure* the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him. Now, to praise Jesus Christ for not using his miraculous power for secular advantage, is to praise him for not being like Simon Magus, “a child of the devil,” and “the enemy of all righteousness,” for not cherishing those thoughts of his heart, which admitted a doubt in the mind of Peter, whether God would pardon them or not.

The third remark I make on this subject, is, that, admitting this sense of the passage, admitting that Christ acted thus, how was “grace” displayed by it? Grace is spontaneous favour, something free, something uncompelled, something to which a person is not bound by any direct and pressing obligation. But the conduct of a prophet in employing his powers for the purpose of accomplishing the work for which he is commissioned, is of duty, not of grace; he is bound to act thus; he is bound by strong and eternal obligations to the God that made him and called him to his service. His own interest is at stake: it is at his peril if he does not devote himself to his work. It would be a perversion of language to say, that, by being thus devoted to his work, he performs an act of grace. In fact, on the principle of Christ’s mere humanity, you destroy every thing like justice and good sense in many passages of the New Testament: you make it impossible to display that condescension, or that love, which excited the feelings of the Apostle; and to describe which, the most expressive language upon earth seems too poor to afford epithets of sufficient depth, compass, magnitude, and grandeur. If Christ were a mere man, when did he condescend? and where was his condescension? Not in being a man; for on that he could exercise no volition, and therefore no virtue? Not in his undertaking the service he was to perform as a prophet; for that was the lightest honour

that could be conferred on him, or on any creature. Paul exults in the honour of being a minister. Peter and others rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer for God: they never dreamed of condescension or grace. If Christ, therefore, had been nothing but a man, he could not be said to have stooped in any thing that he did: his being thought worthy to *be engaged* in the service of God, would have been glory and distinction in itself. And as to love—love which is represented as infinite, sublime, boundless; love, which is said to pass knowledge; love, to comprehend which is to be filled with all the fulness of God: how could that be displayed by a man like ourselves? It is no reply to say that he delighted in poverty, that he died for our sakes, or for our benefit; for on the supposition of his being a mere man and a prophet, his own benefit is involved in all this as well as ours: love to himself as well as love to us, would have led him to do all he did. Besides, in this sense, others have condescended and suffered for our sakes as well as he: nay, others have done so far more than he; for many of his servants and Apostles suffered more exquisite torture, and lived a much longer time, and were thus exposed to a much greater course of suffering. It is not said, Herein is love, that Paul, or Peter, or Barnabas, laid down his life for our sakes. Besides all this, there was another circumstance on the side of Christ, which, as it increased his advantages, diminished his trial; I mean, that he had the prospect before him of an almost immediate resurrection, which all others that suffered had not. And as believers in Christ's simple humanity, are also believers in the sleep of the grave, this hypothesis was an immense advantage on the side of Christ, and diminished, in this sense, the virtue of his sufferings in comparison with those of the Apostles. So that not only is it impossible to see how any grace could have been displayed by Christ if he were only man, but the very idea appears ridiculous; for, as man, he was exalted and dignified by every thing he sustained.

These are plain remarks: they do not depend on learning, or talent, or the knowledge of languages, or of metaphysics, or any thing of the kind. They are plain, common sense remarks, which would have occurred to yourselves on a careful attention of the subject; and, to my mind, they are utterly fatal to the interpretation of the passage opposite to that we have given. I now propose to notice the subject for our religious improvement.

The passage contains, first, a fact stated; secondly, the design to be accomplished by it; thirdly, the knowledge you are supposed to have of the whole transaction: "*Ye know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first place, here is a **FACT STATED, THAT CHRIST BEING RICH BECAME POOR.**

This includes two things under it. First, *He was rich in the possession of the ineffable glory which he had with the Father before all worlds*, of which he speaks himself in the Gospel by John. I learn nothing specific as to the essential nature of Christ from the passage under consideration; only I learn the fact of his glorious pre-existence. Other passages enlarge on that idea, especially in the first chapter of John. From that and other places we learn that he partook of the divine nature—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And as to the particular action to which the text refers, we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise

took part of the same." "For, verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." If you interpret this passage, that "he took not hold on the nature of angels"—that he did not put forth his power to help them when they sinned, but of man, when he sinned, it will be evident that he was capable of doing it. From this and other passages we learn, that, though he could not change the attributes of his nature, he suspended their glorious manifestation; and, taking the human nature into mysterious union with himself, he appeared in our world. I learn that this was a voluntary act, and that he existed in such a mode that he had the power to lay aside his effulgence.

Secondly, *He was rich, not only in glory, but in virtue.* He was the object of supreme complacency with the Father for his immaculate perfection. The Father is said to have delighted in him. He was denominated his "dear Son," his "only and best beloved Son." This character could not be put off. Though he did never divest himself of his actual virtue, yet his relative position to law was altered. Though he could not become poor, in the sense of being a sinner, he did in the sense of being treated like one. Though he could not take sinful flesh, he did take the likeness of sinful flesh. He stood in the stead of those who were sinners. He submitted to die, "the just for the unjust." Our sins, in their consequences, were laid upon him. He was regarded by the law as a debtor; and his life was the forfeit of such moral poverty. I throw out of all consideration the mere circumstance of worldly poverty, it is not worth consideration. In looking at this passage, we are to look at it in a spiritual light: and in this view, though he was filled with the effulgence of the manifestation of the glory of the Father, yet, in relation to law, he became poor; and though there was nothing which he was obliged to pay, yet he submitted to die.

Secondly, **THE DESIGN TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.** He condescended to become poor, "that we through his poverty might be made rich." Upon this language, and in illustration of it, I make the following observations. We suppose our poverty to be analogous to that attributed to him. There was a sense in which we needed to be made rich, or else all this need not have been undertaken. We ought to have it expressly impressed on our minds, that this very representation of what Christ did, proves that we were poor in the following senses:—

First, *we were poor in having lost the glory and dignity with which we were originally invested.* There was some great distinction enjoyed by Adam; and the apostacy introduced by him having greatly injured our nature, I think it is rather difficult to form a very clear and proper idea of Adam's original moral circumstances. I think the idea has been placed too high; and I think it has been placed too low. I think there are persons who have taken part in the high view of Adam's condition, who have had such lofty ideas of his intellect and moral feeling, as seemed to make it perfectly impossible that he could be tempted, or fall, or that any thing like weakness should attach to him. I have heard others so describe the character and moral circumstances of Adam, as made him very little different from ourselves. Both these extremes are to be avoided. If we reduce Adam and the moral condition of his mind to a similarity with ourselves, or nearly so, we destroy the meaning of all the language that speaks of the consequences of the fall; you seem to make them comparatively nothing. And having gone thus far, you will naturally take the second step—you will imbibe low ideas of the remedy, and of the Redeemer. You will be led to think it cannot be that any thing great is to be required to restore us—that

It is a very insignificant matter after all. Therefore I take a very high idea of the injury which we sustained by the fall of Adam; and consider that by it we have lost the glory and the dignity with which we were originally invested.

Then, Secondly, *we are poor in being sunk in positive and practical sin, in the ungodliness of the heart, and in the manifestation of moral evil seated in the heart.* This has been the condition of the world in all ages. History, observation, consciousness, every thing concurs to corroborate and confirm the representation of Scripture as to this being the case.

Thirdly, *we were poor in the sense that we had nothing to pay.* We were bankrupts as well as debtors. We could not come into judgment with God. We could not answer the demands of law. We could not offer any adequate consideration to God, in virtue of which he might pass over our transgressions. We could not bring any thing which the law would accept in lieu of our sins. That we might come before God and be accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ became poor; that is, he became mean, he descended to the law. This he was not bound to do by any obligation of justice; but he did so because he loved us; and thus he rendered our being rich, possible and easy.

Christ became poor, and so made us rich, *first*, by laying the foundation for our pardon in his sacrificial and vicarious death. The law had no claim upon him, but he voluntarily gave it a claim; he voluntarily became accountable, and he died; and thus he rendered to it that which, in the eye of the lawgiver, constituted a sufficient consideration for its violation, while he passed over the transgressions of those that pleaded the sacrifice. There was a sufficiency of compensation to the broken and violated law. There was not a literal compensation to the law—so that we have still no *claim* upon justice—but there was such a moral compensation to the law as was promised to be accepted by the lawgiver. And we have a claim upon the moral integrity and faithfulness of Him who has promised, who has bound himself by that promise, and who will be true to himself and to us; our moral relation to God being thus altered by our justification.

Then, *secondly*, the work of Christ in his humiliation is represented as a ground, in virtue of which the Holy Spirit is dispensed—that Spirit by which we are renewed in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him who created us—that Spirit by which we are again constituted the children of God, heirs of God, the temple of God, and so on. We are thus sanctified: and God hath delighted in us, and we are thus recovered to the spiritual life which had departed from us at the fall. Our nature is not only changed, but we are made partakers of the divine nature.

And, *thirdly*, by the united operation of these happy and cheering effects flowing from the work of Christ, we are permitted to rejoice in the hope of being richer in the next world than we can be in this. We now know something of “the riches of his grace,” but we read also of his “riches in glory.” We read of the inheritance of the saints of which they are to be put in possession. All distinctions of glory and grandeur are used to describe the justified state. We are to rise above, and be for ever emancipated from, all the poverty which we feel here. We are to be made rich, not only by regaining what we lost, but by being put in possession of infinitely more than could have been ours, had we passed through our first period of probation with success. And ever as eternity revolves, shall we be delighted to confess, that we owe all we enjoy to the poverty of Messiah in the days of his flesh: for our song will

be, Honour and glory to the Lamb, to Him who died for us by becoming man, who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, and who thus by his poverty manifested his love, by making us rich, and constituting us kings and priests unto God, even his Father.

We have in the next place to notice, **THE KNOWLEDGE WHICH YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO POSSESS OF ALL THIS.** “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.”

In the first place, *You know it is true.* You know that Christ did thus condescend. You know it is a fact, a fact which the Apostles preached, and which we preach, and which the whole Scripture confirms and corroborates, without which the old economy was without meaning and without use, that in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. You know it is a truth without which all these are meaningless. You know that he did become poor, and that so he displayed his grace. This is an appeal to reason, *an appeal to judgment*—judgment and reason guided by evidence in support of the truth.

In the second place, *You know it in yourselves, as enriching you now.* You have tasted that the Lord is gracious. You have been quickened by him. You know something of the glory of being his children. To use a beautiful expression of the Apostle, “you are enriched in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” So that you have hope toward God as pardoned; you are renewed as sanctified. To use another expression of the Apostle, you are rich in good works, produced by the power and influence of this truth on the heart. This is *an appeal to Christian experience*, and to the feelings of the Christian professor. Brethren, is it so? This is the application he meant it to have. Has it this application to you?

In the last place, *you know it as the ground on which all your hopes are built for futurity*, the source from which you derive grace upon earth, and to which you feel yourselves to be indebted for all the honour and glory which eternity will disclose. This is *an appeal to Christian consistency*; for it is only the consistent Christian that can feel the confidence that he is standing upon this rock, who can look forward now in time to what eternity will disclose.

From the whole subject you can learn such lessons as the following.

In the first place, *the importance which it becomes us to attach to all matters which are matters of pure revelation*, of which this subject is one. There are some things, you are aware, which nature or reason itself may teach us. There are some ideas respecting God, his existence, and government, which you may obtain by the operation of your minds. It is a happiness to have these suggestions and speculations of our mental capacity established when God speaks to us by his word, and informs us we have thought aright. But these are not the true reasons which are to influence you; these are not the doctrines which are the most important, and which are vital. Those things which have never entered the heart independently of revelation, those things in that revelation which man could not perceive, are the things which are to be looked upon as of the highest importance; and one of these has occupied our attention this morning: the subject is a matter of pure revelation.

Secondly, *you may learn the actual necessity that there is for the doctrines of*

*the cross to give coherency and consistency to the whole system of revealed truth.* If my own mind has been impressed with any thing more than another, it has not been so much with the critical examination of any text, as with the impression which the whole system makes upon me. I feel that I require this truth to account for all this phraseology, and for all these feelings and views which are represented to enter in Christian truth and experience.

Thirdly, *you may learn from the meaning we have given of this passage, how grace, or gracious goodness, is exercised towards us*; and then you learn, the claims which Christ has upon our affections and our gratitude. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We are to confess ourselves his subjects. He has claims upon our obedience, and upon the best affections of the heart. We are to be at his disposal, and to act according to his direction and command.

Fourthly, *you learn from the particular phraseology of the passage, the necessity that there is for your examining into the extent, the accuracy, and the influence of your knowledge of religious truth.* What a shame it would be, if, when the language were addressed to you, "You know this," you were to reply, "No, I do not know it; I have never read nor thought of it; I have heard about it, but have never reflected upon this truth." May I be able to take this language and apply it with truth to you. There is something, you perceive, to be done by you. It is of no use for me to say, you know this, and you know the other, if you do not dwell upon it. There must be an examination on your part, into the extent and influence of your knowledge, that the language may be employed with propriety and with force.

Fifthly, *you learn that Christian morality is animated and sustained by purely Christian motives.* It is very observable, in reading the Scriptures, how the Apostle Paul associates almost every moral duty, almost every personal virtue, almost every excellency, in some way or other, with what we know of Christ, with our obligations to Christ. In addressing servants, he tells them to be honest, faithful, and obedient—why? That they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. Husbands he exhorts to love their wives—why? Because Christ loved the Church. This is not worldly morality. We are not to be virtuous in our characters, and habits, and personal virtues, merely upon the same principle that other men are virtuous: we are to be animated by those views and those affections which are connected with the character and work of the Redeemer.

Lastly, It will be found that *the riches of the Church, throughout eternity, will bear a proportion to the poverty by which they were obtained.* This is a delightful thought. We can form no adequate idea of the depth of that infinite condescension and love which led Christ to become poor for our sakes: therefore we can form no adequate idea of what will be the result of it, what will be the effect of which it is the cause. There will be a proportion between the cause and the effect. The Church shall be lifted so high, and her riches shall be so transcendent, as the poverty of Christ was extreme and aggravated. I expect in heaven to enter upon higher happiness than I could obtain by successful probation on earth. If we had been placed under a certain law, and had passed through our probation successfully, our reward would not have been so great as the riches and glory that will descend upon us as the result of that poverty which Christ endured for us. If we could, we should now enter upon what

will be the supernatural result of a supernatural condescension, the result of the love which was manifested in the poverty of Christ.

May these meditations be impressed upon your hearts. May your minds be impressed with the truth; and may you be devoted to our Lord and Master, and ultimately enter into his glory!

## THE MINISTER'S PARTING CHARGE.

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REV. A. REED,

WYCLIFF CHAPEL, MILE END ROAD, MARCH 9, 1834.

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“ And now, brethren, I commend you to God.”—Acts, xx. 32.

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ONE of our practical errors, my dear hearers, concerning the religion we profess to admire is, that we deal with it as though it were only suited to extraordinary occasions. But the religion of the Gospel is adapted to all occasions, is needful on all occasions, and commends itself to our regard on every occasion of life, even the most trivial and insignificant. It is not, then, a manifestation of mercy which is to beautify our sabbaths, and to bless our public and solemn assemblies only; it is a blessing adapted to every day of our mortal pilgrimage, shedding its light upon the darkness of our way, sustaining us under the pressure of daily cares, and sanctifying all things to our bodily as well as to our spiritual life, by the word of God and prayer.

But if adapted to ordinary occasions, and if it is our privilege to seize that adaptation, and to connect it with all our pursuits and engagements, it is certainly proper to refer to it especially under particular and extraordinary circumstances. The apostle Paul found himself in such circumstances when he uttered the words of the text: he had previously expressed himself in a variety of terms, and given expression, as far as he could, to the inward emotions that struggled in his affections. All that is grand and all that is touching passed from his lips, and he addressed himself to individuals who sympathized in his feelings, and mingled their prayers with his prayer, and their tears with his tears. At length he gives some more enlarged expression, to the desires of his heart, by uttering the words which we have read. He says, “ And now, brethren, after all that I have said, and all that I can by possibility say—now, brethren, I commend you to God.” His mind rises up to Deity; he rests his whole care there; he finds satisfaction to his largest desires of benevolence and love there; and he feels that his interests are safe, and the interests of those whom most he loves are safe, when they are thus committed to the Almighty, the All-gracious, and the Ever-living Father.

We are placed my beloved friends, by the providence of God, not in similar but still in remarkable circumstances. You are aware, that for some period, and for a period of longer time than has been usual with me, I am about to leave you. You are aware that, under these circumstances, we are called upon to mark the hand of God, and to address ourselves to his notice, and his care, and his pity, by special confidence, and prayer, and supplication. And if, on this occasion I were to give any thing like expression to that full heart which makes it almost too difficult for me to say any thing, I should adopt the language of the text, as summing up all the love I bear, and all the interest I



feel for your preservation and eternal life, and say "Now brethren, after a long series of years, and after much intercourse and love, after a fellowship which has brought us, I trust, nearer on our way to the heavenly world—now brethren, for a season, I commend you to God."

I have no disposition to pursue by method the subject suggested by our text; I could feel no sufficient reason in standing before you at all on this trying occasion, if it was not that I desire to express to the last my love and my increasing interest in your spiritual welfare, in your everlasting security and happiness. I desire, therefore to seek this, by giving, as far as I may, expression to the simplest movements of my own heart, and by addressing to you, under variety of circumstances and classes, the word of plain and simple exhortation. Brethren, receive it in the love in which it is proposed to you; and especially receive it by supplicating that blessing without which we speak in vain, and without which you hear in vain, and without which our very privileges become to us sources of injury.

In the first place, I would say to those who compose the church of Christ within this sanctuary, Brethren suffer the word of exhortation. I am glad, and have holy joy, I trust, in thinking of your state in Christ Jesus, that you have been called from the waste world, and brought into the family of Christ; that you have received the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; that you have been enabled to make a good profession of him before many witnesses; that you have endured in the face of trial and temptation until now; that you have abounded in faith, and in hope, and in love, and do still abound; and that you are concerned to abound in the corresponding fruits of righteousness by which your profession is commended to the judgment of the world, and by which you testify that you are the devoted disciples of Christ. On all these accounts, I rejoice before God; I offer, and entreat you to offer with me, hallowed praises at the footstool of his heavenly love. But while I rejoice in the grace which has been manifested towards you, I take this occasion to say—*Cleave to the Lord with full purpose of mind.* Let nothing disturb your trust in him, the simplicity of your faith in him, the devotedness and oneness of your spirit in faith to him. Consider that what you do possess and have enjoyed, instead of being sufficient for your desire, is only an enlarged motive for your progress: desire to advance nearer to himself, to have richer fellowship with himself, to know more of Jesus Christ as a Saviour in the mystery of all his sufferings, in the power of all his resurrection, and in all the benefits derived from him to yourself in the present and the future world. Cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. Whatever shall seek to divide you from the love of Christ, from the fellowship of the saints, from the profession of the name of Jesus unto the end, cast it all away; regard it, at once and instantly, as a temptation; and press nearer and nearer to Him, who as he is the fount of your being, is also the fountain of your blessedness.

I would say also, in summing up the various considerations which have been presented to you in the ministry of the word—*Remember Jesus Christ the great end of our conversation and labours among you,* "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." Changes break in upon your own circle; changes arise in the larger society of the saints; changes perpetually meet us in every form in the world, in our daily experience; but the great end of our ministry is to refer you to Him in whom there is no change, nor the shadow of a turning. Remember the end of our ministration, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Amidst all changes, and all pains, and sorrows, consequent upon them, remember that he changeth not, that his purpose changes not, that his love

changes not, that his sacrifice is of perpetual efficacy, and is always as incense before the Almighty, and that for ever he stands at the right hand of God, to plead your cause, and watch over your safety.

Then, let me say, *Especially have regard to the great end of your vocation.* Remember that the end proposed to you by the Gospel in its saving influence is nothing less than the saving of your souls. I beseech you habitually place before you this great, this one, this prominent object: consider that the Saviour is proposing this salvation; gird up the loins of your minds, and press forward, and hope even to the end, waiting for this salvation, even the adoption of the children of God. Reckon not that it is already complete; reckon not that the warfare is already accomplished; reckon not that by continuing until now you are safe for the future; but rather be watchful unto prayer, and prayerful unto watchfulness; that you may be kept through the mighty power of God, through faith, unto this promised salvation. Desire by every prayer to be found accepted at last in the Beloved; to stand at the right hand of the Judge in the great day of retribution, and to have not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance into the joy of the Lord at the coming of Jesus Christ.

There are other classes who claim from us a word of exhortation in all pastoral love. To those who are not already included within the Church, and making a full profession of communion with Christ—I would say to such as are under deep convictions for their safety, and anxious enquiry for their salvation, I would say to such especially, *Be not disturbed in the pursuit of the instituted means of grace.* I will confess to you, my dear friends, those of you who are precisely, more or less, in this situation, that of all the various difficulties with which I have had to contend in making up my mind to leave you for a season, no one difficulty has pressed so closely upon my heart as your especial situation, lest you should be unhinged in your enquiry, lest you should refuse to entertain the convictions of divine truth, and lest you should be disturbed in entertaining those impressions which are so intimately connected with your present and your eternal welfare. With all the anxiety therefore, I feel for your welfare, and with that measure of responsibility which I have taken upon myself in withdrawing myself from your ministration and service for a time, I would say, let not what is about to happen at all disturb your serious, your devout, and prayerful attention on all the means of grace: rather consider the dispensation, however painful it may be, is to be over-ruled for your profit; rather consider, by any disappointment you may now suffer, that the disappointment should lead you up from the instrument to God, and from all created means to the source of your happiness, and your forgiveness, and your joy. If you shall hear no longer that voice which you have been accustomed to hear with any degree of gratitude and pleasure, then let it teach you not to idolize that voice, not to place your confidence on the man, not to confound the instrument with the source of all influence; but seek at once and immediately the enlightenment of your understanding, the deepening of your conviction, the sanctification of your whole spirit, and the entire renewal to God from God's own hand, and by God's special influence.

Then I would say to these persons in this very interesting state of mind, in the second place, *Be concerned to know much of yourselves.* Seek to know yourselves in the light of Holy Scripture; seek to take a just view of your state of sin, your state of alienation, your offences before God by reason of sin, and the guiltiness of your condition because you are thus sinful. Retire from the world, shut out its thoughts, its cares, and its tempting pleasures from your

mind; converse with heaven; converse with eternity; seek after your spiritual good, and impress upon your own thoughtless mind the invaluable results of the life which is to come.

Then I would say, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* Let it not be enough to consider that you are safe because you are convinced of sin, because you have been awakened to much anxiety about your condition, and because you have offered, perhaps, many prayers with reference to that. Many have deep convictions of sin who have had no sanctity of heart; many have been made most miserable, in reference to their worldly pursuits and comforts, who have found no happiness in religion; many have been alienated from all their former courses who have, nevertheless, not turned into the narrow way which leadeth unto life eternal. Rest not then in conviction; consider not your state a safe one because you are anxious, and inquisitive, and desirous of knowing the truth: but press into the strait gate; "agonize" to enter in; rest in nothing short of the evidence of true conversion, of the regeneration of your mind, of the light of God coming down into your spirit, and becoming your confidence and your life; and thus press into the kingdom of God; take it by holy violence; consider all obstructions as mere vanity, and claim from the hands of the Redeemer the salvation he has promised to your prayers.

Finally, I would say to these persons in this interesting and endearing state of mind, *Entertain evangelical views of religion.* At such a time the disposition of the mind is to look only at one class of objects, to regard God as a legislator, to contemplate his laws indeed as holy and good, but still somewhat severe, and pressing heavily upon the conscience. And while the individual is thus affected by the fear of his condition, and humbled on account of sin, he is not always prepared to entertain those lively, and impressive, and penitential views of the Gospel which are meant to be presented to his attention. Know, brethren, beloved, in all your anxious enquiries, in all your convictions of sinfulness, in all your growing sense of unworthiness—know that the Gospel has an offer of pardon for all sin, is a fountain of sanctification for all corruption, is life, not merely to the dying, but to the dead, and is a source of healing to those who have no other Saviour, and no other hope of salvation.

Contemplate, therefore, under these convictions which make you anxious, under these forms of the opening life of the Christian, which fill you oft-times with distress and anguish, contemplate the grace of the Father; dwell on the pleasing love of the Saviour; rest at the very foot of the cross on Calvary; consider Him who hath borne your trespasses, made atonement for your sin, been humbled more deeply than yourselves in circumstances, and humbled in spirit to the very uttermost. Regard him as thus becoming a Saviour, and a mighty one, as full of mercy as he is full of righteousness; and desire to exercise a living faith in his name. Receive him into your own spirit as your present life, as the resurrection of the body, and the title to immortality.

Let me hope that these hasty, but serious and affectionate remarks will be cherished in the recollection of the persons to whom they are addressed; and let me hope that you will embrace the present occasion of giving yourselves wholly to God, imploring from his hand the renewal and regeneration of his Spirit. Let me hope that you will continue attached to all the means of grace, as contributing to your enlarged edification in Christ; and that, should I be restored to you by the good providence of God, if not before that period, you will then be entirely ready to confess Christ before many witnesses, putting in your humble

claim for communion and fellowship with his Church, and devoting yourselves visibly, as well as spiritually, to his praise and glory.

There is another class, not within the fold of the Church, and not, as we fear, in this interesting state of anxiety and enquiry for their spiritual salvation. I know not what proportion such a class may bear to the whole of this congregation; but I desire most affectionately, and as though it were for the last time, to address myself distinctly to this class of persons, leaving it, brethren, to the consciences of each of you to assist me in saying, who is the man, and where is the individual, who having been privileged long with the means of religion, has not become the subject of religious and gracious impressions. I fear that there are many amongst you of this description still; I fear that I have laboured many years, in reference to some of you, and that you have not received the Gospel as the power of God to your salvation still. True it is that you have listened to me as a minister and pastor with great affection: true it is that you have hung on the word of God, so feebly dispensed among you, with unfainting and unvaried regard: true it is, that I have a place—I know I have a place—in your affections, and in your estimation: but with all this, it is likewise true, that you are amongst the unsaved, and unsanctified, that you have not repented of sin, that you have not believed in Jesus, that you have not received the counsel of God, but have rather rejected that counsel against yourselves.

Brethren, I have conflicting feelings in reference to you. I have been almost ready to rejoice in thinking I should be separated from you for a time; that since my voice, to which you have been so long accustomed, has produced in you no saving change, no holy impressions, some stranger voice, and some other mode of ministration, might be overruled to awaken you, and to arouse you, and to alarm you, and to save you, lest you fall into the pit and perish for ever. Gladly would I relinquish my post before you for a time, if this should be the blessed result: and gladly would I hail those labours, from a distance and from a stranger, to which you shall be submitted, if they only work out your everlasting salvation. But yet I desire to plead with you with all earnestness on this subject. Why should it be left to a stranger's voice to address you on this subject? Why should you not regard the voice of him who has addressed you in love, and still is permitted to address you? And why should you not at this time receive, under new and extraordinary circumstances, the grace of the Gospel which you have neglected, and dishonoured until now? Oh, listen now; let it be the honour of the minister and pastor you have long known to be connected in your best thoughts, with your salvation, now; with prostration of your spirit before God, now; with faith in the divine Gospel, now; with the acceptance of the efficacious and sovereign remedy for all your guiltiness, and all your sin, now. Commemorate this last service, brethren, by yielding yourselves to God, by acknowledging all your sins, by taking hold of the grace of Jesus, and by becoming a pledged candidate for heaven, and acceptance in Jesus Christ.

How I tremble when I think of you as I leave you, at least for a season! Oh the nameless anxieties of spirit! Oh the fearfulness and forebodings lest I should see you not again in the flesh; lest you should treat a stranger's voice in the ministration of the Gospel, even also as you have treated mine; and lest after having been placed by your privileges close on the threshold of heaven, you should be cast out, and be cast down, into utter darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! Oh, I would not condemn you, I would not reproach you; but at the same time, I call you to witness, I appeal to your consciences, if you should choose to perish in your sins, whether your

condemnation does not rest with yourselves? Brethren, am I not clear of your blood? Have I not, according to my capacity, proclaimed to you the way of salvation? Have I not added warning to warning, entreaty to entreaty, promise to promise, and prayer to prayer? Have I not publicly and privately entreated God to make you wise to your salvation? The blood, I trust, is not with me; I would not that any spot of your blood in the last day should lie at my door. But if I should be justified, and you are not saved, what comfort, brethren, should I have in this circumstance? Oh, this is what I wish, if I know my heart (and I have searched it often, and searched it deeply) even your salvation; to present you blameless, holy, and acceptable, to God by Jesus Christ; to rejoice in you as not now doubtful in your character and profession, but as truly devoted to him; to know that you are as a brand snatched from the everlasting burnings.

Consider, in summing up these affectionate observations, that if you perish, you perish under aggravated guilt. You have had the Gospel proclaimed: you have had line upon line, and teaching upon teaching. You die rejecting the remedy of mercy; you die, if indeed you die and perish, trampling under your feet the blood of the everlasting covenant, and despising all the manifestations of divine love and pity. Therefore be urged at this time to call upon God; flee from the wrath which is to come; know your circumstances as guilty, lost, and perishing sinners; that you are in the hands of an angry God, and that, if you are found at last in the hands of that God, you will sink from hope and blessedness, to rise no more.

Brethren, pray with me for those who are still dead in sin. Brethren, let the silent and united prayer arise, that they may now be quickened, that they may now live, that they may now be accepted in Christ; and that now, listening as for the last time, to the voice of one they have loved, they may press, and be pressed into the kingdom of heaven.

There is another view to take of our circumstances. Undoubtedly if we are spared to meet again by an indulgent Providence, many changes, and many serious changes, will necessarily have transpired. It has been said to me by more than one in the course of the last week, "Ah, sir, there will be great changes before you shall return:" and the individuals who have given utterance to such feelings have only expressed my own awakened feelings, that there will be changes, and that those changes will amount to the great change of death. Brethren, I may occupy this desk again; brethren, I may look around upon this crowded assembly; but, brethren, never, no never, shall I see you all so assembled again. It is not in the course of nature, it is not in the order of things, to expect, after so lengthened a separation, that we should all meet again in this sanctuary. Some of you will die: it is not for me to say who shall be summoned; it is very likely that the summons will come to those whom I have been least disposed to calculate. One says, *the aged* will die: it is most likely *the young* will receive the summons. One points to *weakness and decrepitude*, and says it is very likely their death will happen: it is very likely that *the healthy and the robust* will be called away instead of those. Two years ago, when, under a painful visitation, I left you for a short season, I looked around at the close of the service, and indulged in imagination the thought of what changes might happen by death; and there sat before me one individual, remarkably in health and robustness, promising for continued life, and I was led to say to myself, "At all events I shall see that friend again:" but there death came; there the summons was suddenly given, and suddenly obeyed;

and he whom I most expected to see in the flesh I saw no more. Brethren, some will die ; and some will die, I trust I may say, to use Scriptural language, will die in Christ—*will die in Christ*. And though you shall be called to die in the absence of your pastor, think not that you will die in the absence of his remembrance. No ; wherever I shall sojourn, my prayer shall attend you in the last hour ; my imagination shall surround that period of affliction, and conceive of you as sustained by Almighty power to the last and through the worst : my imagination and faith shall follow you in the upward ascent to the celestial and holy world, as mingling with the better condition of the Church, and made happy in God for ever. You will die in Jesus ; and to die in Christ is to be blessed, is to receive the consummation of all hope and all the promises which he has spoken.

But there are some who will die away from this congregation, in that interval, who will, it is to be feared, not die in Christ, but die in sin. They are now in a state of sin, and separation, and distance from God ; they are disposed perhaps to postpone and to trifle with the claims of religion upon them in the period of health and youth ; and it will not be remarkable if, in the course of Providence, they are given up to hardness of heart, and, if they are called suddenly to die, are left without life, and without grace, and without mercy. My beloved hearers, you may die. If you should die in Christ, your death would be peace, your end would be blessed. But oh, to die in sin ! What, after having been raised almost to heaven—after having been entreated so much to approach the Divine Saviour—after having exercised so many hopes in reference to your recovery and blessedness—to die in sin, to fall from the presence of God, to sink into a state of condemnation, and to be banished from him by the greatness of his power for ever ! Supplicate, I beseech you, that this may not happen ; that, if death shall visit you, he may visit you as a messenger of mercy ; and that you may be prepared for that event, and for that final change which concludes all change, and commences an eternity of joy, or an eternity of woe.

Brethren, generally, I would say, *Indulge confidence in reference to your minister during the period of separation*. I would have you without anxious care ; I would have you, in the exercise of a kind affection, still to rely on the Providence and care of the Eternal Jehovah. Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, rest in his Providence : commit yourselves, and those you love, to his divine care, and believe that he will accomplish whatever is kind, and gracious, and holy amongst yourselves, and amongst those who are dear to you. Be assured, that you will be cherished in the heart and remembrance of your minister ; that, travel where he may, he will not forget you ; that, occupied as he may be, his thoughts, and his love, and his imagination, will still return to your assemblies, will still visit you in your Sabbaths, and will still imagine to himself the blessing of the Almighty, the Most High, descending upon you. Let us then separate in holy confidence in his care, in cherished love towards one another as the children of one family, as passing to and fro in the world in life, under the convoy of heavenly engagement, and as looking to the consummation of all trial and calamity *here*, in the perfection of our hopes and our blessedness *hereafter*.

Brethren, peace be with you ; the peace of God be upon you ; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you ; the fellowship of the Holy Spirit attend you ; the angels of heaven minister unto you ; the Most High himself establish you, and cause his beauty to appear unto you, and his glory unto your children, age after age, and Sabbath after Sabbath. Even so, Amen.

## THE NATURE AND AUTHOR OF SALVATION

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REV. J. CUMMING, M.A.

SCOTCH CHURCH, CROWN COURT, COVENT GARDEN, JAN. 15, 1834.

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“Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.”—ISAIAH, xlv. 22.

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THE glorious end which the Spirit contemplates in calling upon all the ends of the habitable globe to look unto Jesus is their salvation. There is no intended enriching of men with the titles, and the honours, and incomes of earth; there is no intended extension of the span of mortality, or wisdom, or scientific attainments of man. These are beheld by the Creator of men as scarcely worth a moment's reflection, while everlasting concerns remain unknown and unravelled, or disproportionately felt by those whom they wholly concern. Oh, my brethren, how much, how infinitely better, to pass through the storm and tempest below, and land in the sunshine and calm above, than to float softly forward on the stream of delight, and plunge at last in an ocean of misery! Oh! what matters it, my friends, that we have stemmed the tide of adversity here, or breasted the terriblest blasts of the winter, or mourned, or suffered, if yonder there await us a rest and a refuge—joys that pall not and never can expire. If you saw your child sinking amid the waters of the deep, would you feel that the time for gathering pebbles to amuse him, or meditating schemes of improving his mind? Would you not rather dash into the waves, and at the risk of your life, rescue the child from his perilous situation? Even so the Almighty sees that the short time that is measured out to humanity, needs something better than trifles on which to expend itself. He sees man on the brink of an eternal world; he sees his eternal welfare at stake; and therefore he lays before us not the means of advancing our comfort, or health, or prosperity, but the means of saving our souls—the means of securing a right and a title to glory. And when we coolly weigh matters, and reflect what is the possession that will cheer us at death, and weave a wreath of smiles around our closing lips—what is it, think ye, that will infuse into the parting soul the intensest joys on the last sick-bed? Is it, think ye, the renown our literary or warlike efforts have achieved? Is it the gold that glistens in the overflowing coffer? Is it the remembrance of our voluptuous joys, our bacchanalian Sundays, our prayerless nights and praiseless morns? Oh no! it is the sure hope of acceptance with God; it is our faith in Jesus, which has worked by love, and overcome the world, and purified the heart; it is the conviction that our name is registered in heaven, arising from our nature waked into kindredship with heaven; it is the well-grounded conviction that Christ is ours, and that we are Christ's. If God had pressed on our regards objects less important than salvation in his word and ordinances, oh, when we came to stand amid the

countless multitudes that crowd the last assize, we should have reproached God with setting anything before us to be loved and desired but heaven, or anything to be hated but hell.

We therefore remind you again, that salvation is the grand and exclusive result. We remind you that God regards not whether you be rich or poor, and therefore speaks not for these ends, but for your salvation. Do you ask of the Bible, why it is so full of earnestness, and eloquence, and precept, and example? It will tell you "That you may be saved." Do you ask why a communion table is spread from time to time? It will reply, "That you may be saved." Do you ask why I have addressed you from this place so often and so fervently? I answer, "That you may be saved." If you could hear the praises of the redeemed—oh, these are so loud and so melodious, because they are saved—If you could hear the wishes of the damned—oh, these are so melting because they cry to be saved, and they cannot. Salvation gained or salvation lost, employs the thoughts and fills the years of Heaven and Hell. How is it that we, standing on this isthmus, on the one side of which are the streams that make glad the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem—and on the other side of which are the dark and moaning streams of Hell—how is it that men, on whose present movements hang the issues of eternity, are so torpid, so dead to considerations that should wake the rocks and stir the vast universe into restless anxiety? We find this great city to be noise, and bustle, and confusion, from morning to night, and from one year to the commencement of another, that men may be rich, and famous, and powerful: but how little desire in our homes, how little anxiety in our churches, to be saved! In our public libraries and museums we see hundreds and thousands ransacking the memorials of the learned dead; but how few with prayerful hearts and eager eyes perusing the repository of life—the Word of the Living God!—How fewer still emulating the conduct of the wise man, who having got a glimpse of the jewel of great price, sold all that he had and bought it. I can here conscientiously exonerate myself, for I have laid before you the infinite importance of Eternity, the immeasurable worth of the soul, the nearness of a judgment-seat, and the unquestionable certainty of death. And if, alas, any of you are summoned to an eternal world, and awakened to serious thought, only by the opening graves, and the congregating dead, and the great white throne, and its august Judge—I bid you remember that your minister told you of these things, and, at the risk of wearying you, put you again and again in mind of them.

**I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS WORD, "AND BE SAVED?"**—There is implied in it, first, salvation, or deliverance from the dominion, or ascendancy, or power of sin in this world; and secondly, salvation from the consequence of sin—eternal death in the world to come.

There are countless mistakes respecting the nature of that salvation which is so often mentioned in the Word of God. Men are inclined to suppose that it stands in a mere emancipation from physical disaster or bodily disease, a translation beyond the reach of accident or ill, to eternal immunities and pleasures. These ideas of heaven are drawn from the Poets of Greece, or the Koran of the Moslem, and not from the Word of the Living God. They fancy heaven to be an Elysium or Mahomedan Paradise, in which beauty blooms, and wines and fruits of exquisite nature are tasted, and scenes and landscapes of boundless verdure and unfading loveliness are seen. But, to pluck up such notions by the roots,



we bid you revert to man's unfallen condition, and then to his present wreck, and tell us what made the awful change. Oh, was it not sin that poisoned our nature, and all surrounding elements? The moment Eve's foul crime was seen, the blossoms fell, the green face of Eden withered, and a black cloud, fraught with storm and ruin, fell upon our disuanted earth. The instant God's curse was uttered, the gentle winds broke forth into fury, and that groaning of the creation began which the Apostle writes will continue till the restitution of all things.

Now, to remove effects, we must remove the cause; and therefore before mortal man can enjoy a heaven, he must be purified from sin: before he can be happy, he must first be holy: before he can be saved from sorrow, he must be saved from sin. We therefore hold all means and remedies for man's amelioration hopeless, which do not stand for this grand preliminary step—man's deliverance from sin. We hold the plans of infidels, and Owenites, and whatever other names are to be found in that brood which has been hatched by Satan in these times, to be pernicious whims and wild vagaries, because they pronounce man's happiness attainable amidst man's sins. We hold, moreover, all schemes of national regeneration hopeless, which do not embrace the religious education of the populace, and their emancipation from the slavery of sin. Oh! if you want, ye councillors and statesmen, to make our land to blossom as the rose, and to lift its bosom to the skies, the loveliest by far of all the gems and isles of the sea, send forth a mighty army of preachers of the cross of Jesus, and bid them permeate the crowded lanes and the scattered country population; and knowing, as we do, that the Gospel is the power of God, and that with its honest proclamation there is never wanting the energy and influence of the Spirit of God, we believe that a glorious and a joyful revolution will ensue; we believe that our nobles will be made noble indeed, and our senators assemble in the consciousness of witnessing Heaven, and our councillors be men that fear God and honour the king, and our colleges be vocal with Christian melody and praise, and our Sabbaths have their former sacredness, and an atmosphere of vital Christianity reach from the halls of the great to the hovels of the poor. We believe that with the diminishing of sin will be the rising of happiness; with the ebb of iniquity, the flow of gladness and peace, and with the deep-seated and far-spread principles of the Gospel of truth, the embryo of heaven on earth—the outer court at least of the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem in which we should worship and adore till admitted in due time within the precincts of the Holy of Holies, whither Jesus our High Priest is for ever entered. Take away sin, and you take away misery. Save men from the power of sin, and you save them from the incubus of wretchedness and woe. Destroy the root, and you destroy the tree; neutralize the poison, and you anticipate its ravages; block up the impure fountain, and you check its stream.

Now, brethren, in reviewing my many discourses that are past, I have never endeavoured to make you pleased or happy—nay, I have tried to make you dissatisfied and restless; but I have endeavoured to make you holy, well convinced that if holiness is attained, happiness may safely be left to provide for itself. We might lull you asleep and cry peace, peace, when there is no peace; but we know that this would be the brief prelude to ruin and eternal dismay. We say no peace while there is no godliness; war, we say to the grave, while there is sin lording it over the human heart; restlessness be upon you all, while there is sin within you all. Like the dove of Noah, may you find

no resting-place for the soles of your feet, till you rest in Christ, the ark of safety and genuine peace. We know that those who break in upon the dreams and slumbers of sinners, will be looked upon, by the generality, as no friends to mankind: but which, think you, is the true friend to our race—the man that sees the plague-ship entering the harbour, with her sails set, and her streamers fluttering in the breeze, and hails her arrival with shouts, and bids the heedless populace admire her beauty and her symmetry—or the man that spreads the alarm, and rouses the country, to check the vessel's course? Or which, think you, is the truest friend to the country—the man that sees the coin of the realm forged and circulated, and lends his influence to its spread—or the man that tells the people, and prevents their ruin? Even so, which do you suppose is the faithful and affectionate friend—the man that allows you to enter eternity amid dreams and hollow convictions of peace, which are dissipated the moment they come into contact with an eternal world—or the man that awakes your senses, and arouses all your sensibilities, at whatever risk of pain, and leads you to see clearly?

Secondly, we argue the necessity of being saved from the power of sin, not merely from the fact that sin is the root and fountain of misery, *but from the fact that they who enter heaven must be identified with heaven in character.* If heaven is what we have described it to be, a scene of holiness, and purity, and peace, then none can enter there whose sympathies are not with these, and the other graces of the Spirit of God. There are two extremes in the universe of God—Heaven and Hell; Heaven is drawing towards it by the instrumentality of preaching, by the instrumentality of the written word, by the power of the Spirit of God, all that is holy, pure, merciful, and just, as to a native and congenial clime: while Hell is drawing towards it all that is abominable, all that is impure and depraved, all that is imbued with kindred character. Sin is that magnetism within you which answers to hell, and conducts you inevitably thitherward. Holiness, is that magnetism within, which presses you upward, and leads you to heaven, its birthplace.

You see then, that unless deliverance from the power of sin, be an essential feature of the Gospel of peace—an essential ingredient of that salvation mentioned in the text—we can never be the better of believing the record of heaven. We have often demonstrated, that, the admission of a sinner to heaven, would add to his misery, and alter the state of them that are there before. He would feel the pure and the holy air of the heavenly land, as pestilential fumes; and the saints that worship round the throne, spectacles of horror and repulse; and the sounds of their harpings and songs of joy, he would hear as intolerable gratings indeed; and that which is heaven to others, would to him, miserable man, be the dismallest hell. His sympathies and theirs are eternally opposite: his joys and theirs essentially repugnant: while his very appearance would throw a blighting shade on the faces of the saved, and interrupt their otherwise unbroken joys. "Like goes to like," is a maxim not less true in heaven than on earth.

You see then, my brethren, that, by the very constitution of things, a sinner cannot enter the heavenly kingdom, without a change of his heart, and his habits, and his joys; without liking what now he dislikes, without preferring, in practice and in mind, the Bible to the newspaper, and the house of prayer, to the club and the gambling house, and the praises of God, to the praises of men. And from this great principle, you can deduce in the silence of your closet reflections, your meetness or unmeetness for heaven. You can feel in your hearts whether the

heaven we have delineated would be bliss and sweetness to you; and you can judge from the present joys or weariness you feel in prayer, in reading, in praise, in self-examination, whether you can live in heaven or not. You may just try a day of heaven upon earth, and if you can spend it with comfort in devotional reading, and devotional exercise, then may you presume that you could spend many such in heaven. Or, you may examine how you hallow and hail the advent of the weekly sabbath; for I believe this day is a fragment of heaven dropped upon earth, to enable man, by the pleasures he feels in its duties and advent, to determine his meetness for the endless sabbath in heaven. If the sabbath below is a wearisome and a burdensome day, oh, how much more so the endless sabbath in heaven! If the church below is a tiresome and troublesome place, how much more so the temple above! If the presence of Deity, seen darkly, is painful here, oh, how much more so the glorious sight of Godhead hereafter!

Now it is this, the character of heaven, brought into close contact with our personal feelings and experience, which demonstrates what we are. Do you feel your present life unsatisfactory without the pleasures of the theatre? There is no theatre in heaven, and heaven would therefore be a miserable place to you. There, no lewd representations are seen, no words of impurity heard. Do you feel it irksome to spend an evening in the house of your friend, without the card-table, and the other preliminaries of gambling? There are no such demoralizing things in heaven. How dull a place must it be to men of the world, to liberal-minded christians, and such like. Would your three-score and ten years be tedious without the companionship of novels and romances? Oh, how tedious to you the circling years of heaven! for there are no works of fancy there, no high-wrought and dazzling tales, all is reality, all is sacred truth. Unless, therefore, your best beloved amusements are of a Christian stamp, or sanctioned, at least, by the principles of truth and scriptural piety, there is a strong presumption that your bent and bias are not to God and heaven, that you are not saved from the ascendancy of the world, and the devil, and sin.

Thirdly, we argue the necessity of being saved *from the power and dominion of sin, from the express declarations of the Spirit of God.* Did Christ die? It was that you might die unto sin. Did he arise from the dead? It was that you might rise to newness of life. Did he pay the price of your restitution? It was that he might redeem you to himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Does he intercede for you in heaven? It is that he may present you to himself a chosen generation, "without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing." Does he send forth the Holy Spirit into your hearts? It is to "work within you to will and to do of God's good pleasure." Your works, your walk, your demeanour in the world, are then the demonstrations of your relationship to Christ, or your relationship to Satan. As men, endowed with a portion of the goods and gold of earth, can you say that your hearts are now more imbued with the spirit, and your hands more tinged with the doings of Christian benevolence? As poor, can you say that you are now the subjects of a more thorough submissiveness to heaven's severest allotments? As merchants, and tradesmen, can you declare that you are actuated in your universal transactions by stronger approval, and a heartier practical recognition, of fairness, and justice, and honesty? In your varied employments in the world, can you appeal to heaven, when you say that Christianity has interwoven its tissues with the whole texture of your life, and made you what you never could have been apart from its

plastic energy and power? And do your best performances spring from an ever felt and sovereign regard to the Saviour, and to him alone? We hold your assumed interest in Christ a fancy, a dream, if it be not followed by corresponding actions and conduct. We hold the tie that knits you to Christ, not that tie which bears the shocks of the world, and the pull of its adverse joys, and the onset of Satan, and death, and the grave, but only an airy spider's web, which will sever, the moment you hang by it, and leave you where no recovery is possible; we hold your foundation to be but the drifting sand, which will retreat from beneath your piled-up hopes, and involve you in their ruin. We stand then, again, as we have ever stood, for this preliminary element of the salvation which is mentioned in the text—that it is a salvation from the power and ascendancy of sin, and an introduction to the power and ascendancy of holiness, and purity, and love. Hereby we dissipate the false and misleading ideas of those who believe that salvation is a state into which we are not introduced till we die, and that a belief in Christ which is followed rather by deeper devotedness to the world, and deeper experience of sin, and estrangement from God, instead of being followed with progressive sobriety, and godliness, and righteousness, is all that is demanded of us. Yes, truly, the work of Christ's atonement, is our right, and title, and only plea for heaven; but the work of the Spirit alone, whom we honour even as we honour the Son, is the indispensable meetness or preparation for heaven.

We would now direct your attention to the other part of that salvation which is mentioned in the text, viz., our salvation from the consequences of sin—everlasting burnings.

The first consequence of sin, is, *irretrievable exile from the presence, and the glory, and the joy of Jehovah—the radiating centre of all happiness and peace.* It is painful when the culprit is driven from the home of his father, and the scenes of his youth, to a far foreign soil, where slavery awaits him for life. It was galling to the proud spirit of the Emperor Napoleon, to be fastened to a lock in the midst of the waste of waters, and secluded from the honours and the pleasures of Europe. But the feelings of either of these, are not to be compared with the feelings of them that are assigned to everlasting banishment from the presence of God, and chained to regions of misery, and worse than dreariest solitude, numbered with fallen spirits, and ruined men. But the desolation without them, is nothing to the withering up of every hope, and the desolation of every prospect, within them. No ray of heaven lights up again their dismal cells; no glad promise from Jesus revives their parched spirits; no Gospel call, or Gospel encouragement, reaches even the tip of their tongues; no messenger of mercy, no herald of peace, alights ever on the hills of that blighted place. From this the people of God are all saved.

Secondly, not only are they banished from every joy, but *consigned to every misery.* They are the victims of that bitter remorse which springs from the recollection of having lost a heaven that might have once been won, and plunged into a misery, which might have once been shunned. This is the worm that never dies, this the fire that is never quenched.

In hell, all the faculties and feelings of the lost will be sharpened; the understanding will be cleared to perceive the infinite joys of heaven, and the opposite and infinite miseries: what was exaggeration and fancy in the preacher's sermon, is found to be awful reality in their own experience. Their *feelings*

will be strengthened and enlarged in such degree, that they will wish that they were rocks and adamant; and memory will record and open up before them, those Bible promises they are beyond for ever. Those sacred scenes they once enjoyed will linger on their memories as airy shades, and deepen by the contrast their real suffering; and, as the means and opportunities they lost flit across their memories, the worm will gnaw, and the fire will burn with intenser fury. The sufferings of the lost, will be great beyond all calculation, because they are the expressions of offended justice, and the inflictions of abused mercy. A condemned sinner has nothing to urge in mitigation of his sentence. He had time to turn and repent; but, in the face of frequent warning, he abused it all. He had salvation offered without money, and without price, but he spurned it all. He had motives pressed on him the most powerful, and hopes presented glorious beyond conception far; and he scoffed at all. He is damned, because he would be damned; and on his devoted head the wrath of heaven, without alleviation, will be poured forth, and the darkest curse of heaven assuredly descend. The sufferings of the lost will be terrible, because there is no prospect, however distant, of release. When millions of years have ended, and begun again, the misery of the lost is yet no nearer to its issue: to them, death would be a welcome messenger; to them, extinction a result much to be wished for.

Now, brethren, from these most awful, most awakening, and most to be avoided sorrows and pains, they that are saved from sin are also saved; and, what adds to their happy fate, they are introduced into the opposite joys and delights of heaven, and immortality. There all pains and sorrows are extinct for ever; "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest." The king and his meanest subject, the master and his servant, if true believers, are there admitted to parallel and inexpressible dignity and bliss. The infirmities and peevishness of age, the volatility and rashness of youth, the corrodings of grief, and the pains of sickness and disease, are strangers there. Sin, also—that teeming parent of the Christian's deepest suffering—that element within, he prays and struggles to be freed from—that cloud between him and his God, he longs to dissipate—that spectre, ever harassing, he longs to be rid off—shall then and there be utterly annihilated; and the holy land shall unfold its boundless loveliness, and welcome each pilgrim to its rest and refreshment; and the light of God's countenance, so desirable on earth, shall be lifted up on the faces of the redeemed; and those things which here are seen through a glass darkly, shall there be contemplated in their native effulgence; the eye shall be made susceptible of deeper impressions of grandeur, and sublimity, and beauty, and he satisfied; the ear shall be more alive to sounds of joyfulness, and it shall be pleased; and man's heart shall bound within him under the influx and efflux of sweeter and better streams of life and happiness. In that land, the redeemed shall eat of the fruits of the tree of life, and drink of the waters of life; they shall be pillars in the heavenly Jerusalem, inscribed with the name of God, and of the city of God: they shall be priests and kings; and the crowns they wear, and the sceptres they wield, are such as flourish and fade not away. In one word, the redeemed shall be perfectly holy; and that is a sufficient guarantee for their being perfectly happy. Such then is the nature of that salvation which is specified in the text:—first, a deliverance from the power of sin on earth, and an introduction to the ascendancy and power of holiness. Secondly, a deliverance from the sorrows and ills of this life, and the consequences of sin in the life to come.

II. Let us direct your attention to **THE WAY IN WHICH THIS SALVATION IS TO BE ACHIEVED**: "*Look unto me and be ye saved.*"

Now, it is delightful to find a single verse in the word of God, which, like a ploughshare, tears up and destroys the vague and unscriptural notions which are afloat respecting the nature of the Gospel of Jesus. There is in this verse no preliminary required of man; but a look at the Saviour, and instantly a purifying influence is shot through his whole constitution like an electric spark, and a union with heaven produced firm as the throne of God, and indissoluble as the humanity and Deity of Christ. "Look and be saved."

We do not refuse to admit, that in the look, and in the object looked at, there is much meaning wrapped up; but still we are constrained to affirm, that the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ has been so enveloped in the drapery of human concomitants, that it is with difficulty men are enabled to see through, and feel, its simple and unique character. Men's regards have too often been tortured and twisted aside, and directed to faith, to repentance, and to a vast variety of preparations for learning and living on Christ, instead of being summoned, without restriction and without delay, to Christ the Saviour, who is the dispenser of these most precious graces, not the requisitionist of their previous existence. We say, without hesitation, that when you are told to look to repentance, to look to faith, to look to previous reformation of any description, you are told to look to an idol, and you stand as far off from the true worship of Jehovah, as they that bent the knee to Baal, or they that did homage to the stones, and images, and paintings, in the Roman Pantheon. When Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection, many of his auditors supposed that he proclaimed two distinct and equal Deities; and many still, when we preach Christ, repentance, and faith, suppose, though they allow it not, that we preach separate Saviours, to any of which they may look and be saved. It is not any thing to be done that precedes our reception of Christ, it is only something to be seen and felt. The sick man arrests the physician and applies to his aid, not because he has done any thing preparatory, but simply because he feels within a disease beyond the common skill of common men; even so, they that are spiritually sick, may not, and must not, subdue their sinful desires, and sinful doings, to a certain mitigated amount, but just as they are, with all their rampant sinfulness, with all their earthward desires, go to Jesus, the great Physician, that he may heal them and restore them. It is requisite that men feel their personal defalcation of the vast requirements of a holy law; it is requisite, that they feel the pressure of that curse which proceeds from the words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the law to do them," and fastens on the hearts of all. It is requisite that they feel their nature sinful, their habits sinful, their essential and wide estrangement from the love and heartfelt service of Jehovah; and under the invading tide of such convictions, and under the felt experience of their most aching poignancy, that they run, as men driven by the lashes of an upbraiding conscience, most sore of all, because most within, and under the threats of God's insulted justice, and amid the thunders of a disjointed law, to Christ, that all-sufficient refuge, that Almighty shelter, to whom to look is to be saved. To say that you are saved *by* faith, as if it were the cause of your salvation is idolatry or Popery; but, to say, that you are saved *through* faith, as the humble and helpless instrumentality, is Christianity. When a seaman is cast from his foundering ship, and, when his hand lays hold on some floating spar, and he is rescued, would he say that his hand saved him? Even so faith is the hand with

which you grasp the only ark amid this wide sea of troubles; but can we with any justice say, that it, and it alone, can save us? or, when the wounded Israelites beheld the brazen serpent on the pole, their look was but the means? Jehovah's presence with his appointed symbol was the cause.

But men, again, are ready to urge that, before we can venture to look at Christ and be saved, we must surely have repented of our sins and trespasses. This is another of the meshes which Satan plants between the sinner and the Saviour. Does not the Scripture declare most pointedly, that Jesus is "exalted a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins?" And does not this imply that we must look at him before we can repent? And does not the prophet say that the Jews shall *first* "look at him whom they have pierced," and *then* they "shall mourn?" The tear that glistens in the eye of the penitent, whence comes it? It is begotten between the sinner's and the Saviour's eye brought into contact. The sigh that moves the bosom of the repentant sinner, whence comes it? It is the breath of Jesus stirring the dry bones of nature's frame. The movement of the mourning sinner heavenward, whence comes it? It is the impulse of God, it is the attractive love of Jesus that awakes it. Man may sorrow when he looks back upon the threatenings of the law of God, and fear and tremble when he looks forward to the awful punishment of hell; but repent, in the scriptural and Gospel sense, he never will till he look up to Jesus. Repentance is in fact the expression of a changed heart, the fruit of being born again: but where is the arm that can change the heart of stone to heart of flesh?—where the power that can operate within a change tantamount to being born again? It is not in heaven; for all its holy inmates are powerless to change the destinies of man. It is not in hell; for they cannot change their own. It is not on earth; for man needs it and desires to have it. It is in Jesus; "For I," says the Saviour, "will take away your stony heart, and give you an heart of flesh." It is unto thee, therefore, oh Saviour, we look for repentance and salvation.

When God commands a work, he presents the might to do it; when God prescribes how we are to love, he gives the heart to love, and the power to practise. The Gospel calls you to repent, and calls you by the uplifted terrors and the promised blessings of Jehovah; but it tells you whence you are to draw the will and the way. The preaching that has numbed congregations into apathy, and palsied all their powers, is this endless enjoining of repentance, and withal as endless a concealing of its fountain, this calling upon men to live without opening up Christ, the only parent of life. We fear not to say, that, if this free, this unrestricted, admission to the tree of life, is preached in all the churches of the land, there will ensue a glorious revival of the Spirit and the works of piety. Oh, it is not by presenting to dying and disabled sinners a lean and sapless skeleton of pure morality—it is not by proclaiming repentance and partial reformation as the thresholds that must be passed before we get to Jesus, that nature is to be filled with grace, and they that are dead made instinct with life from heaven, and they that are abandoned sinners, and they that have a Christian name, and nothing more, are to be inclined to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God: but it is by the full utterance of the freeness of the Gospel of Jesus—by removing every obstacle between the sinner and the sinner's Saviour, and demonstrating that one step on the part of the guilty will be met by twenty on the part of their God, that one look on our part will be replied to by salvation given freely.

III. Having thus endeavoured to repel the persuasion that some preliminary change is called for before we can venture to look at Christ, let me now endeavour to open, briefly, **THE CHARACTER IN WHICH THE SAVIOUR PRESENTS HIMSELF TO SINNERS.**

Look at Christ as having borne the punishment which you deserved, and thereby made it inconsistent with the equity of God to punish the believer. Did we deserve to die? The Lord of glory died in our stead. Did we deserve to bear the wrath of God, the maledictions of the law and the withdrawal of our Father's countenance? These, believers, the Son of God endured for you. Have you no claim to heaven or endless happiness? The Redeemer, in your nature, has an undeniable claim, and he gives it freely to you. Look to Christ as the Lamb of God that bears away the world's sins—as our High Priest that pleads for us within the veil, and sends his Spirit forth to seal us to eternal glory. We must look to him as able to instruct us savingly in all the will and Word of God. He is the wisdom that dwelt with God from everlasting ages; he is the fulness of the Godhead bodily; in him are hid the treasures of infinite wisdom; in him all light; in him all truth. To him, therefore, we are to look for knowledge and guidance in this dark and dreary world, until we arrive at those regions of unfading light where all things are clearly seen, where mystery is a word unknown, and ignorance an eternal exile. We are to look to Jesus as the Sovereign King, whose laws we are more unreservedly to reverence and obey. Let the emperors and kings of the earth mould their laws and frame their politics according to his. Let man in all the phases of his life and history, let all the tenantry of earth, look up to him as their supreme and highest Lord. Let us feel that He, as the distributor and source of all things, has a right to all we hold on earth. Ye rich and wealthy ones, your gold, your silver, your treasures, are Christ's: they are not your own, they are his exclusive property; his holy name is stamped upon them; and if ye use them not to his glory he will send the moth to consume, and rust to destroy them, or the revolution of kingdoms, or the revulsion of earth to bury them. Ye kings, your crowns and your sceptres are Christ's: use them to promote the march of his glorious truth, and the overthrow of the adverse powers of darkness and sin; lest the hand of treason reach you, or the risings of an awakened population dethrone you. Look unto him, my fellow Christians, and take his yoke, which is easy, and his burden which is light. Read his laws, and obey them. Read his will, and adhere to it, through good report and through bad report. Look to Him as the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Look to Christ for grace and glory, for spiritual and eternal life, for all the graces and blessings of the Gospel.

#### IV. Our last enquiry is, **HOW WE ARE TO LOOK TO JESUS?**

In looking to Christ there is involved, without doubt, *a looking away from every other ground of pardon, or salvation, or recovery.* Many are at this moment leaning on the punctuality of their Sabbath observances, their general exemption from the sins which stain the characters of those who have broken loose from all the restraints of social life; and, without any heartfelt impressions of their original defilement and actual sins, or any convictions of the Saviour's suitableness and all-sufficiency, or any deep and earnest resting of all their hopes and prospects on his finished work, they die and appear before their God in judgment; and—tremendous discovery!—they find their eternal expectations



based upon a lie, based on delusive dreams they would not have dissipated while there was light, and their salvation possible. Others will shut their eyes upon the plainest declarations of the Word of God, and cry that these are bigotry, and they that preach them bigots, and enter the world to come reposing on the mercy and benevolence of God. But reason and revelation cry that these most glorious attributes cannot avail the sinner, whose heart is impure, whose hands are both unclean. God has declared himself a holy, just, and faithful God; and if men will explain how he can be holy and yet reward the guilty—faithful to all he says, and yet admit the thief, the murderer, the drunkard, the natural man, to glory—we will admit that atonement is a useless thing, and Christ a needless gift. Many are looking to their sect or teacher for their salvation: they calculate that if they are outwardly united to some division of the Christian Church, and recognized and named distinctively amid the thousands round them, that they, at least, are sure of immortal happiness. “All are not Israel who are of Israel.” We value men’s attaching themselves to those departments of the Christian Church which they decidedly prefer; but the moment they build on their peculiarities, and erect their Shibboleth into a ground of worthiness for heaven, that moment they do dishonour to the name of Christ, and look for salvation and peace, not to Jesus, but to Apollos or Cephas, and the parties whom they head. But God’s command is to look—not to merit in ourselves, or mercy in our God, or sect or name of any kind—but to look to Jesus and be saved.

First, we are to look *intently*: just as the beggar looks into the face of him who has the world and the world’s wealth around him—just as the shipwrecked seaman gazes in the face of him that has the means to rescue—so should we, spiritually poor, and naked, and destitute, and wrecked, look up to Jesus. Oh, could we but feel, my friends, that our everlasting safety or our everlasting ruin rests on Christ—could we but realize the thought, that, if we look thus we shall be saved, and if we look not we shall be damned—how would we summon up our best resolves, and muster all our powers, and look to Jesus! The morning dawn would be prevented by our earnest prayers, the evening close brought in by our thanksgivings and our praises: and, amid the toils and troubles of a weary world, we could lift up the mind’s eye often and again to him who is mighty to save, whose name alone is given whereby men’s children may be forgiven and blessed.

Secondly, *continually*. It will not do to look at the Redeemer to-day, and to-morrow to forget his existence and his claims: we must look to him from first to last. When we mingle in the world of business, and commercial enterprise, and feel most powerfully, solicitations to profit ourselves though at the expenditure of strict integrity, look up to Christ, ye men of business, the instant the temptation starts, and think with what emotions he regards you. When we feel our zeal in the holy cause of souls and heaven dampen and relax, and languor throw its silken and voluptuous arms around us, let us look up to Jesus, and think how he must grieve. When we give way to worldliness and earthly habits, and lay aside our Christian character, and leave our high vantage ground, let us look to Jesus, and think how he regards us. Our looking to him will not only be our resting upon him as reconciliation and atonement, and leaning on him as on our only rod, but it will be looking to him as our most perfect pattern and example. If we venture onward an inch to an eternal world without leaning on him, like Peter we must sink; or if we square our

doings by other model than that his spotless life presents, we must assuredly go wrong.

Thirdly, We must look *under strong convictions of our helplessness and imbecility*. When we feel most weak, oh then we are most strong. If we believe the Word of God, which thunders in our ears our weakness and insufficiency—if we give credit to the testimony of the aged, wise, and good—if we consult our past experience, we must see that in ourselves there is really little to depend on, and less to do and dare with for an eternal world.

Now, it is the promise of the Lord that he will satisfy the hungry with good things, while the rich he will send empty away; that he will hear the prayer of the needy, and send healing to them that feel that they are sick. Believe me then, my brethren, if you can empty your hearts of all their natural hopes, and under the consciousness of a painful void within you look to Christ, he will impart his strength, and perfect it in the midst of your weakness; he will fill your souls with marrow and with fat, and arm you for every temptation, and shield you from every danger, and lead you unhurt through every difficulty.

Fourthly, Look to Jesus, not only under a conviction of your insufficiency, but *also of his fulness*. He has purchased heaven for all that look to him, and he has its joys and pleasures to bestow. He has purchased pardon and peace for all that look to him, and he has these most precious boons to give. He has the Spirit of holiness and peace and comfort to commission forth, and Him therefore he can send unto the hearts of men. There is not a thing that man requires, for time or for eternity, which he has not to give away. There is greater fulness far in Christ than there can be emptiness in man. Are our sins most deep? The Saviour's mercy is deeper still. Is our misery great? His mercy stretches far beyond. Are our wants many and wide? His graces and his gifts go infinitely beyond them.

V. "ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH." We dare not circumscribe the mercies, we dare not limit the will and the wishes of Jehovah. We dare not say to him "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." We hold the doctrines of election, and of predestination, to be scriptural and precious truths; but if man will make these drags upon our efforts to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, and dampers on our zeal in the cause of perishing souls, we will stand up for their defence, and maintain that these doctrines are desecrated and abused, and instead of being, as meant, consolations to all true believers, are made barriers in the way of heaven's going forth to recover the lapsed children of Adam, and to rescue the heirs of eternity from going down to perdition. Jerusalem was long the scene of an exalted and glorious deliverer; but now that its day is closed, and its destiny sealed, that Saviour is for all lands, and for all cities, and for all the ends of the earth. We are, my friends, to act upon the principle that there is sufficiency in Christ for all; that his blood can bury the mountains of our sins, and wash the most inveterate stain of guilt, and bound its saving efficacy by nothing short of the limits of the globe. "The ends of the earth." Come then, ye sons of burning Africa, ye pilgrims of the desert, and look to Jesus, and ye shall be saved. Come ye Laplanders and denizens of the icy worlds around the Pole, lift up your eyes to Jesus, and your frozen hearts shall be warmed, and the tear of repentance start from your eyes. Come, ye followers of Antichrist, look no more at lifeless and imaginary portraits of the Saviour, from which neither peace nor comfort can flow; but look at him as represented in the word of God, as seen by eager

faith, as exalted at the right hand of Deity, to give repentance and remission of sin. Come ye cold, ye worldly, ye careless, Protestants, and look to him who never relaxed in his doings to save, and his sufferings to redeem you.

Oh, my friends, the men of this generation are all off on a wrong tack in pursuit of man's regeneration and recovery. You are looking to political reforms for safety, but unless God is in the heart and at the root of them, they will crush you in their ruins. Look to Christ, and you will weather the storm; look to anything beneath, and the vessel of the state will rush stern foremost to irretrievable ruin. And you are looking to ecclesiastical alterations in the established churches of the land for a millennial era; but unless our clergy and our elders will look to Christ in prayer and in supplication, unless they will stand stiffer by their posts, and, like Jacob, not let the Almighty go till he bestow his blessing, their efforts will end in vanity and vexation of spirit. And, thousands round, are looking to expediency, and, as might be expected, there are found infamous coalitions between orthodox believers, and the advocates and assertors of damnable heresy: and, under this covert of expediency, the orthodox dissenting ministers of London! (alas! that their sacred character should thus be forgotten,) are found preaching alternately on Sabbath evenings with the avowed deniers of the Godhead of Jesus Christ.

I say these things in sorrow; and the reason I allude to them, is the reason why Peter's fall is alluded to in the word of God—that you may feel and believe, that, if we look to anything but Christ our footing is insecure. As well may the mariner think that he can steer his bark without looking at the compass or the Pole star, as man think that he can voyage securely onward to eternal bliss without looking to Jesus. Whatever be your high and enviable attainments in morality, and justice, and integrity, and love, whatever the temptations you have mastered, or the virtues you have practised, you must yet look to Jesus, and to him only, for free, and undeserved mercy; for pardon gratis, for heaven gratis; and whatever be the extent of your past misdoings, whatever be the dye of the guilt which discolours any of your hearts, though it be red as crimson, and deep as scarlet, I bid you look to Jesus, and you shall be saved. I except not from the general amnesty I now proclaim the thief in his marauding forays, or the murderer on the public scaffold; “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,” is addressed, not merely to the Philippian jailer, but to every prisoner under his charge. And from the strong need of this preached mercy I exempt not a Howard, with all his wide philanthropies, or a More, with all her merciful charities. The thief, converted at the eleventh hour, and the moral and upright citizen, must, in respect of worthiness of pardon and acceptance, stand, beside the bar of heaven, upon the same platform of unworthiness.

And, now, brethren, the language is, “Look to Jesus, and be saved:” and we believe the converse of this most solemn truth is also just: “Look not, and ye shall be condemned.” The Infidel, the Socinian, the Deist, may enrage us with want of charity and love, but we care not for any charge, which may be made against our Lord and Master also. His words are, “Whosoever believeth shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned.” We deny that truth can be clothed in uncharity. Paul, so mild, so tender, so sympathizing, with stumbling believers, speaks in stern and faithful terms to them that pervert the truth. The Apostle John, whose pen was dipped in love, when he admonished his converts, summoned the awfulest terms of earth to delineate the anti-

christian apostacy. Speak the truth, and uncharitableness will never find access. We fear not, therefore, to affirm with all the principles of this most Holy Book, with all the testimonies of its ablest preachers on our side, that Infidels, and Socinians cannot, as such, be saved : and, when we tell them so, we prove ourselves most charitable, most meek, most kind. These are the two alternatives : “ Look to Jesus as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and be saved ; look not, and be condemned.”

Another year has heard its funeral knell, and its spirit has entered the mansions of eternity. You are yet spared in the land of the living, and in the place of hope. Your temporal concerns in life, have perhaps been abundantly prosperous ; your means and opportunities of grace have perhaps been many : What return have you rendered to the Lord ? Where the trophies of sins you have mastered ? Where the proofs of love, and joy, and benevolence, and peace you have acquired ? Alas ! are ye not where you were a year ago, as prayerless, as graceless, as godless ? And yet, (oh, the long-suffering of God,) you are not cut down as cumberers of the earth. But you are destined, some of you, not to see the close of 1834, as you have seen the close of 1833. But hear the Gospel : this very day, my friends, notwithstanding all, the Mediator is standing over the books in which are registered your multitudinous, your innumerable sins, your abused mercies, your neglected means ; and if you will hear his address, “ Look to me and be saved,” he will expunge the record of your sins, and wash their very vestiges away in his blood, and be merciful to your sins, and your iniquities remember no more.

## THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SPEAKING BETTER THINGS THAN THE BLOOD OF SAUL.

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, SAVOY, FEBRUARY 23, 1834.

“Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.”—2 SAMUEL, i. 21

THESE words form a part of that song of lamentation which David composed after that Saul, and Jonathan his son, had fallen in battle with the Philistines. The death of Saul was in the eyes of David an exceedingly grievous event; an event in connexion with which he considered that no small degree of guilt had been incurred; because Saul was the Lord's anointed: and so grievous, and so guiltful, if we may use such an expression, was that event in the eyes of David, that in this solemn lamentation he imprecates divine vengeance even upon the very place where the foul deed had been perpetrated; he prays, that henceforth on these mountains of Gilboa there might be neither dew nor rain nor fields of offering.

Now one great use of the histories that we meet with in the Old Testament, and a legitimate use of them, is that of drawing from them illustrations of important truths and doctrines that are submitted to our notice, whether in the Old or in the New Testaments. Such a use of many of those histories we find having the sanction of inspiration itself; such a reference is made to many of those histories by the writers of the New Testament; and such a use, I conceive, we may make, even of some of those passages for which we have no such authority, provided that when we so use them we do it with humility, with sobriety of mind, and guided by those general principles with which the Scriptures furnish us, in the examples that they have given us of a like application of Old Testament histories.

Now I conceive that we have a like example in another passage of Old Testament history, which is brought forward by St. Paul in the epistle to the Hebrews, in illustration of an important New Testament doctrine. The passage to which I allude is to be found in the fourth of Genesis, where we have recorded the account of the death of Abel; a deed in which there was an enormity of guilt. We find it said of that deed, that Abel's blood cried from the ground for vengeance upon Cain; the Apostle, in the twelfth of the epistle to the Hebrews, referring to that event says, that those who believe in Christ are come unto “the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.” In the murder of Abel there was an enormity of guilt, and there was a cry for vengeance; in the death of Christ there was indeed an enormity of guilt, far surpassing that which is to be found in the case of Abel, but the result is widely different; his blood crieth not for vengeance, but for mercy.

Now I conceive that we may, in like manner, draw improvement from the

passage now before us. We may take occasion from it to illustrate the enormity of that sin of which those were guilty who embred their hands in our Saviour's blood; and we may take occasion to draw a like contrast with that which the Apostle has drawn in the case of Abel; and we may dwell with delight upon the encouraging fact, that while the blood of Saul that was thus shed called for vengeance on the very spot where it was shed, the blood of Christ calls for nothing but blessings, the very opposite of these curses.

Let us then proceed, first, to consider, **THE ENORMITY OF GUILT CONTRACTED BY THOSE WHO SHED THE SAVIOUR'S BLOOD, AS THAT GUILT MAY BE ILLUSTRATED BY THE ENORMITY OF THE GUILT OF THE DEATH OF SAUL.** What was the principal circumstance upon which David dwelt, but that Saul was *the Lord's anointed*? Saul had been called of God in a very remarkable manner to be king over Israel; he had been set apart in a very solemn manner to that high and responsible office; and it was known unto all that were round about him, both far and near, that he was in a pre-eminent sense, in those days, "the Lord's anointed," and his person therefore accounted to have been holy and sacred; and the sin of touching a person thus sacred was necessarily of no small amount. But if it be said of Saul, that he was the Lord's anointed, how much more may it be said of Christ, whose very name—Messiah, signifies the Anointed, or the Christ of God. And shall we not, when dwelling upon this point, profitably call to remembrance the many infallible proofs that he gave while he lived and dwelt among us men, that he was the Lord's anointed? May we not refer, not only to the remarkable events connected with his work in the days of his infancy, but more especially to those wonderful works which he wrought, because God was with him, to that anointing of the Holy Ghost by which he was distinguished, and by the power of which he thus displayed these wonderful works in the midst of the children of Israel? May we not profitably refer to the evidences that are afforded to us by his spotless character, by his boundless benevolence, by all those evident tokens of goodness which shone forth with so much clearness and with so much majesty in him? It was indeed manifest to every unprejudiced mind, by the whole course of our Saviour's history, that he was indeed the Lord's Anointed—the Son of God.

Now if we look into the history of Saul, we shall find, that there are many circumstances which greatly diminish the enormity of guilt connected with his death; and then turning to the history of our blessed Saviour we shall find the like variety of circumstances, all tending to lighten that guilt. It may be said of Saul, that he richly deserved that death, that untimely death, with which he met. It is recorded of Saul, that he had on more than one occasion rejected the Lord, rejected the authority of that God who had caused him to be anointed king over Israel. Moreover, it appears from the history of Saul, that he had been a murderer in intention and in purpose, if not in deed, as it respected David; on more than one occasion he had, in the bitterness of his wrath and in his malice, sought the life of David; though he had not been permitted in the providence of God, to accomplish his deadly purpose. What shall we say, therefore, in contrast, with reference to our blessed Saviour? He glorified and adorned the doctrines of his heavenly Father, by the most unreserved, entire, and continued obedience; so that the great adversary of man when he came to search and to sift him, could find nothing in him; yea, his very accusers had nothing that they could allege or prove against him, when they had arraigned him. And how remarkable was his own character for benevolence and for good

will to man? How did he shew himself, on a variety of occasions, the friend of man, and bent upon promoting man's real happiness, and advancing his best interests?

If we turn again to the history of Saul, we shall find David dwelt upon *the disgrace connected with his death*, as adding bitterness to the event—that he had been slain by the hands of the Philistines, the sworn enemies of the Children of Israel. If we turn to the history of our blessed Saviour we shall find that there were still more embittered circumstances in his history, which made his cup even still more cruel: we find he fell by the hands of the Romans; that his fall was accompanied by many previous acts of indignity that were done to him. How was he reviled? How was he taunted with the execrations and the malice which men poured forth? How at the very moment when he ought to have called forth the sympathies of all who pretended in the slightest degree to kindness of feeling, at the moment when he hung upon the cross, how were those indignities repeated? How were all the dishonours that men could heap upon him poured out in the most abundant measure?

If we turn again to the history of Saul, we shall find a variety of other particulars, all lessening the enormity of the guilt; and we shall find the contrast again heighten the guilt of our Saviour's death. In the history of Saul we find it recorded, that in the hour and in the day of his distress, instead of having recourse to God, instead of seeking divine direction, instead of seeking comfort from on high, he resorted to the Witch of Endor, thereby shewing that he no longer trusted in God, but in that which was expressly forbidden of God, that against which God had by his law denounced the severest punishment upon those who should be guilty of it. It was the withdrawing the trust from God, and the placing that trust on forbidden objects. If we look at that history of Saul, we shall find, that in the very article of death, when he was reduced to the greatest straits and necessities, his concern was not how he should appear in the sight of God, but what man would think of him; he could not bear the idea of falling by the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, and therefore he added to his other sins, the grievous sin of suicide. It is true, that in the passage now before us, in this song of lamentation, David writes upon the information the Amalekite had brought to him, who pretended that he had himself been the occasion of his death, according to Saul's request; but he only invented this tale in order to secure to himself a reward, as he supposed, at the hands of David. But Saul had been more careful about his own reputation, more careful about the world's esteem than about God, and the judgment that he might form concerning him. If we turn to the history of our Saviour, and especially to the closing parts of that history, we shall find them marked, in a very high and in a very singular degree, by acts of the most unreserved dependence upon God, and we shall find him exercising the most unreserved submission to his Father's will; "Nevertheless," said he, "not my will, but thine be done: the cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" We shall find that our Saviour in this solemn moment was distinguished by calmness, as well as by resignation; all the horrors of the scene were present to his mind before they actually occurred; but did he shrink back? Did he decline the bitter cup? Did he not in all the most dignified calmness go forward to meet his adversaries, and to receive the stroke of death at their hands? **AN.** when he was thus tried, how did his loveliness beam forth with greater and with greater brightness? Though he was reviled, yet he blessed; he returned not railing for railing, nor cursing for cursing, but contrariwise blessing

You well recollect how, in that solemn moment he prayed, even for his murderers "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And whilst in the case of Saul, we may observe, that it was made most manifest in the hour of his death, that he had not the fear of God before his eyes, it was made most manifest to all those who surrounded our Saviour as he hung upon the cross, that he was indeed the Son of God; and this confession was wrung from those who were appointed to carry the execution into effect, this confession was wrung from their lips—"Doubtless this man was the Son of God." And the crowds who had come from Jerusalem to be present on that occasion, returned apparently overwhelmed, many of them, with the consciousness of the enormity of that deed of which they had been guilty, in crucifying him who had been proved to be guiltless, and blameless, yea and righteous, both before God and man.

Perhaps it may be considered, that in the event that has now been passed for nearly two thousand years, we can by comparison have little concern; but oh, my brethren, may it not be said, that these solemn scenes are in a manner re-enacted even to this day? Are there not those who crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, who do despite to the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? All this wickedness may be, and alas is, wrought over again in the hearts of the children of men, even unto this hour; and there are none, who when they come conscientiously and strictly to examine themselves, as to the manner in which they have been, and in which they are, affected by the consideration of the death of Christ, but must be ready to plead guilty to not having thought of that event as they ought to have thought of it, to not having been influenced by it in their conduct as they ought to have been influenced by it; and therefore they have contracted a measure of the same enormous guilt which belongs unto those who actually were guilty of shedding the Saviour's blood. If our Saviour were to deal with us as we deserve, for the manner in which we have treated the momentous and solemn subject of his death—for the manner in which we have regarded all those promises of God which rest on that event as their foundation—for that thoughtlessness of mind with which we have treated that event—for that slighting of him which we have manifested—oh, who is there that can escape?

But we turn to the second part of the subject, and that is, **TO DRAW AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE CASE OF SAUL, AND THE VENGEANCE OF HIS DEATH—IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS HAVING BEEN THE LORD'S ANOINTED—THE VENGEANCE THAT WAS IMPRECATED BY DAVID.** We need not dwell upon these circumstances: it may be fairly admitted that the language of David is poetical where he prays, that there may be neither dew nor rain upon the mountains of Gilboa; "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings." And we may, therefore, at once turn to the striking, but all-important contrast which may be obtained as it respects the death of Christ. Had they been dealt with according to their deservings, the vengeance would have come on those who were guilty of our Saviour's death, and that without remedy. And had we been thus judged ourselves, we may add, we should long since have been cut off, or left without any hope towards God. But what is it that the Scriptures teach concerning the effects of the blood of Christ? That it speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; instead of crying aloud that there should be neither dew, nor rain, nor fields of offering on those who had been guilty of



shedding it, and on those who had treated it with disregard, it cries for the very opposite. I need not remind you, that the "dew," and the "rain," are constantly used in Holy Writ, as well known emblems of the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, with which the hearts of the children of men are visited, in consequence of that sacrifice of atonement which Christ had offered, and the merit of which brings down these blessings upon the sinful children of men. Yes, the death of Christ we know procured that grace of the Holy Spirit—that grace which our Saviour was ever speaking of, as the great and principal blessing under the dispensation of the New Testament—that grace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in his Church, and of which he was giving while he lived, repeated promises, promises which when he had ascended up unto his Father, to enter, as the Scripture speaketh, into Heaven, with his own blood for us, has fulfilled to the very letter. Let us turn to the consideration of the fact, that by our Saviour's precious death, grace may be thus obtained for us. Our hearts are like the ground, when it is not visited by the dew and the rain of heaven; they are hard, they are unfruitful; they are barren of all that is good; and we deserve to be left to perish in such a state of barrenness; but we may look to the blood of Christ and may venture to hope, that the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit shall be given unto us. David says, "Let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor *fields of offering*:" we might have been left without an opportunity of offering ourselves unto God, and our services, to be accepted by him. As we have said, according to our deservings we should have been left to serve sin, and to have nothing but shame as our portion; but through the virtue that there is in the precious blood of Christ, a way is opened for man to present or offer himself unto God; to offer his body, soul, and spirit, a reasonable sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable. Yes, an opportunity is given to return to a state of obedience, and consequently to a state of happiness. Man can never be happy while he is serving sin, while he is serving his lusts and pleasures, never can be happy till he returns from the error of his ways, and takes again upon him the yoke of his God, and yields himself up to him, to serve him in righteousness and in true holiness. The privilege of doing this—for it is a privilege—has been obtained, we repeat it, by the blood of Christ, who obtained it for us at the hands of our God.

But we shall proceed a little further in this illustration, to shew the excellence of the blood-shedding of Christ. To whom was it first to be made known that the Holy Spirit was to be vouchsafed unto the children of men? It was to be made known in that very place, in that very city, and among those very people, who because they had not known him had crucified the Lord of Glory. So wonderfully better are these things which the blood of Christ speaketh, than the blood of Abel, or than the blood of Saul. And we may gather encouragement from this fact, that it was at Jerusalem that the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins, and of the spirit of promise, were first to be made known. Surely, if they of Jerusalem—if many of the very priests who had been foremost in stirring up the people to ask that Christ might be crucified, if many of these very priests received the dew and the rain of heaven—if many of these very persons were enabled to offer themselves up to God to be his servants for ever, through the merit of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, there are none but may hope that they also, approaching God in the same way, shall also be kept, shall be visited with that grace of the Holy Spirit, and shall be privileged to be numbered among the servants and the children of God.

It remains, beloved, after having given this illustration of the passage, and these important truths, that we remind you of one or two events more. We have said, that the offer of this grace was first made at Jerusalem: let me remind you of what the effect has been, and what the effect is, wherever this grace of God has been received in vain. You know that there were many of the Jewish nation who when Christ crucified was preached to them, when they were besought to be reconciled unto God, yet held out and persevered in their sins; you know that there were those who thus filled up the measure of their iniquities—and what is the present state of that whole people as a people, with the fewest possible exceptions? Neither dew, nor rain, nor fields of offering, are to be found among them: as it respects God they seem in an awful state of barrenness and of distance from him, the wrath of God rests upon them as a people. We look indeed, and we believe upon Scriptural grounds, for the day, when that curse which has laid upon them ever since they rejected and crucified the Saviour, that curse shall be removed, and that they shall be restored: but what a lesson does their history read to all who have an eye to peruse it, or an ear to listen to it? How does it solemnly impress on us all, that it is a fearful thing to trifle with the grace of God? Oh, let us beseech you, as the Apostle besought the Corinthians, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain, but while it is called to-day, while it is now the accepted time, seek through that grace the influences of the Holy Spirit, that you may consecrate yourselves to the service of God, lest upon you, also, the wrath of God shall be poured out, and you shall be left in a state of utter barrenness, as it respects any real good.

Let us see also the language of encouragement, which may be very lawfully drawn from the contrast which we have thus been endeavouring to make. Those who have in a measure partaken of that grace of which we have spoken, yet still feel themselves, through the sin still dwelling in them, as land that is without dew and rain, they feel themselves without ability to serve God, they feel themselves, though they acknowledge they are willing to do it, yet unable to offer themselves unto God; and they therefore feel themselves wretched, and depressed, and cast down. Now, beloved, what shall we say? Shall we yield to this despondency? With feelings, such as these are calculated to encourage in us, shall we look merely at our guilt? Shall we not rather look again at the precious death of Christ?—shall we not look again at the testimony of Holy Writ—at His blood, speaking better things than the blood of Abel, or, as we have ventured to draw the contrast from the passage, than the blood of Saul? Shall we not again place our hope in that his precious death, and have hope—a confident hope—a lively hope—towards God? Over and against all our demerits, which are neither few nor small, but on the contrary, many and exceeding great—over and against all those demerits let us again this day set anew the amplitude, the largeness, the boundless extent of the merits of the death of Christ? What ever enormity there may be in our guilt which we confess, it cannot be so great as the merit which there is in the sacrifice and the death of Christ to atone for that enormity of guilt. The blood of Christ is still able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and to present us without spot before God. Oh, let us again place ourselves on this one foundation of hope towards God, and learn humbly to look up for renewed communications of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and then let us anew present ourselves to him, no more to serve sin, but to yield up ourselves—our bodies, our souls, all that we have, and all that we are, by the help of his grace—to be employed henceforth and for ever more, to the shewing forth of his glory.

## THE MANIFESTATION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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REV. H. MELVILL, A. M.

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, MARCH 16, 1834.

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“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”—2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 10.

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THE Apostle has just been giving a surprising description, both of the trials and supports experienced by himself and other preachers of the Gospel: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” He thus makes an array of contrasts, setting what God had permitted in suffering, to bear side by side with what God communicated in assistance: and in our text he may be said to sum up these contrasts; he gathers the varieties of trials into one phrase, and the supports into another. The “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” is his general description of suffering; the manifestation in our body of the life of the Lord Jesus,” is his general description of succour: and you cannot fail to observe, that he does not so much represent the succour afforded, in order that there might be support under the suffering, as the suffering permitted, in order to give occasion for the display of the succour. He bore about in his body Christ's dying, in order, and with the intent, that Christ's living might be manifested in his body: so that he clearly exhibits himself as a kind of tablet, on which were to be graven the characters of suffering and affliction, these characters serving as an alphabet in which the world might read the life of the Mediator.

And we would observe, before advancing to a more thorough investigation of the subject, that there is something beautifully emphatic in the idea, that it is the life of Jesus that is manifested in the Christian. Century after century hath rolled away, and He who won to himself, by agony and death, the lordship of this lower creation, hath not visibly interfered with the administration of its concerns. For aught that the infidel can see, the sceptre of the earth is not wielded by Him whom Christians designate “King of kings and Lord of lords:” and whether it be a truth, or whether it be a delusion, that the crucified Nazarene came up from his grave and ascended into heaven, he can find nothing of token or evidence, that authority hath been given him, or, if given, is exercised. And we are not prepared to contend, that the demonstrations of Christ's life, are of that vivid and overpowering description, which force themselves on the attention of common observers. There is nothing of the like witness circulating about us of the life of the Mediator, as there is of the existence of God. We can meet the atheist on the splendid platform of this visible creation, and we can go with him into the scrutiny of the curious and costly secrets of nature; we can point to magnificent developments, characterized

with infinite power, and to exquisite contrivances marked by infinite wisdom and if the lovely things and the marvellous, the sublime things and the delicate, which thus pass under review, move not the godless man to confess and recognize the existence of Deity, we have at least the satisfaction of knowing, that we carry with us the great mass of our fellows, in pronouncing on him a verdict of wilful and infatuated ignorance. But if I desire to convince the sceptic that Jesus lives, I cannot pursue the same course as when proving to the atheist that God exists. The time, indeed, will come, when what is called sensible proof shall be given, when every eye shall gaze on the Son of Man seated on the clouds and summoning to judgment. We know that Christ shall yet do more than sit behind a mysterious and impenetrable veil, directing, indeed, though seemingly unconcerned, the vast machinery of human affairs. Coming personally, not in the whirlwind, not in the famine, not in the battle train, in which he came to visit the race who had rejected and crucified him, but in the body, in which he once trod this globe, which was torn by the nails, and crowned with the thorns, Jesus shall appear as a monarch, and, sweeping the scene clear of the rebellious and the apostate, shall set up his dominion over the provinces of a renovated creation. Then shall there go out a demonstration, against which it will not be possible for infidelity to set itself, that He who died on Calvary, has been living at the right hand of God, superintending the painful march of the faith which he founded.

Now we are free to own, that since, under the present dispensation, there are no visible exhibitions of the kingship of Christ, it is not easy, if the authority of Scripture be questioned, to bring forward satisfactory proof that Jesus is alive. There is a sense in which the deist has over us something of greater advantage than the atheist: the one wants matter of fact to convince him that Christ lives—the other wants matter of fact to convince him that God exists; but, beyond all question, the matter of fact which goes to the establishing the existence of God, is of somewhat a broader, firmer, and more palpable character than that which establishes the life of the Saviour. Yet, on the other hand, we are not ready to admit the total absence of direct, positive, practical witness. If I cannot appeal to such exhibitions of sovereignty as shall hereafter be displayed, when Christ returns to this earth, are there no tokens that the grave could not hold him, and that the heavens have received him?

We thus bring you to the statement of our text (for St. Paul is explicit on the fact) that there is such a thing as the manifestation of the life of the Redeemer. It was possible enough, that the malice and fury of inveterate persecutors might wear down to the wreck of its vigour the body of the Apostle. Torture might exhaust itself in wasting the limb and tearing the nerve, and famine might draw the fire from the eye, and long imprisonment wear away the elasticity of the spirit, and lingering pain almost strip of its covering the framework of bone and sinew; but, whilst he thus bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, bore it so about that he was as one who lived for the Cross, he could feel and affirm that there were such continued and mighty miracles in his being sustained and kept up in the battle with principalities and powers, that, if challenged to prove that his Lord was risen, that his Lord was alive, he could point to the shattered and almost broken-down tabernacle, and answer triumphantly, the life also of Jesus, as well as the death, was made manifest in that his body.

We think, that we thus give you a fair statement of the scope of our text.

We would associate it with another in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." The marginal reading is—"We are made a theatre." So that, in precise accordance with our text, the bodies of the Apostles might be considered as a stage, on which the dying of the Lord Jesus was continually exhibited; just in order that angels and men might learn from the drama of trouble and pain, that Jesus lived to succour and strengthen his followers. Thus, it is a theatre: the actors, if we may so speak, were persecution on the one side, fierce and inveterate, and, on the other, consolations abundant and abiding; and the scenic representation, which fixed the regards of angels, and ought to have engaged those of men, was the death of Jesus, shewn in the suffering, and the life of Jesus manifested in the supporting, of his followers.

But the great subject which we have in hand, and on the elucidation of which these remarks may most fairly be turned, is, that manifestation of the life of Jesus, the existence of which is here affirmed by St. Paul. We are in quest of evidence—direct, palpable, and more than written evidence—that Jesus is alive. And without wandering, as we might be tempted to wander, into regions of fanciful though brilliant speculation, in order to find instances of operation which conduct to the immediate agency of Christ, and which would of course go to demonstrate the life of Christ, we shall do well to confine ourselves to that single manifestation, which having the authority of the Apostle for its realities, cannot be evaded as in any sense imaginary. It is a fair conclusion, from the assertion of St. Paul in our text, that though Christ has entered within the veil, and thus wholly abstracted himself from the eye of sense, there are tokens put forth in the sufferings which believers undergo for his sake, that Jesus the Redeemer is alive. And it is the accuracy of this conclusion which is yet to be examined; so that the remainder of our discourse will be given to the tracing out the proof of Christ's life, which is said to be continued in the afflictions of Christ's followers.

We begin by observing, that the doctrine of Christ's living for us, is every whit as closely bound up with our salvation, as that of his having died for us. It is no nice speculation, which may be received or set aside, and the scheme of Christianity remain neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The resurrection was God's attestation to the worth of the atonement; so that had the body of Christ continued under the dominion of death, the inference must have been that the sin of the world was untaken away. And it should be remembered, that the preaching of the Apostles of Christ, bore on the resurrection of their Master as the grand truth which they were commissioned to proclaim; it may be said to have been the prime business of those, upon whom the gifts of the Spirit descended, to publish the fact that Jesus was alive. If still dead, he was an impostor; if alive, he was the Messiah.

Now we are to show you, for this is the bearing of our text, that the persecutions which they underwent, as well as the proclamations which they uttered, went to the proving that Jesus was alive. We think, by simple and straightforward reasoning, to bring this matter within each man's comprehension. You will observe, that, as it was every thing to the Apostles to prove the fact of Christ's life, so was it every thing to the chief priests and rulers to disprove this fact. They had bribed the Roman soldiers to declare that the disciples came by night and stole away the body of their Master and you may all

perceive, that, if they could have made good this declaration, if they could have shewn to the satisfaction of the dwellers in Jerusalem, that this was the true account of the emptying of the sepulchre, nothing more would have been needed to the giving a death-blow to the claims of the thus crucified Jesus to the Messiahship of Israel. The process was most obvious: shew us that Jesus is not risen, shew us that his followers stole and secreted his body, and we shall at once leave to infamy and scorn the deceivers who strove to seduce away the people. And we suppose it self-evident, that, if the rulers had the proof at their disposal, they would eagerly have brought it forward; they would never have employed the machinery of power and persecution in order to keep down the rising religion, if they could have produced undeniable evidence of the falsehood of the statements which its preachers advanced. If the Apostles were publishing a lie, and the rulers were prepared to prove it a lie, let them bring forward their proof, and the Apostles must be buried under a mass of universal contempt. But when, in place of substantiating their own statement respecting the robbery of the sepulchre, they strove only by violence and cruelty to silence the propagators of the opposite statement, was it not to be naturally inferred that they knew the falsehood of their own account, though unwilling to confess the truth of the Apostles? The rulers said the body was stolen: the Apostles said the body was quickened. In place of proving what they affirmed, which would have settled the question, the rulers only tried by stripes and imprisonment to prevail on the Apostles to keep back their account from the world. Who, then, sees not, that, by persecuting the Apostles, in place of proving them liars the rulers themselves bore witness to the fact that Jesus was alive? They had no evidence to produce of the truth of their own statement, and they set themselves therefore to get rid by force of the counter statement. Power was substituted for proof; cruelty for argument.

We therefore contend, that no stronger attestation could have been given to the fact of Christ's life, than the persecutions to which the Apostles were subjected for maintaining that fact. Had it been possible to disprove the fact, recourse would not have been had to the backing by slaughter the sheer denial of that fact. If there were one spectacle which more than another might have demonstrated to intelligent men that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, we hold it to have been that of the first preachers of the resurrection; exposed to every species of assault from the chief priests and scribes, attempted to be forced into silence, simply because they could not be convicted of falsehood. So that whilst all the array of persecution was marshalled against the Apostles, and the strong arm of civil might, or of popular fury, was employed to withhold them from proclaiming Christ's life, the very sufferings which they endured proved the truth of that which they preached; and thus it came to pass, in the strongest and most literal sense, that, by bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also of Jesus was manifested in that body.

We may yet further argue, that by submitting to persecutions the Apostles showed their own belief that Jesus was alive. There is a limit which enthusiasm cannot pass. If an enthusiast had stolen and secreted the body of Jesus, he would not on that account persuade himself that Jesus was alive. Had not the Apostles believed Christ alive, they would not have joyfully exposed themselves to peril and to death: but their believing he was alive, is in itself a mighty proof that he lived; it shews the falsehood of the only other account that was put forth of the disappearance of Christ's body, and therefore

it establishes the truth of that account which they themselves had advanced. Thus we maintain, that Christ's life was manifested in the martyrs' flesh. And if I had lived in the earliest days of Christianity, and had desired practical evidence that Jesus was alive, then, though the heavens might not have opened to me, displaying the magnificent spectacle on which Stephen was privileged to gaze—the spectacle of the glory of the eternal body of Jesus standing on the right hand of God—yet, if I had seen the Apostles fighting their way through a scene of tribulation, and marked them, undaunted by the onset at which nature is most accustomed to quail, clinging to the work of Christ, which was the light of the world, and as to which nothing could force from them a denial—why, I think, I must have been possessed of a heart proof against the most rigid, practical demonstration, if I had not acknowledged, that, inasmuch as those men voluntarily bore about in their bodies the dying of the Lord, the life of the Lord was also manifested in those bodies.

But we turn to a new line of proof. The grand manifestation of the life of Jesus lies in the supports and consolations vouchsafed to the persecuted. When the malice of the ungodly was allowed to do its worst, and the disciples were given up to death under its most terrible shapes, there was administered so much of supernatural assistance, that all but the reprobate must have seen that the power of the Lord was sustaining the martyrs. They went out of the world, whether it was the sword or the cross which dismissed them to glory, with gladness in the eye and with triumph on the lip, confident that their Master lived to welcome them, and therefore able to cry out with Stephen of old, the leader of the slaughtered band, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And admitting, as you must all admit, unless you reject all history, whether sacred or profane, that the Apostles were singularly sustained by God throughout their arduous and painful career, we shall have no difficulty in making out our proof that the life of Jesus was manifested in their bodies. The great truth which they published, and in support of which they suffered was, that Jesus was alive: hence it was to sustain them in proclaiming the life of Jesus, that the Almighty interfered and dealt out aids and consolations.

Now we think and maintain, that, whenever God directly interposes to preserve an individual while publishing a doctrine, God virtually gives testimony to the truth of that doctrine. If the published doctrine were the reverse of truth, He who is truth itself, and the fountain of truth, would never mark the publisher with the signet of his approval: and thus we have a decisive and vivid manifestation of the life of Christ in the sufferings of the Apostles. They were sufferings for the bold endurance of which God palpably gave the nerve and the sinew; but, at the same time, they were sufferings undergone for the maintenance of the fact that Jesus was alive. Hence it follows, that God afforded assistance towards the advocacy of the doctrine of the life of the Mediator. What then? The doctrine must be the true doctrine, because it has God for its supporter. Jesus must have risen, Jesus must be alive; otherwise, the Omnipotent could never have put forth his omnipotence, to secure those who proclaimed that he was risen, that he was alive.

Thus you have our text developing its meaning with singular precision. The Apostles bore in their bodies Christ's dying. In consequence of their earnestness in affirming Christ was alive, the Almighty comforted them in bearing this; and the comfort thus divinely afforded was the testimony of the Almighty to the life of the Mediator. And it was enough to look on these

holy men, and to see them serene when the storm was at the fiercest, and confident when the spring of human hope was at the lowest; it was enough to behold them buoyed up in trouble, when you knew that mortal energy unaided must have gone down in the whirlpool; and you would have felt—you could not have done otherwise than feel—that the Father was marvellously showing in their experience the life of the Son; so that, whilst they bore about in their bodies the dying of Jesus, the life also of Jesus was manifested in those bodies.

We add, yet further, that whilst Christ sojourned on earth, he had told his disciples that trouble and persecution would be their lot when he himself was withdrawn from their company; but, at the same time, he had also assured them that he would be alive to act as their protector, and that, being with the Father in glory, he would send down the Comforter to guide and uphold them. “Ye shall be hated of all men, for my name’s sake,” was one prophecy; “Because I live ye shall live also,” was another prophecy. We then shew you our text in both its clauses, delivered by the Redeemer himself years before St. Paul wrote. When, therefore, all occurred exactly as Christ had predicted—when the supports were administered which he had pointed out as the result of his life, what can be fairer than maintaining that the supports were a proof of the life? If a prophet prophesied that a certain cause shall exist, and a certain effect be produced, why then, when we see the production of the effect, we can scarcely refuse assent to the existence of the cause. Such is, in every respect, the case before us. Christ prophesies that consolations shall be given, and that his own life shall be the well-spring of those consolations. When, therefore, the consolations come, we are bound to feel certified of the life; and thus looking upon the Apostles afflicted just as Christ had predicted, and comforted just as Christ had promised—the affliction resulting from faithfulness to his cause, the comfort from his living to intercede—we can only describe them as manifesting in their bodies the life of the Lord, just as they bore about in those bodies the dying of the Lord.

Now it is plain that the line of argument with which we have engaged your attention might be run out almost indefinitely. We suppose, however, that, without the addition of further illustration, the meaning of our text, as first determined by St. Paul, will be considered as being amply exhibited and thoroughly vindicated. But we would not have you think that the manifestation of the life of the Redeemer was confined to the bodies of those who, in the young days of Christianity, fought with error and idolatry: we would rather maintain, that the bearing about in the body Christ’s dying is a thing of every generation, and that so also is the manifesting in the body Christ’s living. We may be, indeed, and we are, in the abundance of God’s mercy, exempted from those fiery trials through which confessors and martyrs carved their way to their thrones. We bear not about Christ’s death in the scathed and shattered appearance of our earthly tabernacle, in the wounds and brands with which an infidel world hath marked our bodies: nevertheless, as Christ died *for* sin, so are we required to die *to* sin; and whensoever the flesh is crucified, with its affections and lusts, and the body offered up a living sacrifice on the altar of a holy obedience, then most emphatically is it true that Christ’s death is borne about in our bodies. The Apostle asserts that “our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed:” an expression which decisively implies, that the dying with Christ is not limited to seasons when the fires are blazing, and the swords are glittering, and all the apparatus of bloody hostility



is hemming around the followers of the Lamb; but that it has an existence, as actual and as intense, in days when there may be such an outspread of toleration or indifference, that no man concerns himself with the creed of his fellow. And if the dying of the Lord Jesus be thus at all times exhibited in the bodies of believers, is not his life full as vividly manifested? St. Paul associates the two in words, which every Christian finds applicable to himself; "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Is it requisite that we prove to you, with greater precision, that the life of Jesus is now manifested in the bodies of his followers? We will approach then: the theatre stands open before us, and the mysterious and mighty drama is fixing the regards of the angelic creation. We will take any one of those who in deed, and not only in word, are walking by faith, and not by sight: we care not if he be selected out of the lowest ranks of society; let him be truly a man of faith, and his meanness and insignificance will only heighten the beauty and the brilliancy of the manifestation. He will tell you that his whole conduct is ordered on the supposition that he has a Saviour ever living to intercede in his behalf. He will tell you further, that never in one lonely particular, has he found the supposition falsified by experience. He goes to Christ sorrowful, *believing* that he lives; he comes away comforted, and thus *proves* that he lives. He carries his burdens to Christ, *supposing* him alive; he finds them taken away, and thus *demonstrates* him alive. All, in short, that is promised as the result of Christ's life, comes into his possession, and is, therefore, an evidence of Christ's life. If I am a believer, I look to Christ as living for me; I go to Christ as living for me; I pray to Christ as living for me: and, if I am never disappointed in my reference to Christ as living for me—if, when I look to him as living for me, a bright glance of life flashes into the soul—if, when I go to him as living for me, the warm breath of life is round about the spirit—if, when I pray to him as living for me, the rich speech of life comes floating back in answer—have I no proof that Jesus lives? Is there no strong, and deep, and eloquent testimony in my own experience, that Jesus lives? What, though there be the bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord, in the mortification of the flesh, in the resisting the affections, in the crucifying the lusts—all this is only preparatory to the manifesting in the body of the life of the Lord. The Christian cannot conquer in his own strength—he leans upon Christ's strength—it fails him not: and thus it is manifested that Christ is alive. He needs cordials in the combat—he turns to Christ as the good Samaritan; he receives the oil, the balm, and the wine: and thus is it manifested that Christ is alive. He is met by principalities and powers; they press upon him, they almost trample him under foot; he appeals to Christ as being an intercessor; assistance is sent down: and thus is it manifested that Christ is alive. In short, if the Christian live only by faith in the living Saviour, his life must be the manifestation of the life of the Saviour. If Christ be not risen, if Christ be not alive, how comes it that they, who act upon the supposition that he is risen and that he is alive, find the supposition perpetually verified, and in no instance falsified—verified by the assistance vouchsafed, verified by the promises fulfilled, verified by the consolations enjoyed in these mortal bodies, which are the theatres of truceless warfare with a corrupt nature and apostate spirits? The Christian must keep under his body, and he must mortify his body, and he must crucify his body; and thus he bears about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. But, then, all that

Christ declares he would ever be alive to communicate in comfort, in succour, in victory—all this is received in his body; and what he thus receives must, therefore, prove Christ alive. What then? Let him take to himself the language of St. Paul—it applies to him in every syllable and in every letter—that he bears about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body.

It is but little which a subject, throughout so practical, can require in the way of exhortation. If we bear not about in the body Christ's dying for us, we must, assuredly, bear about the crucifying him afresh, and the putting him to an open shame: and what we wish for you is, that you might manifest the life of the Redeemer—manifest it in the vigour with which you resist the devil, in the boldness with which you break loose from the world, in the earnestness with which you set yourself to the culture of holiness. We tell those amongst you whose bodies have been long given up to the workings of sin and death, to the manifestation of the power of natural corruption—we tell them, that He who is verily the resurrection and the life, stands ready to turn their bodies into temples, lit up with the shinings of his own glorious and indestructible being. We tell you all, that so amiable is Jesus' love, so unlimited the sweep of the benefits of Christ's passion, that there is not one of you into whom the Mediator is not waiting to enter, ready to carry on afresh the moral conflict which he waged upon earth—to prove himself alive by throwing such strength into the withered arm of mortality, that it shall scatter the hosts who would keep back souls from the inheritance of the saints. Oh, when we come to die, and the angels are around us, marking the throes and struggles of a nature paying out the curse of dissolution, what a privilege to have Christ manifesting his life in our mortal flesh!—what a fearful, dark, desolate thing to have nothing manifested but death in all its naked, native ghastliness! We shall feel our need of Christ then, however bravely we may carry it while the pulse beats well, and the spirits are not dislocated.

May we all thus strive by prayer, now—*now*, ere the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, that we may be made conformable to Christ in his death: and then, when we touch the margin line of eternity, the soul shall spring upward elastic with life; and He, who has lived to sustain it in its pilgrimage, shall prove that he also lives to gladden it in its immortality.

## THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

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REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M.

JOHN STREET CHAPEL, KING'S ROAD, JANUARY 3, 1832.

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“His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.”—SOLOMON'S SONG, v. 14.

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“His *bowels* are as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.” That this is the manifest reading of the passage, will be clear by a reference to one or two passages of God's sacred Word. In the fourth verse of this chapter you observe, “My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my *bowels* were moved for him.” Again in Jeremiah, xxxi. 20, “Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my *bowels* are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him saith the Lord.” And again, in Isaiah, lxiii. 15, “Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the soundings of thy *bowels*, and of thy mercies towards me? Are they restrained?” The expression, then, sets forth the *tenderness* of the *compassion* of the Redeemer, his boundless, his inconceivable mercy; which is compared to “ivory overlaid with sapphires.”

Before I proceed to consider the passage, there are two or three remarks that I would desire to make.

*May we ever esteem it to be our mercy to take our sentiments from the word, and not take our systems to the word;* for if our minds are under this bias, we may, with the Bible in our hands, go further, and further, and further, away from God. That was no unnecessary exhortation, “Receive with meekness the engrafted word,” and “As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” For want of this, we might imagine a person, having some preconceived opinion of God's benignity, or confining his mind to one or two passages, and not reading the word as a whole, but forming his own imagination of the divine benignity, conceiving of God as having actually designed to save every man in the whole world; and, consequently, when he comes to those passages that speak of God's electing love, all his concern is to explain them away. When he comes to such a passage as this, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” his preconceived opinion induces him to put a lever under that passage, and endeavour to undermine it altogether. Thus it is the Socinian, forming an idea of the impossibility of there being three that are God, and holding the unity of the Godhead, he reasons from that supposed impossibility, and says, it cannot be so; having the system formed in the pride of his own heart, and then, forcing the Bible to speak according to his own system. In the same way one might form (do not be offended at the term) a sort of novelist, romantic idea, about the sympathies of Christ; and because we

form certain notions how this sympathy must act, and because we cannot see how certain effects can follow without certain causes, which we think alone adequate to produce those effects—then we imagine that our Lord, fully to sympathize with us, must have had our own sinful nature. I believe, that though it does not amount to an avowed neologian system, it is, after all, the rational system of the day, that worships talent, and idolizes reason; and unless you come and lay prostrate some of your hopes, if you are God's people, God will surely chasten you for these things, as the Lord liveth. Oh, for the spirit and temper of a little child! I can never forget the observation that a dear friend of mine once made, "A greater self-command than ever Alexander had, has that man over his spirit, who takes up his Bible and reads it as a little child."

I would now, *first of all*, direct your minds to some few plain observations with regard to *our Lord's sympathy, and the tenderness of his compassion*, and then, *secondly*, consider the application of it to the words of the text.

Now, *first of all*, with regard to OUR LORD'S SYMPATHY. No doubt, it is more especially in the consideration of our Lord's humanity, that all right views of his sympathy can be formed. An angel would not suit us; what losers should we have been if angels had had to preach to us, if archangels had had the Gospel message to proclaim. We want a *man*—he must be a *man*; if he were not a man, we could not look upon him as a brother looks upon a brother. I dare say, that many of you have often found this upon your hearts, causing you to thank God, that in the midst of all you can discern of human infirmity in him that preached—you can thank God that he sent his Son to preach to him the Gospel. We want a man, too, in the *weakness* of his humanity—one who can feel weariness, and hunger, and thirst, and cold—and one who can feel these things to be a trial. He must be one, too, that could be *tempted by Satan*. We know what use Satan made of his power, and though he tempted him not to the commission of sin, yet he was always labouring to produce it. When our Lord made that exceeding bitter cry, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," he especially refers to its being "the hour and the power of darkness."

But, my dear hearers, although it is most manifest to my mind, that we want a man in his weakness; yet we must have a *pure man*—or how can he do us any good? I fully acknowledge, that those who hold what appears to me to be one of the most blasphemous opinions that ever came from the lips of man, (there is no necessity for making a longer preface; this is what I think; this is what God makes me to assert, as being the full conviction of my soul)—yet I acknowledge, that I am far from charging those who speak these things—thoughtlessly speak, I would hope, and things to be corrected by after judgment and by after prayer—I am far from charging them, that they hold that in any respect our Lord was a sinner. That they believe he did not commit the act of sin, that it did not come out into action, that this sinful nature in him, was controlled and kept under, so that it did not come out into exercise—all that I acknowledge, and need not make the acknowledgment again. But if our Lord had a sinful nature in the eyes of God's holy law—that law that takes cognizance not only of acts, but of thoughts—that law that takes knowledge not only of what I do, but of what I think—that tells me the thought of sinfulness is sin—then I would say, that to hold it, is to hold a most awful delusion.

would ask, if there are here any of God's dear children who are tainted with

this plague. I would speak to them in all affection, and ask, Does it not strike you, in the very first face and look of the thing, that you are without any direct proof whatever? You have your lame inferences; but, to my mind, the Socinian has a much more spacious inference to prove our Lord's inferiority to the Father. He can come to direct texts, and say, "My Father is greater than I"—"The Son can do nothing of himself;" he can bring forward these two or three isolated passages, and has something to countenance him in his most awful, Christ-denying error. But you have no direct proof whatever; you have not even the shadow of a proof; it is all lame, halting inference. And when you take us to such a passage as this, that because "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," and "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same"—and when you tell us he was made "of the seed of David according to the flesh"—and then endeavour to sustain your position, as logicians say, you beg the question; you do not prove it, you assert it; you cannot bring forward these as the slightest proof of it; for was not Adam our father before he fell? Must it needs be that he should fall in order to become one with us?

Now while there is no testimony of Scripture in favour of this opinion, how much positive Scripture there is against it; how much direct testimony of God's word there is against it. When, for instance, in the fourth of the Hebrews, our Lord's sympathy is expressly alluded to: "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin*;" it was not said he was in all points *liable* to sin, but he was in all points *tempted* to sin. Satan tried hard to tempt him to the committal of sin; but, if we want to know the full meaning of this passage, our Lord tells us—"When Satan cometh, he hath nothing in me." It is not said, "he gains no advantage over me;" here is not a word said about the polluted nature kept down; but our Lord positively says, "*he hath nothing in me.*" As a child might say, it is like a lever without any ground to rest upon; it is like a screw with only the air to lay hold of; "he has nothing in me to lay hold of."

Then you ask, "But how then was our Lord tempted as we are?" *Was not the holy soul of Adam tempted?* Was it not the holy soul of Adam that was tempted? Is it needful that man should be a sinner in order that he may be tempted? We have clear testimony of God's word upon this point. "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"—"that holy thing," the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost producing that miracle of miracles, a pure thing out of an unclean, a holy thing out of an unholy; not a new substance, not a new nature, but the nature that first sinned, only sanctified and preserved from all pollution even from its conception.

Observe *the unreasonableness* of it. Persons say, If the Lord Jesus had not the same nature as I have, how could he sympathize with me? If you knew ought of the plague of your own soul, you know that the great hindrance of Christ's sympathy is your sin. Look back and see during the past year, whether you have not to acknowledge amongst the sin of sins, the selfishness of your souls? And what was the cause of this selfishness? It was the sin of your nature. But, dear friends, the argument comes exceedingly short of these two points, because it does not go far enough. They suppose—perhaps some of you that hear me—that in order that our Lord should fully sympathize with us, he should be in all points like as we are. Why, what conception can we form of

one who is as truly God as the Father, and as truly man as you and I are. Does that not seem to lift him up to an inconceivable height above all our conceptions of him? And even as regards the humanity—how is he in all points to sympathize (according to your ideas of sympathy) unless he knows what it is to fall under sin, unless he knows what it is to be assaulted, and thrown down, and wounded, and then restored and brought back, as we are restored and brought back, and placed on our feet, and mourn over our sins and follies? Do you want such a nature? Then, as you give up the Godhead in the first place, so you give up the humanity in the second; and you leave us without a Christ at all. While the doctrine seems so opposed to the current of Scripture, it seems to lay the axe at all Gospel truth. It was not the exemption from sinful acts that laid the foundation of the efficacy of the ancient sacrifices; it was the sinlessness of the nature. It had not a reference to the thing done, but to the spotless nature of the animal. It was to be a perfect animal, it was to be without blemish in any shape whatever; and if there had been aught of a blemish, the sacrifice had never been accepted. See, then, to what awful lengths this would carry us. They leave us without the atonement of Christ, they leave us without the righteousness of Christ; they leave us with a dignified humanity; for in order to be consistent they must deny the very Deity of Immanuel.

My dear friends, *may God keep you from itching ears and vain curiosity.* I believe Satan has been glad to see some merely going that they might hear; and the spirit of delusion was given, and now they are as certain that the lie is a truth, as they were once certain that the lie was a lie, and the truth was a truth. It is a dangerous thing to trifle with God's word. The man who enters a place of worship from mere curiosity, has need to go to school to learn to redeem the time. If you can find in your vocabulary a list of things unimportant, I cannot find them in God's word. When you enter a place of worship, you have need to pray to be kept from the corruptions of the preacher, and from the corruptions of your own soul.

Truly our Lord's sympathies are *tender* sympathies. They are hid from the eyes of the world; they are within; but they are most tender. All the figures that *could* be adopted, *have* been adopted, to signify the tenderness of the Saviour's compassion.

Observe, *secondly*, that THE COMPASSIONS OF OUR LORD ARE HERE COMPARED TO IVORY OVERLAID WITH SAPPHIRES. There are three or four points of view in which I would regard the subject, praying that God would come and fill our souls with substance, with reality.

In the first place, *it is a compassion such as we have not met with before.* "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips are lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." It is compared to *ivory, lasting and durable.* Dear friends, we have come to the end of another year. What changes the world has experienced during that year; what changes have there been in the Church, what changes in God's saints; what changes in our circumstances; what changes in our own selves; and yet, here is one sweet and blessed truth, that amidst all the changes we have experienced from within and from without, *the love of Christ has not changed.* Do you ask me, is there any use in this truth? Most undoubtedly there is. Do men abuse it? I think I never pass a week without hearing some manifest abuse of that truth; and this, so far from being any argument against the truth, only assures us, that the better a truth is, the more

Satan tries to abuse it; the more excellent any thing is, the more he tempts to the abuse of it. The unchangeable love of God towards his people, is the very sheet anchor of their souls' confidence. To imagine that because I change he changes, that he ebbs and flows according to my ebb and flow, is one of the most mournful creeds that can distress the conscience, harass the soul, and bring it into utter bondage. And yet to suppose, that God looks on me at all times with equal compassion—whether I am walking in his ways, pursuing after his laws, whether I am looking for dependence to his blessed Spirit, or whether I am careless, and go away after vanity: to suppose that at all times, God *manifests* the same love for me, is, I think a perversion of God's sacred word. There are various exhibitions of that love, just as the moon waneth, and waxeth, and fadeth; but the love itself is like the sun, immutable and eternal. It is a sweet remembrance, in looking back on the past year, to retrace the unchangeable love of God towards us. Who is it that has kept us? Who is it that has provided for us? Who is it that has restored us? Who is it, when the hands have hung down, and the knees have been feeble—who is it, when all real diligence has seemed to make to itself wings and fly away—who is it that has brought up the poor soul, and led it again in the paths of righteousness? Who is it that has oiled the wheels, and made them run swiftly in the ways of God's commands? Oh, my dear friends, I know of nothing so humiliating as the remembrance of God's mercy. The doctrines of grace are abused, but grace itself is never abused. Never was a sermon preached where the doctrines of grace were brought forward, but they were abused by some who heard them; but “the grace of God that bringeth salvation,” teacheth a man “to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world.” My brother, in looking back on the years that are past, is there any thing that so melts thy heart, so wins thee to the Saviour, as the remembrance of his unchangeable mercy towards thee? Friends have changed, but God has not changed. Thy poor heart has often been out of tune; but he has come and wound it up again, and put sweet melody into thy heart, and led thee to praise and bless the God of thy salvation.

Remark, secondly, *the character of this ivory is, that it is bright.* There is a purity in the love of Christ. Christ loves his people, but he loves not their sins; he loves their persons, but he loves not their follies; he has his rod for them. We are sometimes expecting heavy judgments in the way of affliction—sometimes expecting deep trials from the loss of friends, the loss of property, the loss of health, the loss of children; we forget the loss occasioned by having an itching ear; a vain, idle curiosity, that can take up the Bible, and speculate, and speculate, and draw out a hair-drawn system, and mistake it for truth. My dear friends, I would that you would desire nearer and closer walking with God; and then, I think, you will be conscious there is a heavy chastening in this. You take up your Bible, but you find not God in it; you pray to him, but your souls enjoy it not; you hear his word preached, but you profit not by it; you converse with God's saints, but you cannot find their communion to be sweet; walking in darkness, and seeing no light, and yet kept to trust in the name of the Lord. Oh, what a miracle of grace is it; what a wonder-working power of the Eternal Spirit of truth: *the ivory is bright*

The Lord Jesus loves not the carelessness of his saints. I do, from my soul, believe that earthly-mindedness is swallowing up the heart's blood of numbers; I will not say that it will touch their life; but I will say, they are thrusting the great business of life into a corner; they neglect God to the close of the day;

and then, when their hearts are jaded, and their spirits worn out, they give themselves to God, instead of giving themselves to him first. He has his furnace for his gold; he has his Nathans to go and say, "Thou art the man." Perhaps thou art brought here to-night for me to be a Nathan to thee; and I may come to thy conscience, whether thou wilt or not—I may come up to the secret caverns of thy heart; and God may speak to thee, and force thee to confess, "I am that heartless walker; I am walking at this great distance from God; and this is my state, and has been my state for weeks and months that are gone." May God give thee grace to see, that the love of Christ to his people, is a pure and holy love. He loves his people, but he loves not their sins; he loves not their half-heartedness, he loves not their loitering behind, he loves not their weak faith, nor their being satisfied with little things; but he loves to see them mount up, as on the wings of eagles. Oh, how we should pray, "Lord, we believe—help thou our unbelief."

Remark, thirdly, *the character of this love is a costly love.* The love of Christ cost him much; it cost him a life of suffering, and a death of agony; it cost him his couch watered with his own tears; it cost him bitterness, and anguish, and grief unutterable. There is not a blessing that comes to us, though it comes without money and without price, but it cost the Son of God a groan. Sweet and holy thought! Deep and humiliating thought! What! Does it come to me without money? Does it come to me without price? And yet did it cost Thee thy heart's blood, and cause Thee to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Happy will that soul be, that finds every mercy that comes to him perfumed with the blood of Immanuel, that takes the bread that he eats, and the water that he drinks, and the raiment that he puts on; all the sweet solace of friends, all the communion of the saints, all the reading of the word, all delight in God, and all his prospects for a coming eternity; and finds them all fragrant with the precious blood of a crucified Immanuel. The promises are sweet indeed, but they are sweeter because they come through Christ; they are doubly sweet, because they have all the incense of his merit, and all the fragraney of his heart in them.

There is a point I would not omit, and that is, *this ivory is overlaid with sapphires.* The love of Christ is oftentimes to us a mystery. We do not forget Newton's hymn; I suppose many of us are learning it out in the school of Christ. We expected once to walk happily with God in the way of simple faith, we thought at one time that we should put our foot upon the neck of our enemies, and find it an easy thing to walk in the strait and narrow path. We went to the Lord with fervency of desire, with great expectation, and we asked him to subdue sin in us. Did that fail? Never; God's ears are ever open to hear, and every prayer is filed in heaven's chancery, and never, never can be registered in vain. But *how* has the Lord answered it? Why, just by contraries; in the way we had not expected it, in the way we least desired it, in the way most mortifying to our pride. I suppose many of the saints of God may truly say, "If there be a way of getting my bread which I dislike the most, God gives it to me: if there were any cross which I would wish to be spared from, God gives me that cross." Thou thoughtest, it may be, that God would make thee most useful, that he would make use of thy tongue, and thy head, and thy prudence, and thy courage; and the Lord puts thee to the rear rank, and seems to make nothing of thee—perhaps takes some one that thou didst think a half-wicked man, and makes him a greater blessing than thou art; so that thou standest



amazed sometimes at thy own littleness, wondering at his greatness. God brings thy greatness to the dust; and why? That he may lift thee out of the dust, make Christ thy greatness, and endear himself to thee in all the vastness of his unutterable love. Oh, my brethren, these sapphires are all in their order, there is not one of them out of place. We often think that God is mistaken; but they are all set and arranged, even as the precious stones in Aaron's breast-plate; and one might say, that as all the saints of God are there borne on his heart, and all are precious, though not all equally shining and glittering; so does the compassion of Jesus bear thee up, poor, weak, heartless creature as thou art in all thy helplessness and nothingness, ready to say, Well, I am less than the least; but sometimes I say, Am I any thing at all? And yet all thy care is on his heart, all his compassion is toward thee, from the beginning of the year to the end of it; not one stone is out of place, but all are arranged by infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness, and infinite faithfulness.

There are two or three observations with which I shall conclude.

In the first place, *there is nothing like living on the compassions of Christ, on his tender love.* There is something so engaging to know that in all my afflictions he is afflicted; that in all my temptations he has been tempted; that Satan has never injected one temptation into my soul which he has not thrown on him; and though there was nothing in him that encouraged Satan, yet Satan tried to cast him down from the top of the temple; he tried to lift him up in self-consequence; he tried to make him work a miracle for himself; shewing that there is not a temptation into which we are thrown, but our Lord has been in it before us. Have you aching bones? Think of the suffering humanity of the Lord. Is the world unkind? Think of the suffering humanity of the Lord. Did he not feel it? You may ask, "If he was so divested of all sins, how could he enter into my sins?" How could the pure soul of Adam be tempted? If you will answer me that question, I will answer you the other. May the Lord make us sit down at the feet of Jesus as new-born babes. Blessed posture, blessed name!—to be a babe, taking the word as milk, and being fed by it. I believe the day will come when the philosopher must become a babe, otherwise he will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The great end of all is, to live in the enjoyment of the compassions of Christ. What are the two directing truths? Living by faith—living in obedience. First, *living by faith*: taking God simply at his word. First of all, receiving Christ as the Saviour of the sinner. Some of you are lagging and lingering outside the ark in forgetfulness of it. You want Christ to be the Saviour of the excellent, and the good, and the pious, and the fruit-bearing, instead of taking Christ as the Saviour of the poor sinner. But if God bring that gleam into your heart, you shall find it shall enlighten the room in which you live, and shed a glory on all the objects around you. The first truth is, receiving Christ as the Saviour of a poor sinner; and what is the next lesson? Living by faith on his fulness. I find myself weak, and incapable of thinking a good thought, or speaking a good word, or performing a good deed. Christ has all fulness for the poor, the needy, the empty. When I am weak, then he is strong. Happy are they who are contentedly learning this lesson, to live out of themselves on the inexhaustible fulness of Immanuel. This is the way to enjoy much of the compassions of his heart, to be living by faith on the Son of God.

The second truth is, *living in obedience.* "If any man love me, he will keep

my words." God give you and me grace to understand that truth. Talk about revivals! if ever the pulpits of London have revivals, if ever the congregations of London have revivals, you will find this truth laid on the hearts and consciences of men, that in order to live holily, they must live by faith, receive Christ as a great Saviour, live on him in all his fulness, and live to him in the way of obedience. For though there is not necessarily a connexion between the obedience and the blessing, any more than there is between the furrow and the good seed, though there is no direct connexion, yet because God has declared that it is so, the mind in that posture is disposed to receive the blessing. There are shoots in some plants (as we see in the laurel) which seem to spring up in two or three weeks, there is such a vitality in them. So, when a soul is brought down, and kept down, brought to a simple reliance in the Saviour, up shoots the laurel, the soul makes a spring upwards toward God. Sometimes, in a few days, there is such an advance in the ways of God, as has not been made in years before. God lay these things on your hearts. Many are crying out, "My leanness, my leanness;" of whom, if we knew them more, we should say, Ye are Achan, ye are Achan. They would not like us for it, because there is a state of soul in which the wounds are so fretful you cannot touch them: and if I come and touch some of your views, and you do not like it, be assured it proves the necessity of touching them.

*Do not let us be surprised if much of the love of Christ should be nearly hid from you by circumstances.* You receive a letter—the letter is full of disappointment; you had expected just the opposite. You had formed your schemes nicely; you had marked out the track in which you thought to walk; you thought yourself wise enough to read it; but God puts you in a directly opposite course. Some of you have to learn this lesson—"The greatest trial of my life has been the greatest mercy of it; I was brought low, and he fed me." Some of you that are walking in the bitter paths of affliction, who are under heavy trials, and in such deep emergencies that you cannot describe them; it may be that when you are in heaven you shall say, "Of all things in my life, next to the gift of Jesus Christ, next to the gift of the Holy Spirit, there was this gift of my long and trying troubles." May it be a message to us from God to be looking upward and forward to the blessed inheritance of the glory that shall never fade! God grant it, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## THE PROSPERITY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

REV. W. JAY.

SURREY CHAPEL, JUNE 11, 1826.

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“The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”—**PSALM, xcii. 12—15.**

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THE title of this Psalm is, “A Psalm or song for the Sabbath-day.” Many foolish writers believe that it was written by Adam himself. If this were true, it would be an immense curiosity indeed: for of all he did, nothing else has come down to us but the sad consequences of his eating the forbidden fruit. “In Adam all died.” “By one man sin entered into the world.” This supposition is groundless: it is contradicted by the internal evidence of the song itself; for there were then no musical instruments; then, there were no adversaries—there were no wicked men to rise up against him. “But the leaders of this people have always caused them to err; they destroyed the way of their fathers.” The Jews are a lamentable proof that infidelity does not arise from want of evidence: they could always believe any thing, unless that He who opened the eyes of the blind, and who raised the dead, and who was raised again the third day, was the Son of God. We have every reason to conclude that it was composed by David, who was more distinguished by an attachment to the sanctuary of God, than by anything else. He could say, “I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth.” “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

It consists of praise; the materials of which are sketched from the works of Jehovah, and especially his dealings with the wicked, and above all, with the righteous. The case is this: the Lord loves his people infinitely; “he takes pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.” And it is of this that David here speaks.

Let us interrogate this text, and obtain from it, if possible, answers to these six questions: first, Who shall flourish? The righteous. “He shall flourish like the palm-tree.” Secondly, How shall they flourish? “He shall flourish like the palm-tree: they shall grow like cedars in Lebanon.” Thirdly, Where shall they flourish? “In the house of our Lord, in the courts of our God.” Fourthly, When shall they flourish? “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” Fifthly, Why shall they flourish? “To shew that the Lord is upright,” &c. Sixthly, Who can come forward and bear his testimony to this? “I,” says the Psalmist; “he is my rock.”

WHO SHALL FLOURISH? The righteous. "There is none righteous, no, not one." Such was the testimony of God himself, when he looked down from heaven on the children of men. Not when he looked down before the flood, when it is said, "the wickedness of man was great," and that "every imagination of their hearts was only evil continually;" but after so many means had been employed to reform the world. We may be imposed upon; we are often led to erroneous conclusions; but His judgment is always according to truth. You may entertain a hundred good opinions of your fellow creatures; but you cannot suppose that any one of them hath ever "continued in all things written in the law, to do them." You may have a flattering opinion of yourself, and especially compared with some who are grossly vile; but surely you cannot imagine that you are naturally innocent before God. But if you are transgressors, you are under the law and under the curse. Does not universal observation and experience accord with this testimony of God, that "there is none righteous, no, not one?" Yet the Scripture is perpetually speaking of the righteous: and if there were no such characters to be found, nothing could be said concerning them.

The case is this: there are none righteous by nature, but there are some who are righteous by grace. There are none who are righteous by a righteousness of their own—that is, a righteousness derived from themselves; but there are those who are righteous by a righteousness derived from God. Of this the Apostle speaks; "That I may be found in him, not having mine own," &c. He tells us, that "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law of righteousness; and wherefore?" says he, "Because they sought it not by faith; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion," &c. And yet they were distinguished by innumerable privileges, and were very zealous; but their zeal was in a wrong cause, and therefore carried them astray: "for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about," &c.

There is a two-fold righteousness, however, spoken of in the Scriptures: the righteousness of justification, and the righteousness of sanctification. These are very distinguishable from each other; and unless it is clearly discriminated, a confusion will pervade the whole of the religious system. The one is the change of our state; the other of our nature. The one is a relative change; the other personal. The one entitles us to glory; the other is a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. The one is an instantaneous operation, and applies at once; the other is gradual and progressive. Yet they are always inseparable, though distinguishable. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed, behold all things are become new."

With regard to this righteousness of sanctification, you will observe, that this at present is not complete. So far from it, "there is not a man that liveth and sinneth not." We are taught, by our Saviour himself, to pray for our daily pardon, as well as for our daily bread. This righteousness is so prevailing in the subject of it as to discriminate even to character: and when a Christian falls, he is acting out of character. In due time it will be complete; complete as the righteousness of justification. Now, as he has a new righteousness, he has new and right views, new and right feelings, new and right hopes. But all these righteousnesses have a mixture, but soon they will be without mixture before the throne for ever. Oh, Christian, it is a thing worth dying for—is it not? To drop this body of sin and death; to feel no more "a law in the members warring against the law of the mind;" no more to say, "When

I would do good, evil is present with me"—to shake yourselves from your moral death to put on your beautiful garment of holiness to meet the Lord in the air, and be "presented faultless before the throne with exceeding joy."

HOW SHALL THEY FLOURISH? "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The image is sometimes taken from human life: we read in the family of God of little children, young men, and fathers: we read of our coming to "the measure of the stature of perfect men in Christ." Sometimes the image is taken from animal life: it is said that those "upon whom the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, shall go forth like calves of the stall." Sometimes the image is taken from vegetable life, and very frequently indeed: "They shall grow as a vine;" "they shall revive as the corn;" "they shall spring up as willows by the water-courses;" "they shall flourish like the palm-tree, they shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." It is unnecessary to inquire why the palm-tree and the cedar are selected; it is sufficient to know that these trees are beautiful in their growth and form, and very fruitful; and both of them are evergreens: the cedar gives strong and sweet timber; and, in addition to this, the palm-tree yields an abundance of fruit—dates—sometimes a hundred weight is found upon one tree.

But just notice the contrast mentioned in the former verse of this Psalm; "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." "They flourish as the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the fire." But the righteous flourish as the cedars and palm-trees. We have the same contrast in another Psalm, and in reference to another image. "The man," says David, "whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in whose law he doth meditate day and night, is like a tree planted by the rivers of water," &c. "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand," &c.

But the grand thing to be derived from this part of the subject is assuredly this—that there is a real and active progressiveness in religion; that though Christian principles and passions at present are all imperfect, yet they are growing, and shall advance to maturity. This progressiveness is to be considered as a Christian's duty, his desire, and his privilege. His duty; and therefore it is so often enjoined upon him. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge," &c. "Giving all diligence add to your faith," &c. His desire; therefore he "forgets the things that are behind, and looks forward to the things that are before; therefore his prayer is, "take back that which thou hast wrought for us." "Perfect that which concerneth me" "Thy mercy endureth for ever." "Forsake not the work of thy own hands," &c. His privilege, and therefore it is provided for him; "therefore it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" and from this fulness he is to receive "grace for grace." Therefore it is said, "the righteous shall hold on his way;" "the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree."

WHERE SHALL THEY FLOURISH? "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." There is a fine allusion

It intimates that the house of God is like a garden, or like a well of water, rendering to the life and fertility of the tree. Can you say in words which you have often taught your little children,

“ Lord how delightful 'tis to see  
A whole as embly worship thee.”

There it is that you have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. There his ordinances are dispensed—the ordinances of life. There the word of everlasting truth is proclaimed. There God hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. There he resides: “ This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell.” “ I will clothe my priests with righteousness, and make my saints shout for joy.” Yes, “ they shall be satisfied with the fulness of his house.”

In order to enjoy these advantages, you must be planted there, as a tree must be, in order to be fruitful: that is, you must be fixed there. How is this? Is a Christian to live there continually? No; this is not to be his dwelling-place literally. We sometimes exercise spiritual self-denial. There are some who run after their favourite preachers, who ought to be at home attending to their families. There are some in the house of God who ought to be in their own house at the very time. Christian wisdom is necessary here to distinguish things that differ. God has enjoined various duties on you, and as Bishop Hopkins says, “ He will never accept a duty that comes before him stained with the murder of another duty.” Every thing is beautiful in its place, and in its time. Yet we frequently read of Christians dwelling in the house of God. Here we have the same idea. Their being planted must mean something; and there it is that they are fixed—there they dwell in two ways. One by choice—for, “ where the treasure is, there will the heart be also;” and where the heart is, there you are, wherever the body may be. The other is by the frequency of your attendance, availing yourselves of every opportunity the providence of God allows you to be found there. How often, is not for us to determine; it is not determined in Scripture. God honours his people by leaving it to their disposition: for love is a generous principle—it always acts best when left free and God thus honours his people, by leaving it to their inclinations and experience.

I am sometimes struck with two things. I am sometimes astonished that some persons attend so frequently, and get nothing for themselves, nor have any desire to get anything. You never examine yourselves afterwards. What in the world can induce you to come here, year after year so regularly, when you know you have never been really seeking after God in any of the services. Some have been hearing here, twenty and thirty years, and there has not been a religious movement in you—you are no more settled than you were when I first came, now thirty-eight years ago. As you are determined to go to hell, what use is your observation of the Sabbath, of being so often reprov'd, passing so many weeks and months—yea, years, within these walls. “ Oh, but we may find him if we seek him.” But you know you have not been seeking him. Whatever in the world has influenced you? You know this is not your aim. I wonder on the other hand, that others do not attend more frequently, because they know the value of these things; and am often amazed, that such trifling excuses keep people from the sanctuary of God—especially on week-days. We need something in the week to keep our minds nearer to God. I have been

amazed that people will not rise earlier on those days, and so manage their concerns as to be able to come forth on week-day evenings to hear the Word of Life, especially if they can afford the expense of riding, or if they keep their carriage.

Now, this slack attendance of some, is the effect of a cause: it is the effect of a low degree of zeal, and will become still lower in a man, who can neglect the means of grace when opportunity offers: he must not expect to be in a prosperous condition. Sometimes people are fixed where they cannot attend by sickness and accident. Now God, in these cases, will not leave them comfortless. And there is this to encourage his people—when they cannot have access to the means of grace, they have access to three things—namely, that they have access to the word of grace; they have access to the throne of grace; and they have access to the Spirit of grace. But as for those who can attend, and refuse these opportunities, what have they a right to expect. What good they can do is one thing, what they may do is another. But what is the ground of your expectation? “They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” “Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you.” “The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

WHEN SHALL THEY FLOURISH? “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” Not that they all live to be old—this is not the meaning of it. Sometimes they have been removed in early life, in the midst of their days; which, by the way, is a very mysterious Providence—that men who are likely to be useful, should be soon cut off, while a Voltaire is suffered to live, poisoning men, to the age of ninety. But though they die young, they fill up their days. They die old; for life is not to be measured by days. There was a being, once, that lived in Judea, who died at thirty-three, and yet lived much longer than Methuselah; for every action, and word, and feeling, of that Being, said, “I must work the work of him that sent me while it is called to-day.” Under the former economy, long life was reckoned a peculiar honour and blessing: it was made a matter of promise, and was attached to the first commandment of the second table: “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Says David, “He that would desire life and live many days,” &c. “With long life,” says God, “will I satisfy him.” “Length of days is in wisdom’s right hand.” Religion has a tendency to prolong life by sustaining and promoting health. Lying late in bed is very injurious to health; and a Christian will say with David, “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning.” Idleness and sloth are very injurious to health; and religion abhors every thing like idleness. Intemperance in all its stages and degrees is injurious: and a religious man will put a knife to his throat if he be a man given to appetite. Anxious cares and fears corrode and injure the constitution; but faith teaches a man to be tranquil. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” All the malevolent passions are injurious to health, but religion is designed to establish the affections and passions, and teaches us to love God supremely, and our neighbours as ourselves. And you find in the scripture, that the hoary head is a crown of glory, when found in the way of righteousness. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, David, Samuel, John, Peter, and Simon, and Mnason (an old

disciple with whom the Apostles lodged)—all were spared to a fine old age, and were gathered-in like a shock of corn when it is ripe.

But when it is said, that they “shall still bring forth fruit in old age,” it is not to be taken as if they were not to bring forth fruit at any other time; but, first, to show the permanency of their fruits and dispositions; that though others fail they will endure. That which comes from God will infallibly lead to God. It is well to distinguish the Christian from all the works of nature :

“The plants of grace shall ever live;  
Nature decays, but grace must thrive;  
Time that doth all things else impair,  
Still makes them flourish strong and fair.”

Not that they escape all the effects of old age, far from it; but as the Apostle says, “When the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.” When the outward ear grows deaf, then the inward man hears the voice of God. When the eye grows dim, the mind is irradiated and enlightened. When the fleshly parts grow weak, we are “strengthened with might in the inner man.” When the corporeal frame shrinks and is withered, the spiritual part, to use the language before us, is “fat and flourishing.” We look for this in the old Christian. The young Christian seems to me like a tree in spring covered with blossoms. That is the loveliest period to see it. An old Christian is like a tree in autumn, bending with fruit. ‘Tis not more beautiful, but more valuable.

What fruit are we to expect in you, you old sinner? When you sin you are like a man stealing under the gallows. When a carriage is going down hill, we suppose it will be chained and clogged. When people are going down hill in the close of life, we expect to see a peculiar restraint upon these appetites and passions; we expect to find them dead to sin and the world; they know its deceit and emptiness. We expect to find them ready to go. Not that they will say, “Take my life from me, for it is better to die than to live:” but we expect they will be more loosened from the world. It is one of the consequences of old age in Christians, to look towards heaven. There he reckons upon his relations and friends. “There my best friends, my kindred dwell—there God my Saviour reigns.” He seems to have more connexion with that world than with this. We look for meekness in the aged. The young are giddy, fierce, fiery, and determined—the older are willing to give up every thing for the sake of peace, unless it is a good conscience and truth. There we look for maturity and judgment in divine things—that he should be able to distinguish things that differ, that his heart may be established in righteousness. He has not only had faith, but experience: the one is help to the other. The young soldier when he enters the field, we expect to see him hang down his head at the first fire; but the old soldier looks the foe in the face. The young mariner may be alarmed at a little squall, while the old sailor, who has been through many storms, has no fear. “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” The young have had few trials, and have seen little of the power and providence of God: but the old Christian can endure long; he can bear many hardships; he has seen the interpositions of Providence and of grace, so that he cannot despair. “Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.”

WHY ARE THEY TO FLOURISH? “To shew that the Lord is upright.” There seems something remarkable in this. Their fearing God, attending his



ordinances, and "bringing forth fruit even to old age," shews that they are upright; but how does it shew that God is upright? And yet David gives God the glory. "To shew," says he, "that the Lord is upright." Why? It does this in two ways. First, as it evidences his faithfulness to his engagements. All the ways of the Lord are mercy: not only mercy but truth; because they are in fulfilment of his promises. What is there pertaining to you, Christians, that has not been provided for in the covenant of grace? I am sure it is not your afflictions, whatever else it may be: I am sure the rod was in the covenant from everlasting. "If thy children transgress my law, and walk not in my statutes, I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes;" and David says, "I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." Faithfulness regards the accomplishment of the promise: God has engaged to afflict his people. Has he been with you in trouble? He told you so. Has he not sustained your strength; and have you not had shoes for your feet, to defend you from the thorns and the briers. He is upright: he is faithful. Then in the next place, because it shews their adhering to him with purpose of heart: and not turning back from him, shews that they found him what they took him to be. Had they been deceived in him they would have given him up. Under the law, the servant that had his ear bored gave proof that he loved his master; and he would not have loved him if he had not behaved well to him. The attachment and the adherence of the servants of God proclaim his faithfulness; and shews they have not been disappointed in their expectations of him. Just like the venerable Polycarp, who when asked to deny his Saviour or perish, said, "He has been a good master to me these eighty years, and can I now forsake him?" This shows the perseverance of the Christian; not what he is, but what God is. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "Not me, but the grace of God which is in me." "To shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

**WHO CAN BEAR HIS TESTIMONY TO THIS TRUTH?** "I," says David; "he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Every one can say this, and will say this, who has, like David, made God his rock for building upon—his rock of danger—his rock of refreshment, whose streams follow him all the wilderness through. Many still are able to bear their testimony, and to say, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Others have their rock—they make many things their rock: but as Moses said, "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges." Do they ever recommend their rock in trouble? However fond people may be of the world, they never speak well of the world: not one of them in death recommends the world to those that visit them. Not one of them speaks well of their own experience. But the wicked have been obliged to bear their testimony to our rock. Balaam exclaimed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." If this be the testimony of the wicked, what must be the testimony of friends! They can speak from experience; and this carries force with it. It is said that Socrates lectured so eloquently and beautifully on the honours and advantages of marriage, that all the poor bachelors were ready to rush out, determined to marry as soon as they could. And yet he could not speak from experience, for he was tied to a limb of the devil. But yet you see the force of eloquence. Then what must it be when spoken from experience? There is nothing like experience to enforce our

addresses to others. We should, when we speak from experience, speak clearly and with confidence. We can say, "that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." Such are likely to speak with earnestness. It will come from the heart. They are the persons who know what a miserable condition it is to be absent from God, and they who have made a trial of reconciliation with God, are the men to speak his faithfulness; yes, they who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to say to others, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is gracious." Therefore do this; think well of his name—speak well of his name—recommend him to all around. Only take care of this one thing—while you recommend religion see that you are examples of it yourselves. Some professors often speak in favour of it; they would do much more good if they were silent, they do more harm than good, when the mouth says one thing and the temper and conduct another. When you strongly recommend a medicine to others, and yet they see disease staring you in the face, they say, you don't believe one word you are saying to us in recommendation of this medicine—you have no confidence in it yourself—try it upon yourself, and then from its influence recommend it to us.

See that your conduct is such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Then you cannot say too much. Then you may hold forth the word of life. Then the word speaks in your souls. How good it is! Avail yourselves of every opportunity to recommend the Saviour you have received; and say, as Moses did to his father-in-law, "We are journeying toward the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." "If a man err from the truth, and one convert him: let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul alive, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

## THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND THE JEWISH SACRIFICES.

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REV. H. MELVILL, A. M.

CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, GOOD FRIDAY, 1834.

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“ For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”—LEVITICUS, xvi. 33.

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ON the evening of the last Sabbath I engaged you with an examination into the institution of sacrifice; and endeavoured to establish the important truth, that the slaying of animals, as a religious observance, was an appointment of God, and typical from the first of the offering of Christ. We dwelt, however, at greater length on the patriarchal than on the legal sacrifices; our great object having been to shew, that no human origin could, with any fairness, be assigned to the opinion, that Deity might be propitiated by blood-shedding. It still remains, in order to the completeness of our argument, that we trace, in some striking particulars, the correspondence between the death of Christ and the sacrifices of the law. There can be no doubt, that if God instituted sacrifice, and if he appointed a close and immediate connexion between the death of the animal and forgiveness of sin, it must have been by a typical virtue (for, unquestionably, there was no natural), that the blood which was shed made expiation for the transgressors: and if sacrifices in general, and in the legal sense more especially, were typical, we are bound to search for some great propitiation to which they may all have respect; and if we find that propitiation in Christ, we shall at once clear up the mysteries of the ceremonial dispensation, and derive from those mysteries illustrations of the Christian.

That the law had a shadow of good things, and that the substance was Christ, is a point conceded by all who admit the inspiration of the New Testament. The unhesitating manner in which the Apostles apply to the offering up of Christ, the various sacrificial services of the Jewish ritual—the labour bestowed in the epistle to the Hebrews, in shewing the insignificance of legal observances, when viewed in their reference to the Mediator—these, if the authority of Scripture be admitted, compel us to the acknowledgment, that between the temple sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ, there subsists the relationship of the type and antetype; and when once this relationship is admitted, it becomes a great point to ascertain the sense in which the legal sacrifices take away sin; for, of course this sense must determine that in which the sacrifice of Christ made atonement for transgression. Hence there is nothing on which Unitarian writers have bestowed more labour than on the endeavour to invalidate the propitiatory nature of the Mosaic sacrifices. They have seen clearly enough, that, if they could succeed in demonstrating that the sacrifices under the law were not expia-

tory—in other words, that they were not efficacious to the removing of guilt and obtaining of pardon—they would have made a long advance towards establishing their favourite theory, that Christ only died to set an example and confirm his doctrine, and not as a sin-offering for a fallen creation. The relation of type and antetype being admitted, whatever proves that there was no propitiatory virtue in the type, would go far towards proving that there was none in the antetype. On the other hand, if it be shewn that under the law the offering of animals was taken as a substitute for the punishment of offenders, so that by virtue of this offering the sinner was released, we shall possess an almost irrefragible demonstration that Christ died as a real sacrifice for sin, and that by the energy of such sacrifice forgiveness is now attainable by man.

We have no intention on this the most solemn anniversary of the services of our church, to engage you with an examination of Unitarian statements with respect to the character of the Mosaic dispensation; enough will be done, and the argument of our last sermon made complete, if we select one great legal observance, and shew you that there was strictly what we call propitiatory virtue in the sacrifices there associated.

Nothing, apparently, can be more express than the language of our text: it is there declared, that the priest shall make atonement for the people, and that the people would be cleansed, and that the people would be free from all their sins before the Lord. You will not easily be persuaded, that these words mean aught else than that, as a consequence of the atonement, the congregation would be transferred from a position of condemnation to a position of pardon; so that an expiatory power, no matter whence derived, must have resided in the atonement. We must indeed admit, and we do it frankly, that the word "atonement," as used in the Old Testament, does not always refer to sacrifice for sin. When Moses, for instance, went up into the mountain to entreat forgiveness for the people who had sinned in the matter of the golden calf, he said to the congregation, "Peradventure, I shall make an atonement for your sin," he was not about to offer sacrifice, but only prayer; and hence it follows, that atonement, according to the sense of the word in the Old Testament, might be made without blood-shedding. We might adduce other equally pertinent instances; but we believe, that though atonement is often spoken of when there is no sacrifice, it is never spoken of but when something was done which reconciled Deity by removing his displeasure. The original meaning of the word translated "atonement," seems always kept in view: its meaning is that of covering with pitch; and those words are used first of all in reference to Noah's ark. Whatever, then, serves to hide what was displeasing to God, and so renders him propitious, is called an atonement. Hence, naturally, the word would be used, in a variety of cases, instead of sacrifice. But, of course, though there might be atonement where there had been no blood-shedding—external impurity, for instance, being removed by some ceremonial process, and then that which removed it being called an atonement, as having covered what displeases—still, where moral impurity was concerned, so that reconciliation was effected between God and the transgressor, atonement, partook closely of the nature of propitiation, and a sacrifice, an atonement a veiling to hide sin from Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, must have possessed an expiatory virtue such as we are wont to ascribe to the sacrifice of Christ.

We make these remarks on the use of the word in the Old Testament, that we may not be thought to lay undue stress on it as occurring in our text.

We believe, that however various the cases in which atonement is said to be made, there is only one way in which the notion of reconciliation, as a consequence of that which is offered or done, may be distinctly traced: and if atonement always marks reconciliation, then when atonement is by sacrifice, and the reconciliation that of the Creator with his offending creatures, we seem warranted in saying, that the sacrifice must be propitiatory, and that, because propitiatory, it served to make atonement.

We will now turn to the chapter from which our text is taken, and examine that great legal observance with whose details it is occupied. The chapter relates to what is ordinarily termed "the great day of atonement," or "expiation," the tenth day of the month, *Tisri*, which among the Jews was the first month of the civil year. This day was termed "the great," or "first," or simply "the fast;" not only because the people fasted all the day long, but because no other fast was actually enjoined by the law.

It will be our business, in the first place, to take a brief survey of the services of this day: in the second, to shew that the sacrifices then offered were strictly propitiatory; in the third, to trace the correspondence between this annual expiation under the law, and that one great expiation which we this day commemorate.

NOW THE CHIEF SERVICES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (for it would be beside our purpose to enumerate all) were these:—The high priest, having purified himself by sundry ceremonial observances, and offered a bullock for himself and his house, cast lots between two goats, one to be sacrificed and the other sent to the desert. Having slain the first goat on the altar, he carried his blood into the Holy of holies, sprinkled the mercy-seat therewith, and then returned to lay his hands on the head of the second goat, denominated "the scape-goat," to confess over him the iniquities of the people, and send him away, by a fit person, into the wilderness. Of this scape-goat it is expressly said, "It shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." Such were those observances of the great day of atonement on which we wish to comment: the minor, and less significant, we purposely omit.

We have now, in the second place, to inquire, WHETHER THE SACRIFICES WERE STRICTLY PROPITIATORY—whether, that is, the atonement spoken of in our text, was not strictly analogous to that which is meant by atonement in orthodox Christianity.

In order to the rightly answering this question, it is important that you observe, that the two goats are spoken of throughout the chapter as constituting *together* the sin-offering; so that the ceremony of the scape-goat is not a distinct ceremony, but rather a continuance and consummation of the sin-offering. It appears that, although it was usual in the sacrifice of animals in expiation, that there should be imposition of hands on the head of the victim, this significant rite was omitted in the case of the goat that was slain, but employed in the case of the goat sent away. Hence, rather, if the two goats had not been described, as they are, making up conjointly the sin-offering, we might have inferred the fact from the omission of a part of the sacrificial service, which ought otherwise to have been performed on the offering. And when you consider the two goats as together constituting the sin-offering, you must receive, as the only satisfactory account of the transaction, that the sign

which set forth the scape-goat, exhibited the fact of the expiation which was represented by the death of the other. The sins of the people were laid upon the head of the scape-goat, and borne away into the wilderness; but this scape-goat was a part of the sin-offering: hence, by combining the parts of the sin-offering, you have before you both the means and the effect; you have the means of shedding of blood without which there is no remission; you have the effect of removing the guilt, so that iniquity, though searched for, can no more be found. This we think the only fair and legitimate account. One animal could not have exhibited both the means employed and the effect produced; hence, two are united in the sin-offering; and whilst the first effects, at least typically, an expiation, the second exhibits the consequences or results.

But the question now before us is, whether the sacrifices thus offered were not strictly propitiatory; whether the victims were not symbolically a substitute for the people. The ceremony of the imposition of hands is, to our minds, quite conclusive upon this. Nothing could be more significant than this ceremony, as we find it recorded in the chapter before us. "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." You can attach no sufficient meaning to these words, unless you admit that the sins of the people were actually transferred to the sin-offering. We do not forget, when we speak of the transfer as actual, that it could not, at most, have been more than typical: we are not concerned to observe whence the virtue was derived, but only with the fact that there was virtue in the rite which prevailed to the removal of the guilt. And that guilt was actually removed, we conclude from the ceremony of the imposition of hands. All the transgressions of the people are said to have been put upon the head of the goat, and borne away unto a land not inhabited. And over and above these express statements, which seem wholly unintelligible unless we allow the actual, though symbolical, transfer of sin from the people to the victim, you will observe, that the goat thus sent into the wilderness, was to be considered a polluted thing; the man who took it becoming thereby unclean, and not being allowed to return into the camp until he had performed certain legal purifications. And why, when the goat, which when led up to the altar, had been accounted clean—for otherwise it could not have been made a sin-offering—why was it reckoned now so impure that its very touch was defilement? We can give no answer but that the transgressions of the people had been laid on him as a substitute, and that, therefore, when it went away, it went away laden with iniquity; so that what in itself, had been pure and unblemished, became, by the transmitted defilement of the sinner, so fearfully polluted, that the least contact with it communicated ceremonial uncleanness.

It seems certain that such was the view entertained by the Jews, who were wont to treat the scape-goat as actually an accursed thing. Though not commanded by the law, they used to insult over the goat, the Azazel—for by this name was the scape-goat known—to spit upon him, and to clip off his hair. They thus acted towards the goat precisely as they afterwards acted towards Christ, who, in the true sense, as the Azazel, was made sin for us. And if further proof were needed of the sense in which the second goat received the ceremony of the imposition of hands, it is to be found in the forms of

confession, which their writers have transmitted as used in ordinary sacrifice. When an individual presented his own sacrifice, he laid his hands on the head of the offering, saying, amongst other things, "Let this victim be my expiation;" words which are universally considered equivalent to an entreaty that the evils which ought in justice to fall on the offerer, might fall on the sacrifice.

It is every way worthy of notice, as supporting this idea with regard to the great day of atonement, that the modern Jews hold fast the opinion of a strictly propitiatory atonement. In observing this day, they now substitute a bird for the prescribed legal victim, but used words and actions which are very significant. Thus the master of a family pronounces over the bird words such as these. "Let this bird be a substitute for me; let it come into my place; let it be an expiation for me. Let death be allotted to this bird, but to me and all Israel, a happy life." The bird is then consumed with fire; but the entrails, to which sin, as being an inward thing, is supposed to be transferred by imputation, are exposed on the top of the house, that they may be carried away by the birds of prey, just as the scape-goat of old bore sin into the wilderness.

We only add, that, even amongst the heathen—and let not the witness of heathenism be rejected as worthless, for natural religion, as it exists in the world, is in a high degree traditionary—even amongst the heathen, the practice was common of imprecating on the head of the victim evils which the sacrificer wished to divert from himself. The Greeks, for example, under the influence of this custom, would not eat the head of any animal. We think, then, we attach nothing more to the imposition of hands than is warranted by the words of Scripture and the witness of antiquity, when we regard it as symbolical of the transfer of sin from the sinner to the thing sacrificed; and this being admitted, we are possessed of clear demonstration, that the services of the great day of atonement were strictly propitiatory. There was a substitution of the victim in the stead of the transgressor, and the taking away of the guilt in virtue of the expiation. We know, indeed, that this virtue resided not in the sacrifices itself, but was wholly derived from that which it typified. We know, further, that the eternal penalties of sin cannot be considered as having been thus removed from the congregation of Israel, so that if, as one man, they had then died, as one man they would have passed into heaven. Every year was the atonement repeated, seeing that the "gifts and sacrifices could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." The remission of sins obtained by the Levitical sacrifices, could, from the nature of the case, have obtained nothing more than the remission of temporal punishment. If these sacrifices were offered merely as a ceremonial duty, they could necessarily only operate to propitiate God in his temporal relation to Israel; and, undoubtedly, unless connected in the eye of faith with the precious blood-shedding of Christ, they must have been powerless to procure more than ceremonial purification. But nevertheless, the atonement was clearly propitiatory, for it actually procured the remission of penalties. The sanctions of the law which enjoined the sacrifices were only temporal, and of course, therefore, the penalties remitted must have also been temporal.

But we fasten upon the argument, that there was remission of penalty; for this establishes the fact, that the sacrifices themselves were propitiatory. And when we see the scape-goat carried away into the wilderness, laden with transmitted guilt, so as to be made the accursed thing, then, whatever the sources

whence the virtue is derived, and whatever the amount of remitted penalty, we have before us a circumstance which ought to satisfy us of the expiatory nature of the legal offerings, and to convince us that sin under the law, as we are wont to declare of it under the Gospel, was literally transferred from the transgressor to the sacrifice; and being thus transferred, was so removed and done away, that the offender obtained full pardon for the offence.

Now we here bring you back to the main argument, which we all along have in hand—the inferring from the character of the legal sacrifices that of the Christian. If we once shew, that the sacrifices of the law typified the offering of Christ, and that all the sacrifices of the law were strictly propitiatory, it follows as an irresistible deduction, that Christ died truly as a propitiatory offering. We deny not, indeed, that even if no reference whatever were made to the Old Testament, the language of the New is so clear and explicit, that nothing but the most determined prepossession could fail to find in it the doctrine, that Christ's death was a propitiatory sacrifice. But the connexion between the two dispensations, and therefore of the two Testaments, is so strict in every point, that it were no just examination of the Gospel that should keep the Law out of sight. Besides, the opponents of the truth make their attacks on the Gospel through the avenue of the Law, calculating, and that fairly enough, that if they can prove that there was no real propitiation for sin under the Mosaic, they have proved there is none under the Christian dispensation.

We have made it, therefore, our business to demonstrate that, on the great day of atonement, sin was so transferred from the sinner to the sacrifice, that guilt was removed, and, therefore, penalty remitted. This is equivalent to demonstrating, that the atonement thus made by sacrifice, was an act of propitiation; understanding by propitiation what we believe the word always denotes in the Bible—that it propitiates, and therefore asks reconciliation with Deity. And you may all see the fairness of the conclusion, that, since the services of the great day of atonement typified the Christian, and were in the true sense propitiatory, Christ himself must have borne our sins on the tree; he has been made a curse for us, even as the Azazel was for the congregation of Israel.

But this assumes a typical correspondence between the sacrifice of the Saviour and those we have now been reviewing. It is to this point we propose, in the last place, to address ourselves: and we proceed to consider **THE EXPIATION MADE BY CHRIST ON CALVARY, AS PREFIGURED BY THE GREAT ANNUAL EXPIATION ENJOINED UNDER THE LAW.**

We would first remark that, even if we could not detect special points of resemblance, a strong case would be made out on the most extensive principles. We suppose it admitted that there was a propitiatory virtue in the sin-offering of the goat: but such virtue could not have resided naturally in the blood of the animal, and must, therefore, have been derived from some blood-shedding with which the legal had an instituted typical connexion. If, however, the sacrifices were efficacious only because they were typical, there can be little dispute that the antetype was Christ, there being no other sacrifice which imagination itself can suggest whose virtue may be thought to be transmitted to the type.

But we are not limited to this general consideration, the particular points of resemblance being numerous and striking. There can be little doubt that the high priest himself was, on this solemn occasion, a special type of the Redeemer



Christ was not only the victim presented in sacrifice, he was also the priest who presented it; he offered himself; so that we might expect, and shall on inquiry find, the typical observances which were in allusion and personal to Aaron and his sons. We have not dwelt on such observances, and shall not enlarge on their figurative import: we will only point out two particulars, in which what was commanded by the high priest bore, as it were, typical relation to Christ.

The high priest was to perform the solemn services of the great day of atonement in the mean garments of the ordinary priests, and not in the rich robes peculiar to his own office. There is, certainly, here a reference to the humiliation of the Redeemer. It was not in that great glory that belonged to him as God, that the second person in the Trinity wrought out our salvation. He divested himself of this glory: he did not, indeed, and he could not, lay aside any of the attributes of Deity; he was as truly and actively God, the well-spring of life to every creature in all the districts of immensity, while circumscribed within the frame-work of flesh, and walking the narrow stage of this earth in the fashion of a man, as when throned in the majesty of eternity he created the universe, and breathed animation through all its departments. The only thing of which he could divest himself, was, *the form of God*, the outward manifestation of the powers and the splendours of the divine nature; he exchanged, in short, the form of God for the form of man; just as the high priest exchanged the robe of beauty and richness for the mean and lowly garment. But the change was only in the robe; the high priest was equally the high priest, the same in his powers, and functions, and dignities. Thus with Christ, change is only in the form; the external appearance or display: the Deity was equally Deity; the same in omniscience, in omnipotence, and in all those properties which remove immeasurably infinite being from finite.

We observe, again, that when the high priest entered within the veil, carrying the blood, with which to sprinkle the mercy-seat, it was expressly commanded that there should be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation. In the mysterious silence and the loneliness thus enjoined, whilst the work of intercession went forward, there is a voice which the least heedful amongst you can scarcely fail to hear. Solitary, with none even of the priests as assistants, he who typified Messiah passed into the Holiest, and made atonement for himself, and his household, and all the congregation. Thus the High Priest of our profession "trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him:" no man was in the Tabernacle when he entered by his own blood into the holy place.

And now, if we would have a share of the benefits of his intercession, above all things we are to take heed that we attempt not to compound the human with the divine. Christ must be alone; he needed no coadjutor, and he allows not of a rival. If we will commit simply into his hands the business of our salvation, he will carry it through, and so sprinkle the mercy-seat, that there shall be liberty to approach whilst we remain on earth, and admission into the light of his presence when delivered from the flesh. But if there be any hearkening to the suggestions of pride, any adherence to the dogmas of a spurious theology, which would make man a half-worker with God in the work of salvation, we attempt, in respect to the true High Priest, that which was so emphatically forbidden in the typical; we send an intruder into the courts of the Sanctuary, just when the Almighty has declared, that their deep and awful silence must not be broken by any human foot-tread and all that we can

expect is, that having sinned by our presumption, we perish by the blast of his displeasure.

But though in these respects the high priest was an accurate figure of Christ, there can be no doubt that the sin-offerings thus made were chiefly typical representations of the Mediator. We wish to recall to your recollection that this sin-offering was composed of two animals, the one slain, the other sent into the wilderness. It was to be expected that there would be such a weakness and insignificance in types, when the object represented was Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that they could be made accurate only by being combined; and it was on this account, we suppose, that the legal types were so amplified. It is not that precisely the same thing is represented under great variety of emblems, it is rather that one part of Christ's work, or one section of his office, is specially delineated by one rite or type, and another by another. No single figure could evidence more than a fraction of those stupendous combinations of which He must be the subject who is made to his Church wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Creation might pour forth all its imagery, and yet leave the mediatorial work imperfectly portrayed. The law was made up of almost innumerable shadows; but why? Because the substance (to which, in some points of view, it necessarily corresponds) threw a different outline with every motion of the illuminated body: and thus a combination of types was indispensable to the completeness of the delineation. In the case before us, one goat was not sufficient to represent the sin-offering of Christ. The sacrificed goat returned not to life, and therefore, however it might typify the expiation which Christ made in dying, it could shew nothing of those consequences of expiation which Christ rose from the dead to carry on in our behalf. Hence a second goat was introduced, not as a separate victim, but rather (for the weakness of figures obliges us to use something like contradiction in terms,) that first victim itself, in a different and after stage of the expiatory process.

And when you thus view it only as constituting one sin-offering, and combining the dead and the living in the same delineation, you have before you such a representation of Christ as must commend itself to all by its power and by its faithfulness, as the true Azazel, bearing on him the transferred sins of the whole human kind, and thus made a curse in our stead. Christ Jesus ascended the altar, and yielded himself to the knife and the fire of justice. Pouring out his blood, and scorched by its flames, which must otherwise have racked everlastingly the tribes of our race, he satisfied every claim which God had on man, and paid down that immense debt which human torment and human anguish could not have discharged. But it was not enough that he was delivered for our offences, but he was to be raised again for our justification: he must live to plead the merits of his sacrifice, and to apply, as an intercessor, what he had effected as a propitiation. And therefore did the slain goat appear again, as it were, in the scape-goat. The very being on whom had been poured the vials of God's righteous indignation against sin, and who had gone down to the grave crushed beneath the weight of imputed transgression, started from the tomb, and, with a conqueror's might, stood ready to bear into the broad wilderness of forgetfulness the offences of all who should believe on his name. The atoning efficacy had resided in the sacrifice of the first goat; but it would have been a demonstration that there was no essential efficacy had the victim seen corruption, in place of re-appearing fresh strung with animation.

And over and above this necessity for a resurrection, as the public acquittal of Him who had undertaken to stand in the criminal's place, the life of Christ is requisite to our being saved, just as was his death to our being reconciled; the mediatorial work consisting in no isolated act, but rather extending itself in constant operation through all the centuries which are to roll over our disorganized humanity; intercession, so repeating crucifixion, that He who died once in shame and agony, dies ever in the fresh shedding of that blood which alone can wash away our fast-recurring stains. Hence there must be a second goat to make up the sin-offering, and that goat, though an integral part of the sin-offering, is not to be put to death: it is to carry away, so that they may be no more found, those transgressions for which expiation had been made by the first; and this, too, representing, or rather making effectual to the congregation, the propitiatory virtues of the blood which had been shed. As, then, the first goat was Christ offering himself without spot to the Father, so the second was Christ the resurrection and the life, applying the energies of his death to the annihilating the guilt of his people.

There needs nothing but that we confess in faith our iniquities over Him who died the just for the unjust, and lay our transgressions on his head as he passes through the fearful scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the living Mediator, by the resistless application of the might of his atonement, will so wash away the remembrance of our misdoings, that, in the emphatical language of Holy Writ, they will be cast behind God's back, and be buried in the depths of the sea. There is a beautiful quality which the whole company of Christ's worshippers are ascribing to Christ's propitiatory sacrifice: there is not only *forgiveness*, there is *forgetfulness* of our sins; they are carried into the desert, and can no more be found. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." He who takes Christ as his propitiation, stands before God, not merely as a man who is pardoned (this were much; O! more than an angel's tongue can tell) but as a man who has never sinned; and this is immeasurably a greater thing. My sins may be forgiven, and yet I may still feel as a criminal in the presence of God. Let them be forgotten (and this they never can be with man: man may forgive, but he cannot forget; it is God alone who can both forgive and forget;) let sin be forgotten, and there is no room for suspicion, even in the most timid and down-cast, that God looks on them with any eye but that of a Father whose affections were never estranged and never weakened. Thus the symbolical representation of the great day of atonement extends itself over the whole breadth of Christian privilege. Sin forgiven, sin forgotten—these were the things typified by the slaying the one goat, and the sending the other into the wilderness. Sin forgiven, sin forgotten—these, blessed be God, are the results obtained for us by the crucifixion and intercession of the one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus.

Well, then, may it be declared that our text, originally applied to the day of expiation under the law, belongs in all its force to that day of which the present is the solemn anniversary. "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." We are gathered now, as it were, before the cross of our Redeemer, and are summoned to give in our allegiance to Him who is at once the High Priest and the Victim. We mark the infidel Jews treating with scorn, and loading with execrations, the Azazel on whom are rolled the iniquities of Adam and his race. He is despised and rejected of men, wounded

for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. We behold him lifted up an ignominious spectacle, reviled by men, and, for a small moment, forsaken by God. The inanimate creation sympathizes with the suffering Creator; the very sun puts on sack-cloth, and the rocks tremble as though quickened by the awfulness of the scene. He dies; but his death destroys death: he falls; but it is the fall of the foundation stone which grinds into powder, as it descends in its stupendousness, the sovereignty of Satan, the despotism of evil. Are you ready—man—woman—child—to transfer to this Azazel your iniquity, that he may hurl it into the unfathomable abyss? Are we ready to transfer to him the countless misdoings of our lives, to lay our hands on his head, and to say, “Be thou my expiation?” If not before done, it may be done now: now, this moment, we may believe on Christ: faith shall effect the translation of guilt; and they who came up to God’s house with a huge burden of unforgiven sin, may depart with that burden removed and annihilated; for the scape-goat shall have borne it into the wastes of oblivion, and justice have pronounced that there is no condemnation.

Oh that this Good Friday may be a day on which, from amongst this congregation, Christ may see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied! There are yet many of you, we cannot doubt it, whose Christianity is only nominal, who are still the servants of sin, and whose thoughts are on their gold, and their honours, and their pleasures, rather than on the undying soul and the boundless hereafter. This is not a day on which we should strive to move such by pathetic speech, or cogent argument, or impassioned rhetoric. This is the day on which Christ must speak for himself to such—Calvary the church, the cross his pulpit, anguish his argument, and blood his eloquence. And what the sermon? Hear it, ye stout-hearted, and prove not yourselves harder than the rock, which shuddered at its sound, by hearing it unmoved—it is a sermon against sin. What! sin a thing to be trifled with, when its pardon could be gained by nothing less than the death of God’s only and well-beloved Son! It is a sermon which burns with the fiery things of everlasting punishment. There is no description of hell which shews God’s wrath so tremendous as the description of the crucifixion. It is a sermon which breathes of hope, and glows with love. It is rich, inexhaustibly rich, in encouragements. Its words, pronounced in the name of the Living God, are such as these: “I have laid help upon one that is mighty: I have found a ransom.”

May God give us all the hearing ear, and the feeling heart, that we turn not away from Him who thus speaks; but learn at once what sin is, and how alone it can be pardoned; may abjure its service, and embrace its atonement.

## THE MINISTRATION OF ANGELS.

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REV. T. GUYER\*,

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“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”—HEBREWS, i. 14.

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THE imagination of man has given existence to a thousand forms that have had no reality whatever except in the fancy of the poet, or in the bold delineations of the painter. There was a time when the human mind was peculiarly the subject of imagination, when, during the dark ages, there was but little knowledge, and in consequence of there being but little knowledge, there was a large outspread of superstition, and, as the effect of superstition, there was a considerable degree of fear; and individuals acquainted with neither science nor art, were easily wrought upon by superior and commanding faculties. Hence it was no uncommon thing to have the intellect very powerfully impressed with the belief of spirits or apparitions, and unearthly objects: and the dark wood, and the lonely tower, and the mouldering abbey, were supposed to be spots where these unearthly spirits were constantly to be seen, where they were, from time to time, passing and repassing before the agitated spectator, only to alarm, and without producing any moral or spiritual effect whatever on the mind. But these days have died away; the increase of knowledge and a purer philosophy have scattered these impressions, and we are enabled to look on them in a great measure as the scenes and the dreams and the impressions of past ages. Yet though these things have all passed away, the Sacred Oracles of God remain perfectly true, and they exhibit to us an order of beings distinct from men, an order of intelligences superior in their character, who have yet a very intimate and a very important connexion with the creatures who are passing through this world, and who are designed to outlive all that is earthly. Hence, whether we peruse the Old Testament or the New, whether we look at the ancient economy or the dispensation under which we are now living, we perceive that there are beings who have a very close association with the spiritual and eternal welfare of men, and who are appointed by the great God of the universe to occupy their powers and to engage their thoughts, and in some little measure, it may be, the habitude of their lives in connexion with those who shall one day be associated with them in glory. The Apostle, therefore, after glancing at this subject, and referring to the peculiarity of their character, and the infinite superiority of the Son of God to these, says, “To which of the angels said he, at any time, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” What a beautiful idea! The whole company of angelic beings are ministering spirits, ministering in connexion with men,

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ministering in connexion with the world, ministering in connexion with spirits that are fallen, ministering in connexion with beings that are one day to be associated with them in the bliss, and the purity, and the glory of heaven!

Let me gather your thoughts for a few moments on this passage, while we notice, in the first place, the scriptural representation of angels; secondly, the ministration connected with them; and thirdly, the truths which are connected with these important representations. Oh, that the Spirit of God may hold up to us these invisible realities as those who believe their importance, and who are one day to come in connexion with them!

Let me draw your attention, in the first place, to a few remarks on **THE SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF ANGELIC BEINGS**. I have said "Scriptural representation," because, you must be perfectly aware, that we can say nothing at all about these intelligences but what is to be found in the Word of God. There is not an idea that we can utter with certainty respecting any one of them, or any thing appertaining to them, which comes not from the Sacred Oracles of Truth. All representations, in connexion with angelic beings, all in connexion with the circumstances that relate to them, are to be founded upon what God has been graciously pleased to reveal.

In the first place, let us glance at their *nature*. You observe the term in the text—they are said to be "spirits." What do we know of spirits? What idea can we form of a spiritual being? We turn to the Great Creator of Nature, and we remember that he is an Infinite Being. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Oh, that that thought were impressed upon our minds when we come up to his house! Oh, that we were deeply impressed with the recollection that we are surrounded by the Omnipresent Being, in contact with the Omniscient Spirit, one who can penetrate the secrets of the heart, and discover the peculiarities of the character.

But remember, while we speak of God as a spirit, there is one quality which invests him, which does not attach to angelic spirits, and that is, that he is invisible. "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see; who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto." There is something about God that is invisible; and the creature, with all the powers of his soul, even where they are at the utmost extent, and of the utmost purity, cannot reach the immediate presence of Deity so as to recognize, as it were, the form or the substance.

There are other creatures who are represented as being spirits. *Man* is a creature compounded of matter and of spirit; and yet, if you look at him a little, you will perceive it is one perfect machinery, and that we know nothing about it. Our knowledge is imperfect, a negative kind of knowledge. If we try to ascertain what the human spirit is, we cannot succeed; all we know is, certain properties, certain qualities, which attach to it. And the same is true respecting body or matter. It has a certain organization and certain properties; but if you ask what constitutes the essence of matter, or what constitutes the essence of spirit, you are perfectly unable to give an answer, but are involved in perplexities which the human mind cannot develop. Hence, when our thoughts turn to angels, while we believe the fact we are totally unable to explain the peculiarity of the essence. They are simply described in the Word of God as spirits: and the question, therefore, has been asked, What is the peculiarity of their appearance? Now it is quite clear, as regards our present state, that we can form no idea of any thing without shape, without form, without substance, without something that has a peculiarity of figure, as it were: any thing de-

cient in this respect, seems totally beyond the comprehension of our minds to ascertain what it is. Hence, we say, is it not possible that these angelic beings have a manifestation something like the refined beings which the Apostle mentions, when he speaks of the resurrection of believers—that they have a spiritual body, something which manifests itself externally? We cannot say much on this point; yet you see their existence is clearly and simply delineated under the expression contained in the text.

Then, as regards this peculiarity of their nature, it is asked, When were they created, if they are created spirits? When were they created, and of what were they created? Now, I would have you bear in mind, that these are points which the word of God does not reveal; and though they may appear to us to be peculiarly interesting, yet they are not absolutely important, and, therefore, we are not enabled to come to a satisfactory conclusion. But, if you come a little closer, you will perceive there are two very distinctive features attributed to them: they are *rational* and they are *immortal*. They are creatures of the highest influence and noblest capacities: and as regards their existence, they are immortal; death, which passes on all men, will never pass on them; mortality, which sweeps off one generation of human spirits after another, will never touch them; mortality can never touch these glorified beings. It is worthy of your attention, that it is true also of the fallen angels that death, which comes in connexion with mankind, never touched them in the same way, they never had that peculiarity of death which attaches to the guilty posterity of man, but they have an immortality of wretchedness, an immortality of misery, an immortality of woe. Let us think, then, for one moment on these spirits, and let us learn a very humiliating lesson: let us learn how little we know, and let us learn to believe many things that we are not able adequately to comprehend.

I pass on to notice another thing in connexion with these spirits, and that is, their *qualities*. These are to be described as physical and moral. As regards their *physical* qualities, they are represented in the word of God as invested with peculiar *beauty*. There seems a glory about them infinitely beyond any thing which can attach to beings of this lower world. Hence when the guards who kept the sepulchre saw them, they were terrified with the light of their countenance; there was something unearthly attaching to them. If you look at their essential qualities, they are remarkable for their *power*: and hence they are called “mighty angels,” and “the angels that excel in strength:” and, we are told, that at the time of our Lord’s resurrection, they rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre with the utmost ease.

But their *moral* qualities are the most beautiful features in their character. Think for a moment of their knowledge. What an immeasurable extent of knowledge an angel must have! Think of a pure and guiltless intellect, that ever since the creation of this world, has been surveying the being of God, and the providence of God, and the government of God, and the redemption of God, as unfolded in connexion with the posterity of man—and there is no great improbability in supposing that all these things have occupied the attention of angelic spirits—and what a vast portion of knowledge there must be possessed by them; and how this has been rapidly increasing, increasing with all the wonderful communications of divine grace to a lost and ruined world. Hence it is said that, in connexion with the great work of redemption, there is made known to them “the manifold wisdom of God:” as though the Apostle would seem to intimate by that expression, that angels never saw so much

wisdom, or so much of the wisdom of God, before. They had seen very much wisdom in creation; they had seen very much of it in the government of God, very much in his providential dealings: but when they came and looked at Calvary; when they bent from their high and holy abodes and saw God manifest in the flesh, saw an incarnate Redeemer, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and standing the great substitute for human transgression; when they saw this astonishing mystery, the manifold wisdom of God seems to have been discovered, and a greater display made of wisdom and of angelic power.

And you learn, too, with regard to their knowledge, how wonderfully it seems to be on the increase, when they observe the rich communications of grace. Only think, that for the lapse of some thousands of years, they have been in the habit of seeing every sinner who has been converted; taking the expression of God's word, that there is not a single sinner converted upon earth, but the conversion of that sinner is known in heaven. What an astonishing impression does this convey of the worth of the soul: that all heaven is attentive, when one sinner bows at the feet of Jesus, when one guilty sinner smites on his breast, and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When one sinner flees from the wrath to come, and escapes to the refuge that is set before him, all heaven is attentive, and there is joy among the angels in the presence of God.

This is a lesson of very deep importance to us as believers: indeed, we ought to have this subject more deeply impressed upon our minds. It is very astonishing how little we make of the conversion of a soul. We merely speak of it by saying, We hope such an individual has been brought to God; we hope such an individual has profited by the ministry; we rejoice that such an individual is about to take upon him the character, and manifest the principles of holiness of walk and conversation: and this is all. There is no depth of joy about it, nothing that indicates a powerful emotion of mind: there is nothing in this earthly state that assumes a correspondence with the heavenly world; for all *their* harps are tuned afresh, when they hear one individual singing, "To him that loved me," bowing at the feet of the Redeemer, and glorifying him for his salvation. Oh, that we may be more affected with the conversion of souls, that when we think of the interest that angels take in the great plan of redemption, when we think of the great joy they feel in the salvation of man, and in the power of divine grace that is exercised in salvation, we may rejoice and very earnestly rejoice, when we see one and another turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Need I remind you, my dear hearers, that angelic spirits are very remarkable for their *purity*. "Holy angels," that is the expression that is characteristic of them in God's word; and, therefore, these are beings that never were contaminated, that never had an unholy thought, that never had a polluted imagination, an unhallowed affection. How little we can comprehend of this state! How little we can apprehend the condition of these spirits! Oh, to think of beings that have never had one sin to grieve over, that have never had one transgression to afflict them, that have never had one contaminating thought to defile them; one who, ever since he has been capable of thinking, has enjoyed a purity of intellect, so that he never abuses his powers; a purity of affection, so that he ever loves that which is good; a purity of will, so that he is constantly obedient; a purity of character, so that he has a constant assimilation to the divine character. All this seems to be the peculiarity of angels. They are called, "angels that have kept their first estate," and stand,



continually, in the presence of their Creator. Mark their qualities, then, and see how very short of them the greatest believer comes, while passing through life.

Notice *their number*. Here we can only take the Sacred Record as our guide. Speculation may amuse us, as it has some, as regards the number of angelic beings; all we can say on the subject is, that it is very great. Our Lord, when on earth, said, he could pray to his Father, and he would send him a legion of angels at once. And, you remember, that at the time of the Redeemer's advent, there was one of the heavenly host appeared and spoke to the shepherds, and, as soon as he had delivered his message, suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host; the clouds sparkling, as it were, on a calm serene night, with angelic spirits, urging their flight downward, in order to tell that there was peace on earth, and good-will to men.

But the Apostle gives us the most delightful view of this part of the subject. He says they are "an innumerable company." After the mind has rolled over numbers (and it is amazing to what extent in calculation the human mind can go, how astonishingly comprehensive some minds are in computing numbers), yet there is a point at which even numbers fail. When the thoughts turn, therefore, to these beings, there is an "innumerable company" of them; and these, with a multitude of human spirits, which no man can number, shall conjointly form the glorious society of the upper and the better world. One loves to dwell upon it, there is nothing so sublime as a vast crowd of intelligent beings, when the eye rolls over them, and thinks of the dense multitude, all of them having intellect and capacity, and all at one moment bowing and adoring Him who sits upon the throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Carry your thoughts upward, then, and meditate upon the innumerable company of angels, with whom the believer is, ultimately, to be associated.

I pass on to one idea more upon this part of the subject, and that is, their *place*. If you attend to God's word, you will find they appear to have a locality. We cannot understand how spirit is connected with locality; but still heaven is a place, and the angels are in heaven. There appears something rather absurd, in supposing one mind to be existing in another mind. If you read with attention the sacred page, you will perceive that they are described as being in the immediate presence of Jehovah: and, in connexion with this, you will find there are certain other angels, certain orders, and connexions, associated with them.

As regards what are called "Archangels," if you pay the least attention to the Sacred Scriptures, you will find the term "Archangels" is never used; it is "an archangel:" we never read of "archangels." There is some question whether that individual who is called "the archangel" is not the Son of God, the Chief Angel of the Covenant, and so represented in this peculiar connexion. But as regards all the others, they seem very clearly to describe orders; thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers. And if it be so, and we see no reason to the contrary, then it shadows forth to us the different degrees of glory in heaven. Oh, look at this, believers. You sometimes imagine that if there be different degrees of glory in heaven, there would not be an infinity of happiness to each inhabitant; but look at these thrones, these dominions, these principalities, these powers, and the glory of their spheres, each possessing a dignity compatible with his own order and circumstances; and then take this view of it that sheds a light on the celestial world, that as one star differeth from another star in glory, even so is the resurrection of the just.

Some have supposed that these thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, are expressions that indicate a certain kind of guardianship over kingdoms, over societies, and over individuals: but the Word of God says nothing of this kind; there is not a single hint of the kind: and therefore we must take it as manifesting peculiar glory, and referring to their particular employments. Hence we read of angels doing the will of their Father in heaven: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his Word."

I have endeavoured thus briefly to give you a brief notice of the scriptural representation of angelic beings. I now pass on to notice **THEIR MINISTRATION**. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Oh how pleasing the thought, that there are millions of spirits who walk unseen, and are doing the will of God in connexion with us, in connexion with the Church, and, we may say, in connexion with the individual believer. Let us attend a little to this point.

I notice, first, *their general ministration*. I have said their "general" ministration, because we apprehend they have some sort of service in connexion with the world, as well as the Church; and in connexion with the sinner as well as with the saint: and before we come to the particular point, we would take an outline of their general ministration. They appear from the Word of God to be the ministers of God's providence to do his will. One is represented as holding the four winds of heaven. Admitting this to be a symbolical representation, it seems to afford a view of God's administering his government in connexion with angels. So again one angel is represented as blowing the trumpet, another opens the seals, another pours out the vials; all apparently indicating the ministration of the servants of God by performing his designs in connexion with the Church, in connexion with the world, until the time of the end shall come, and the Son shall give up the Kingdom to the Father.

Then as regards the *ultimate* point of their ministration, it has a very peculiar reference to the separation that is to take place between the righteous and the wicked. For supposing that there may be a kind of momentary resurrection of the just first, yet they shall rise at the shout of the Archangel and the trump of God. These angelic spirits are represented as separating, and, it may be perhaps, as classifying them into two bands, the righteous being on the right hand, and the wicked on the left, waiting the awful decision, when they shall be commissioned to go forth and gather the wheat into the garner, and bind up the chaff in bundles to be burnt. Let us remember, then, that the ministration of angels is connected with all the things which are seen and temporal, and with some of those which are unseen and eternal.

But there is another point, and that is, *their connexion with Christ*. You will observe they were constantly his attendants: and looking at the whole of it, one is quite disposed to say there are no Socinians there; they all did homage to the Son of God, the whole army of heaven bowed before him, and they were attentive to his humanity. When he came into the world, they announced his birth; when he was in temptation, they came and ministered unto him; when he endured the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, there appeared an angel strengthening him; when he rose from the grave, two of them rolled away the stone, and two of them sat, one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus had lain. They announced to the women his resurrection; they terrified the guards; they appeared to do honour to

their Master, who had thus spoiled principalities, and was triumphing over them, making a show of them openly. And this is not all. These angelic spirits attended him when he left the world. These spirits were at Bethlehem at the very time when he took his last leave of the Church below, when he threw the parting glance on the whole multitude that was assembled about him, gave them his benediction, and spoke of the things that were to come; and a cloud removed him out of their sight: they were there. The Psalmist has given us the idea he formed of it in the twenty-fourth Psalm; and it seems very probable that something of the sort in spirit, if not in language, was uttered by them. We seem almost to hear this beautiful song of praise as the angels went up with the Redeemer to glory, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in:" while the angels that were within seemed to throw back the sound, and say, "Who is the King of glory?" and those who were escorting him to heaven, replied, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory." "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." And as he ascended, one of them, by divine appointment, lingered behind, tarried a little after his Master, and then, pointing upward, said to the wondering disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"—"without sin unto salvation." Angels, you see then, ministered to him in all the circumstances of his humanity, and in connexion with his deepest sufferings, in his triumph over immortality, and in his ascension to the regions of glory, to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In heaven they perpetually adore him. John says, "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

There is one other view which we will take of this angelic agency; and that is, *their ministering unto believers*. Before we enter upon this, I would have you mark the expression contained in the text, and then you will see to whom the Apostle says they ministered so very specifically: they minister unto "the heirs of salvation." The believer is an heir: salvation comes by relationship; it does not come by descent, by natural birth; but it comes in connexion with a very peculiar relationship. They are heirs, and they are joint-heirs with Christ. They are heirs of heaven. It points out very beautifully what the inheritance is. Open God's Word, and you will see that what is termed salvation, is in another place said to be "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "In my Father's house," said the Saviour, "are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It is said to be "the inheritance of the saints in light." What a beautiful idea; the purity of the inheritance, the purity of the inhabitants, the glory of the state, the knowledge, the bliss, and all the perfection that attaches to them. These are the individuals, those who are to come to this inheritance. And they come to it, you perceive, by virtue of heirship; being united to the Son of God,

having a part with Him who is our Great Forerunner, and our Elder Brother who sustains all that are delivered into his hands until they shall come of age, and shall be taken to the inheritance themselves.

My dear hearers, let me ask you, whether you have any thing like this in prospect? Heirs of salvation, perhaps it is worth your attention that these spirits are never said to minister to the wicked; they never minister to the ungodly. Worldly men, earthly men, carnally-minded men, ministering spirits have nothing to do with you, except that it is to obey the command that shall go forth, if the grace of God does not prevent, "Bind them in the bundle." Think of the believer, the heir of salvation. These spirits, under the direction of Him who is the Great Angel of the Covenant—these spirits, all under his authority, all under his guidance, and under his peculiar care, watch over them until they shall have done with time, and shall form a part of the glorified inhabitants of heaven: they are the "heirs of salvation."

Now let us proceed in our illustration. And where shall we begin? You have only to turn to God's Word, and from the commencement of it to the close you find the ministration of angels connected with believers. See them taking Lot, and sheltering him from the wrath which was then pending over the whole city. Pass on a little further, and see the holy Prophet in difficulty and trouble, persecuted and distressed, and cast into the den of lions: "My God hath sent his Angel." There had been one of the heavenly messengers in the night, in the dark and doleful dungeon, where every thing that was painful to human nature, and every thing that was appalling, was presented to him: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." Look into the New Testament, and you see the same ministration of the spirits. Observe the case of Peter: how perfectly secure he was supposed to be in the prison. He was fastened, according to the Roman custom, by being chained to a soldier on each side, and in such a position, that he could not move without awakening his companions; if he turned on either side, the fetter which connected him with one soldier, would instantly have produced a pressure which would have awakened the other soldier. But there was one of the heavenly spirits came into the prison, touched the fetter, released Peter; and he goes and manifests how God, in answer to prayer, had sent forth a ministering spirit to minister for him who was to be an heir of salvation.

We may go a little further than this. It is delightful to think that ministering spirits are near us when we are dying. They wait to convey the believer home. They are passing, and they have been, from eternity, and ever will pass, between this world and another. And if our eyes were opened just as the eyes of the Apostle were, we should be strack with the multitude of the spirits that are ever near. Hence, when the human spirit is about to be freed from the tabernacle, about to drop that which it has long inhabited, there are these angelic spirits near it to convey it.

"Hark! they whisper, angels say,  
Sister spirit, come away!"

And they die, and are carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Oh, let us think, my dear hearers, how soon we shall be approximated to these spirits, who, redeemed by the grace of God, have part in all the blessings of salvation.

I hasten now to close the subject by noticing SOME TRUTHS WHICH ARE CONNECTED WITH THIS GREAT AND IMPORTANT FACT.

And here observe, in the first place, *the vastness of God's creation*. How little we know of the creation in which we live, and move, and have our being. We think of the almost invisible creatures which pass over the surface, from the smallest insect up unto man; we look at the lofty masses of matter—the sublime mountain, and the beautiful and deep valley; and we cast our thoughts over the rolling ocean; every thing that is attractive in form, colour, or substance; and all seem to overpower us. But oh, what a little speck it is, what a mere point in the universe, when we think of Him who has innumerable spirits, who has already countless multitudes of angelic spirits about him, and who will eventually gather, in connexion with them, a multitude of the human race whom no man can number. Oh, what wisdom; oh, what power; oh, what goodness, in the profusion of creation—in all that is seen, and in all that is unseen! Let us think, then, how great our God is: let us think of the Infinite, Eternal, and Uncreated Spirit: and let us think that all the beings in the universe are maintained by his power, preserved by his care; and that all that portion of the creation which is fallen, in consequence of the transgression of one human being, is now to be the subject of his grace before it can enter the glory of another world.

Another truth which we may gather from the subject is, that it reminds us of *the amazing insignificance of man*. “Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” When we cast our thoughts upon these beings, how very insignificant we are, with diseased, mouldering, decaying, dying bodies; but these spirits without any infirmity, without any affliction, without any moral delinquency, or mortality in their character. What an astonishing contrast! Oh, what is man in all his greatness, compared with an angel? What are all the powers of his intellect, compared with those beings who excel in strength, in holiness, in knowledge? What is all his earthly grandeur and glory, which in the course of a few years will pass away, and be to him as though they had not been? Let us think what are the enjoyments, and the honours, and the glory of the world, yea, even the intellect of man, unless that intellect be sanctified? Remember, my dear hearers, that powerful intellect, unsanctified by grace, only brings you nearer the character of a fallen angel; it does not bring you nearer the character of these angelic beings, these celestial intelligences, these creatures that have never sinned. Mark your insignificance, then, and think of the immense disparity between human creatures and these holy beings, so holy, so glorious, and so pure.

It reminds us of *the peculiar glory of Him who is Lord of angels*. This is, apparently, the drift of the Apostle in the comparison he is here drawing. In the next chapter, he is shewing the superiority of Christ to Moses; and in the next, the superiority of Christ to Aaron. He is establishing the peculiar dignity and glory of Jesus; and hence, you will observe, that all these angels that excel in knowledge, and wisdom, and purity, pay their adoration unto him. “When we bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” They bow before him; there is no difficulty in their minds in looking to him, and saying, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Never let us be afraid, then, of asserting the dignity of Christ; never let us be afraid of giving him too much honour, while we see that angels love him and worship him, and that angels, who excel in knowledge and purity, are constantly paying their best obedience to him. Oh, that we may confess, in the humble exercis

of faith, "My Lord, and my God!" Oh, that we may cast our crowns before him, in connexion with the holy angels, and adore Him who sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever! Let us remember that they were made superior to Him, and pay him their highest homage, and their best obedience.

It intimates *what ought to be the anticipation of believers*. We are coming, my dear hearers, to an innumerable company of angels. "Oh, what a privilege it is to be an heir of salvation. Think of the society, think of their state, think of their character. In the course of a very little time we shall be given to the dust. Death is making rapid strides. "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" How we see removals constantly taking place. Year after year, some pulpit is vacant; some father, some pastor, some prophet of Christ lost to us, and gone to the eternal world; or some that have been active and holy in the Church, members of the mystical body of Christ, have passed away: and every year reminds us, that the period is coming when our dust shall return to the earth, when our connexion with the Church shall be broken up, when our associations here below will be no longer continued. Let us humbly say, "Father, thy will be done: only let me live in this delightful anticipation, that I shall come to the Church above, that I shall mingle with the innumerable company of angels, that I shall enter into that society at last where I shall hear how the creation came into being, where I shall hear how the heavens and the earth were made, where I shall hear how God's providence has governed it for six or seven thousand years, where I shall hear more of the mysteries of redemption and all its glorious effects." May the Spirit of God help us, my dear hearers, that, when we feel we are approaching eternity, we may have some pleasing anticipations that we are coming to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect.

In closing this subject, let me remind you there are two classes of angels: and let me seriously put the question to you, With which, think you, shall you be associated? There are the angels who have not kept their first estate, and they are consigned over to chains and darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. There are legions of them, legions of fallen spirits: and will it be that you shall mingle with *them*? Will it be that you shall die under the sound of the Gospel, and be associated with those that perish? Will it be that you shall have heard of the Bible, and of the pure society of heaven, and, after all that, be excluded from it? Oh, that you may be wise, that you may consider your latter end, that you may ascertain where you shall be found at last, when every one shall be judged, and shall receive according to the things done in the body. Remember, if you are to associate with angelic beings, you must yourself be holy: all angels are holy; and they can have no intercourse, no communication, no fellowship with unholy creatures: if you mingle, therefore, with these holy angels, you must have a corresponding holiness. "Ah!" you will say, "I am unholy, I am carnal, sold under sin: I am a rebel, a transgressor: I feel the depravity of my nature." Now look at the blood of Jesus; now look at that which angels are looking into with admiration, and love, and praise. I call upon you to look at it with faith, to look at Calvary now, to turn to the Lord of angels; and remember that his blood cleanseth from all sin; and, however impure and imperfect you are, standing in him you shall mingle with this innumerable company when time shall be no more. May he pour out his Spirit upon us, and at last bring us into this celestial state, where we shall go no more out, but serve him day and night in his temple continually. Amen.

## THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT OF GOD.

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REV. T. DALE, A.M.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHAPEL, DENMARK HILL, CAMBERWELL, APRIL 6 1834

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"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.—  
1 JOHN, v. 11.

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OUR knowledge of God being limited as to his attributes, it is manifest that our conceptions of God must be inadequate as to his acts. It is, however, mercifully ordained, that those which most immediately concern ourselves are those also which we can most readily comprehend. The wisdom which devised, the love which directed, and the power which accomplished the Gospel system of salvation, are, doubtless, among the mysteries into which angels desire to look, as well as among the splendours of divine agency on which mortal sense cannot endure to gaze. For, of the dwelling of light wherein Jehovah tabernacles, and to which we are told man cannot approach, we know it is a concentration of brightness, before which even the celestial intelligences are said to veil their faces with their wings. And if this be true in the material, wherefore not also in the moral sense?

All speculations, therefore, concerning the divine nature, which deviate in any degree from the beaten track of divine revelation, are much more likely to bewilder by uncertainty than to conduce to edifying. And, in like manner, all admeasurement by the standard of human reason of things beyond its province, all attempts to scale or system those divine workings by which salvation can be brought home to any one of us, are liable to become, in the issue, at once disparaging to the divine honour, and detrimental to our own improvement. It must be enough to establish a doctrine that God has revealed it; enough to certify a promise that God hath uttered it; enough to commend and sanctify an inward working that God hath ordained, and that God is accomplishing it.

Hence, in propounding the doctrine which our text records and attests, that "God hath given to us eternal life," and that "this life is in his Son," no demand is made on the believer for an examination into God's motive, *why* he gave; nor for an admeasurement of God's benevolence, *what* he gave; nor for a demonstration of God's consistency, *the way* he bestowed the gift of his Son. His motive is revealed to have been the purest possible; his benevolence, the broadest possible; his mode of dispensing it, the wisest possible. All these points, indeed, are practically involved in the declaration, that the work of salvation is God's. Lower than this, the Apostle could not rest; higher than this, he desires not to ascend: for when wisdom and faith have combined, and measured out their widest range, they must turn, after all, to the two points, and settle there, wherein all the light that can be thrown on the subject is con-

centrated: "He is faithful that hath promised;" and "what he hath promised, he is also able to perform."

It is, therefore, a matter of fact which is stated, both in the text and in the passage to which the text immediately refers: "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life:" and thus, though the subject is one which overpasses man's imagination, though it is that which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive;" though, consequently, were it man's, no asseveration would be too earnest, nor any evidence too ample and conclusive; yet, since it is God's, the Apostle hinges the door of eternal life on the single and sufficient promise, on the bare word and will of God; and, with a touching simplicity which goes directly to the heart, and which should operate a confidence filial as his own, he thus demonstrates by example, what he had before declared in terms, that it is impossible for God to lie, and, that in proportion to our conviction of that impossibility, is the strength of our consolation, if we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel.

The inference, then, from all this will be, what indeed the Apostle had already stated in the preceding verse: "He that believeth on the Son, hath the witness in himself." It is the witness of God's working; it is the seed of God's sowing; it is the root of God's planting. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the power of the Holy Ghost;" and none, surely, can aver that there is life eternal in Christ Jesus, who does not believe and avow that Jesus is the Lord.

It ought, therefore, to be determined this day, dearly beloved brethren—and may the Lord himself enable you to determine the point aright—whether you have as yet duly recognized and realized, impressed and engraven on your hearts, first, the value of the gift; next, the goodness of the giver; and, lastly, the fitness and sufficiency of the instrument. The gift is eternal life; the giver is God; and this life is in his Son.

Now, in one sense, it must be admitted, **THE VALUE OF THE GIFT** defies all estimate: for the gift is *eternal life*; and who shall furnish us with any *data* on which we can compute the costliness of a benefit which is destined to endure throughout eternity? Some of us may be able, perhaps, to cast a retrospective glance nearly three-score years and ten behind, and the life of man is declared to be nought but labour and sorrow; but what is that when paralleled with the chain which stretches forward throughout endless ages and generations? It is the hill that we ascend which overlooks the boundless plain; it is the river down which we are borne by the tide into the immeasurable expanse of ocean. No, we can never rightly estimate the value of the gift; but, we can arrive at this conclusion—that its value transcends all estimate; not only in theory (for all will concur in the fact, which is from its very nature incapable of denial) but in practice also; so far, at least, that we seek the invaluable gift in preference to every other, though the due proportion may not be observed between it and others, as to the ardour, and zeal, and fixedness of purpose in which it is sought.

Still none approximate to the general estimate of the truth, but those who avow, or, which is better far, whose conduct will attest for them, without the necessity of any further avowal, that they do seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, though they do not seek these only—that their works, in the experience of their daily intercourse, are commenced, continued, and ended in God; that they sanctify whatever they undertake by the word of God and



prayer; furnishing themselves for the necessary contact and unavoidable collision with the world, which is always hazardous, and often pernicious, by keeping constantly upon them the whole armour of God, and constantly polishing their only weapon of defence, which is the Word of God. It would be no feeble test of vital religion, to determine how far we are acted on in common things by the remembrance and recognition of eternal life; how far the desire we have to attain it works upon our daily motives and principles; and how far we are thus prepared for the pursuit of practical holiness. For though God has given freely, and gratuitously, and like a God, in a manner harmonizing with all that he has in his word revealed of his own adorable perfections, he does not offer, except in some few special cases, to force, or even to urge, his gift on man's acceptance. Free to accept that gift we must be considered; just as it is certain that we are unable to accept it unless God prevent us, and give us the will, and work with us when we have that will. The impulse, therefore, the effort, comes from him: and happy are those who can, while I am speaking, discern the production thereof in themselves.

For in stating the fact, the Apostle virtually proposes an inquiry. He supplies the subject of it, at least; and the estimate of its importance will best determine the propriety of proposing it for ourselves. The fact is this: "God hath given to us eternal life." The question founded on the fact is, Have we received his gift? Have we truly and effectually received it? For there were those in the Apostle's days, and doubtless there are in our own, of whom it is necessary to entreat, even with tears, that they "receive not the grace of God in vain." If then, we have received it, where is the evidence of the fact? What result does it produce? What power does it bring to bear on the complicated machinery of our daily motives and principles of action? How does it operate on the actions of our lives, and how does it influence the conversation of our lips? How do we know ourselves, how are others to know, that we have earnestly accepted and appropriated the unspeakable gift of God, for which all thanks are now due, but for which hereafter all account must be rendered?

And this suggests a consideration fraught with an awfulness which few of us can duly appreciate—that here, in the presence of each other and their common God, is a congregation of persons who would concur in the acknowledgment that God hath given to us eternal life; while there is reason to fear that not a few would be confounded by the demand, were it made by one who had power to dive into their hearts—Have you received what God has given? Have you so much as stretched out your hand to receive the bough laden with the fruit which the dove has brought fresh and fragrant from the bowers of Paradise? Have you taken any step that you might affix your name and seal to that covenant which, at once, entitles all who are parties to it to become inheritors of eternal life, and excludes all who might have been parties to it and are not? Do you really feel and declare that the Sabbath is not a mere shred and fragment of time given to God, torn from the piece, and varying in colour and texture; but that, in the desire to mortify sin and to serve Christ, every day is a Sabbath, an antepast of that rest which remaineth for the people of God, and into which they that have believed do enter now? For scarcely is any habit more pernicious—and none, certainly, requires more care in the avoidance—than to refer every thing to a future and indefinite period, considering that the life of the soul is then only to begin when the life of the body is extinct; which it is no more reasonable to expect than that manhood should arrive without the preparatory

stages of infancy, childhood, and youth. The gift of God includes the riches of his grace no less than the riches of his glory: the former must be realized here, if the latter are to be enjoyed hereafter: and the very expression leads appropriately to that which we ought to consider in the second place; I mean,

**THE GOODNESS OF THE GIVER.** Here also, it is obvious, the same difficulty will be found to lie which we encountered at the commencement of the subject: When can we take an admeasurement of God's goodness, but when we have computed with precision the full value of the benefit? and how can his love be a fathomable deep when eternity is an interminable ocean? Our knowledge must be comparative; the subject of practice, not of theory; delineated in action, with a full conviction on the mind, that, in the estimate, imagination itself must fail. We feel, if we feel at all, that we are held by an obligation of which we cannot tell the force; a love constraining us, of which it is impossible to express the depth and the power. The venerable Evangelist has, perhaps, concentrated in three words all that the language of man can express, and far more than the capacity of man can embrace, concerning that peculiar attribute of the divine nature under which we must for ever contemplate the Author of our salvation: "God is love." And hence in treating this other portion of our subject, the value of the gift, incapable of being theoretically comprehended, must be brought practically home. Then, at least, we ought to know the love that passeth knowledge. It is not only, What are we doing that we may attain the gift? but, How are we endeavouring to demonstrate ourselves the surpassing and incalculable obligation towards Him who gave it? That God hath given to us eternal life, that life eternal is the gift, that He who hath given is God, and that he hath given it in his Son—oh what a treasury of love! and condemnation is reserved even in these most comfortable words, to all those whom the goodness of God is not the means of leading them to repentance.

Is there the shadow of a pretext, is there the phantom of an apology, is there the breath of an excuse, for those who know the fact, who believe the fact, who acknowledge the fact, and yet, who knowing, believing, and acknowledging, forbear to act on it; who live from day to day in the presence and under the eye, the never-wearied eye of the God who hath given them eternal life, which yet they put away from themselves—not as judging him unfaithful, or themselves unworthy, but simply, as it will appear, because in their view such a Giver may be most safely neglected, and such a gift most conveniently postponed?

Ah! beloved brethren, it is to little purpose that we have long enjoyed the revelation, and attended with outward show of reverence on the ministry, of God's word. It is to little purpose that we have heard the details of the love, the exercise of which called into action all the attributes of the divine nature, to devise, ordain, and execute the plan of mercy: it is to little purpose that, while we listen to the development, and look on the spectacle, of the eternal redemption accomplished by the inestimable sacrifice, we feel our hearts burn within us, and our desires awakened, and our affections delighted, and our conduct improved: all this, I say, is to little purpose, if the inefficient knowledge and the evanescent love produce only a light which imparts lustre to the mind without warmth, a blaze which kindles up momentarily, only that it may expire in darkness or be smothered in death, if these be the only result of the declaration of such a gift, through the benevolence of such a giver. Yes—for those who live such, and die such, it would have been better never to have heard of the gift, though unspeakable—never to have known a benevolence which will only punish. For where the

Gospel becomes the savour of death unto death, who can inculpate or accuse the Judge, when he has despised and rejected the deliverance? Who can arraign the justice of the sentence of eternal death, when he has wilfully and deliberately, with a contemptuous negligence, not less criminal than presumptuous, and with open defiance, put away the offer of eternal life?

Remember, therefore, beloved brethren, that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance, and that only those have a right knowledge of the goodness of God whom it has led to this, and that by all such the right knowledge is possessed. So that when I reverse the contemplation of the subject, and turn to the better and brighter side of it, for your comfort, and edification, and establishment in the truth, which I now gladly do, I am not to ask whether you have measured the mercy which reacheth to the heavens, or the faithfulness which stretcheth to the clouds; whether you have formed such an estimate of the divine goodness as is intrinsically worthy of the overwhelming subject; but has your conception of it been, at least, sufficiently elevated, and has your impression been sufficiently deep and genuine, to operate continually and constantly in your conduct? Have your combined and habitual principles of action been, "Ye that fear the Lord hate evil;" ye that love God follow after righteousness; ye that praise the gift serve the Giver; ye that hear the Giver accept the gift? The first and the most obvious demonstration of knowing God, is to take him at his word, and to act firmly and decidedly on his promises. If we can but do this, though still unworthy, our unworthiness is nothing to the purpose; though still weak, our weakness is nothing to the purpose; though we are sorely beset and ready to halt in our path by the power of enemies without and within—adversaries, not of flesh and blood, who can only be combated with weapons not carnal—all these are nothing to the purpose. The single question of real importance to the believer is this: Has God promised eternal life? Then let who will withstand, he will give it. Has God given eternal life? Then, let who may accept, he will ensure it. And if this is the promise that he hath promised us, and this the gift that he hath given us—even eternal life, and that this life is in his Son; it then follows, as of necessity—and those whose experience responds to the testimony, will thus know that they are right—it follows that the man who clearly understands, most warmly acknowledges, most sensibly feels, most abundantly receives and realizes the goodness of God, is he who closes at once with the frank, and gracious, and godlike offer of an unlimited and unconditional love, on the simple ground—"God hath said it, God will do it: God will give eternal life; and it is enough for me, sinner though I am, that that life is in his Son."

Yes, brethren, to all who are taught of God, the consummate fitness, the exquisite adaptation, the entire sufficiency, the unalloyed perfection of the instrument by which such a Giver conveys such a gift, comes home to the heart with a demonstration of irresistible power; it becomes the witness in himself by which the believer is at once identified. We then believe, when we feel that such a salvation was made for us, and that we were made for such a salvation. The soul, conscious from the first of its own deficiency and degradation, needs a sure foundation on which it can construct an edifice which shall endure throughout eternity: but believing, it finds all that it needs in the one glorious conclusion, the one invaluable assurance, "Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The perfection of the sacrifice grapples, in the mental struggle, with the immensity of the sin: the costliness of the ransom is opposed to the accumulation of the debt. We knew that "sin abounded," and we felt that

death would abound by reason of sin: but how can the understanding be so darkened, even by its own ignorance, or the heart be so deadened, even by its own depravity, as not to admit the inevitable conclusion, that "grace doth much more abound?" If it were by a finite sacrifice, or without any sacrifice at all, that God hath given to us eternal life; if angel or archangel had been the atonement, or if atonement there had been none; the cloudy vision of the conscientious heart might still have been bewildered and perplexed, in discovering adequate hope of pardon. Had the divine displeasure against sin been expressed with equal energy as his willingness to pardon now is, the words of mercy and of wrath might have held each other in equipoise; and we might, nay, we must, have passed through life in a solicitude the most fearful, and from it in a suspense the most appalling. But now "the life is in his Son;" now there is the endurance of God incarnate to compensate divine wrath; there is the obedience of a pure and sinless man to vindicate God's holiness; there is the perfected sacrifice of Christ Jesus, the God-man, to afford the strongest consolation; so strong that death cannot prevail against it, to those who flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel.

Now, as God has arranged the scheme of our redemption, now the ransom overpays the debt, the obedience outweighs the sin, the one offering perfects for ever them that are sanctified; now death is not only overcome, but even "swallowed up in victory:" and he who was dead in trespasses and sins, now made alive unto God through Christ, is nothing daunted in approaching God by the retrospect of former days, when the motions of sin in his members did work in his members to bring forth sin unto death. Yet he will say, and I have heard it in substance said again and again "Death comes to me as my born inheritance, by reason of Adam's sin, and it works in me by the agency of my own indwelling corruption; and were I to be judged by my own consciousness of demerit, or to toil and travail for eternal life by my own merits, I should be consigned to despair: but now I have a good hope through grace, for God has given me eternal life (it is not the wages of my service; it is the gift of God), and this life is in his Son."

Let not, then, this subject leave you, beloved brethren, without a standard by which to determine your own spiritual state: for the Apostle has told you in the preceding verse, that "he that believeth hath the witness in himself;" and, therefore, we may warrantably apply the reverse of the proposition: "He that hath *not* the witness in himself cannot be safely considered as a believer."

Now, the witness within is none other than the record which God hath given us of his Son; and if, for your practical application, I am to throw this into a tangible form, I would shape the inquiry thus: Believing what God hath promised; accepting what God hath offered, even eternal life; acting daily, though imperfectly, on the conviction that the promise is true, and the persuasion that the gift is sure—do you dwell with the greater satisfaction on the promise of God; and do you accept with the greater confidence the offer of God, because both are in his Son? Are you accustomed to calm your apprehensions, to silence your misgivings, to comfort your hearts, and to stay yourselves on the consideration, that Jesus is a Saviour, at once all-sufficient, and alone sufficient? Have you in consequence committed to him, with entire and ample confidence, the accomplishment of the indispensable work? Or, if you have not as yet given him your confidence, are you at least aware that he demands confidence and that he deserves it, determined never to rest satisfied till you have rendered, in spirit and truth, what he both deserves and demands?

Yes, we would press this point, for we must assume this as the very lowest point of practical Christianity. This must be the experience of all those who have so much as a foot upon the threshold, or a hand upon the door; who are scarcely within, yet just within, the safe enclosure, where the fire of divine indignation against sin might singe the garment, but it would not scorch the flesh. This, I say, is the very lowest point to which every one who is indeed a Christian must come up; he must experience a positive satisfaction. To many, indeed, it is a lively, a joyful, a transporting, a triumphant satisfaction; but every one, I repeat it, who is on the lowest form of Christian instruction, must realize a positive satisfaction in the thought, that what God has given, he has given in his Son; that thus the sacrifice is perfected; that thus the covenant is made sure; that one is alike enthroned as sovereign, and accepted as intercessor, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him. And thus we who feel that we need the uttermost, inasmuch as we are the chief of sinners, how can we but confide in it when it is salvation through the Son of God?

We have only time, in conclusion, to identify three classes of our hearers; and, do you, brethren, determine your own place.

There are first, and I would you were not almost but altogether such, there are those who believe, obey, confide; and whose experience may thus briefly be summed up: that they work trusting, and they trust working. These are the children of God, these are the members of Christ, these are the planting of the Spirit. Already more beloved than angels, they shall hereafter and for ever be more glorious.]

Next, there are those who believe without acting, who acknowledge the gift, but who do not accept it by every public confession of God's goodness, and seal and rivet the justice of their own condemnation, by every acknowledgment of their own sins. By these the unspeakable gift of God is postponed; the offer, the unmerited, inestimable offer of God is adjourned. Life, eternal life, life in the Son of God awaits (could you believe it, if it were not verified by facts?) awaits the accumulation of a little more wealth, the acquirement of a higher reputation, the swelling of some bubble of ambition, or the grasping of some phantom of pleasure. In the mean time, the sun disappears, and the sky darkens, and the night lowers, and the tempest howls, and they who would not work while it was day, are come to the hour that they cannot work in; and they call on us to pray for them in their agony, and we cannot even pray for them, "Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did."

And, lastly, there are those—but no, we will hope that there are not those here, who neither believe nor know; who come here for no better purpose than to deceive men, or to outrage God; nay, we will even hope with those who belong to the former class, that these may be prevailed upon by the simple word of God, when our pleadings and threatenings are alike in vain. Hearken, then, ye congregation of immortals, you who cannot but in part, and that the lesser and the viler part, return to your native dust: hearken—God hath given to you eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Oh, then, take what God has given, and accept what God has proffered. Receive the Saviour into **your** hearts ere he be angry, and so you perish from the right way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Rather may you inherit the blessings of all those that put their trust in him.

## THE CHRISTIAN HOPE OF A TIME OF REFRESHING.

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REV. D. WILSON, A. M.

ST. MARY, ISLINGTON, APRIL 6, 1834.

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“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the time of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—ACTS, iii. 19—21.

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ALL the great doctrines of Christianity are of a deeply practical nature; if they do not reach the heart, they fail in their object. They are not matters for speculation, or hearing only; they are subjects for individual and personal application. The important truths which we have recently considered, embracing the sufferings, and the death, and the resurrection of the Son of God, if they lead not to repentance, to conversion, to the forsaking of sin, and the seeking after holiness, they entirely fail of their object: there has been either a want of plainness and distinctness in the manner in which they have been stated, or there is a deficiency in the application of them to our own hearts and consciences. The Apostles invariably brought their expositions of truth to a practical close; they never set forth the wondrous events connected with the crucifixion and resurrection of their Lord and Master, as subjects for curious inquiry and vain disputation; they made them, indeed, the basis of all their discourses, both to Jew and Gentile; but they never failed to employ them as motives to repentance, and stimulants to embracing the Gospel. So in the passage connected with our text, a most favourable opportunity had been presented to them for setting forth the efficacy of faith in their crucified Lord, from the miraculous cure of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, they instantly seized the opportunity, not for display and vain glory, but for awakening the wondering populace to a sense of their guiltiness in killing the Prince of Life, and solemnly calling them to repentance and life.

The promise which St. Paul here held out, as a motive to their immediate return, is one of deep interest to the Church of Christ in every age. Permit me, then, from the words before you, to invite your attention, first, to the promise of our text; and secondly, to the practical exhortation founded upon it. And may that blessed Spirit who can alone apply it to the conscience and convince of sin, be pleased to bless what may now be spoken.

I propose to call your attention, first, to **THE PROMISE CONTAINED IN OUR TEXT.**

This refers to a period of peace, and holiness, and righteousness, which shall be hereafter revealed in the world. In its more confined and limited sense, indeed, it imports that peace and joy that shall flow into the soul of every true

convert. It forms the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to all who come to him:—"I will give you rest." It comprises the accomplishment of Isaiah's lofty prophecy, where he describes the future Saviour as coming "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only true source of refreshment, and peace, and joy. "This," says the prophet, "is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; this is the refreshing." This is the source and spring of hope, under circumstances of disappointment and sorrow, when the truth of Christ is admitted by faith into the breast, and the influence of divine grace begins to operate; when the promises of mercy are fulfilled, and the love of Christ shed abroad; when a sense of refreshing from the presence of the Lord is vouchsafed; when the moral disorder is destroyed, and every faculty, and every power, of body and mind, is restored to its proper use, and original purpose; when all this begins to take place, and the man is made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

But I am aware this is but a very partial and very imperfect application of the promise before me. It evidently looks forward to some future scene of peace and joy, of holiness and of righteousness, which shall prevail more generally throughout the earth, when Messiah's reign shall be more fully established, and the influence of true piety shall be more generally spread. What the exact import of these terms mean, I pretend not to explain: "the day shall declare;" the times and seasons the Father hath put in his own power. We may, nevertheless, be able to gather some general ideas respecting the nature of the promise before us, which may be sufficient to stimulate and encourage the humble and inquiring mind, and which may form a powerful motive on which to ground our subsequent appeal.

The promise before us, then, embraces, in the first place, the assurance, *that some future period of more general repose and peace shall be granted to the Church*; "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." The expression conveys the idea of relief, repose, consolation, and rest, as following after a previous period of affliction, trouble, and distress. The Church of Christ is at present in a militant state; a struggle between light and darkness is going forward. The age in which we live is also remarkably distinguished for this conflict. Light and truth are spread abroad; the Gospel is proclaimed far and wide; evangelical religion is no longer a party name, distinguishing a sect which is every where spoken against, but embraces, more especially in this favoured land, a very large body of the professing Church. On the other hand, the enemy of souls is actively at work; he is sowing tares among the wheat, infidelity, scepticism, and false doctrine, are widely propagated. We seem to be on the eve of some great result, momentous to the Church of God. The promise, then, before us seems to imply, that a period shall arrive when this conflict and agitation shall cease; when refreshing dews and heavenly grace shall descend; when Christ, by his Gospel and his Spirit, shall come as the rain upon the new-mown grass, and as the showers that water the earth; when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; when a breathing time of repose and rest, as it were, shall be granted to the people of God; when peace shall flow as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea.

The next point connected with the promise before us, is, *the return of the*

*risen and ascended Saviour, to take full possession of his glorious kingdom* when, having triumphed victoriously in every age, he shall receive his faithful servants to final and complete happiness. How and when this shall take place, we indeed know not. The heavens have now received the glorified Redeemer; there he sits, until he has subdued all enemies under his feet. The Church is now waiting his return in humble expectation. The Apostles ever kept in view this glorious period; from the time that their ascended Lord was received out of their sight, they seem to have been perpetually influenced by the expectation of his return: they warned their people to wait in constant expectation; they repeatedly employed this stimulating truth as a motive to holy diligence; and amid the trials, and sufferings, and afflictions which surround them, this formed their topic of consolation. "It is a righteous thing with God," says St. Paul to the Thessalonians, "to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Apostle further speaks of this period, as one which should bring about *the restitution, or more perfect restoration, of this disordered world*. We cannot, my brethren, look around us without perceiving the want of order and regularity. Sin has deranged the moral system: vice prevails; and the professor of fairness is despised and oppressed: unlawful gain succeeds, and is pursued; and honesty not unfrequently is left without recompence. Religion does not receive in this world that proper and just respect which its merit demands; God is not honoured with universal benevolence; his Gospel is not accepted with undeviating joy; misery, sorrow, and trouble, widely prevail in this our earth.

The language of our text, then, seems to imply, that a period is fixed in the councils of heaven when God will rectify this state of irregularity in the present dispensation, and make the cause of righteousness and truth for ever triumphant and glorious. This forms a source of no ordinary consolation to the Church of Christ. Whether the period is near or far distant; whether it shall form a part of our present system, or be reserved for the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is a matter of comparatively little moment to the devout mind. It is enough to be assured, that the Divine Ruler has ordered it in all things after the counsel of his own will, and shall bring about, in his own way, his designs of love to the Church; that eventually Christ shall reign King of kings, and Lord of lords; and that at length the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

I have only to add further, that *all this will be the exact fulfilment of prophecy*. It is what "God hath spoken, by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." It will not form some sudden, unlooked for, unexpected event but will be the consummation of the whole series of prophetic writings, which will gradually become more fully understood as they are fulfilled in their due order.

But, secondly, whatever darkness or obscurity may rest upon the exact import of this term, none can attach to **THE EXHORTATION GROUNDED UPON IT**. The connexion of these two parts of our subject will perhaps appear more obvious, if we read the first verse of our text thus: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." It is thus translated by most commentators; and if so



rendered, it more distinctly shows the design of the Apostle in the exhortation before us. He evidently holds out the prospect of this glorious season of peace, and regularity, and order, in the Church of Christ, as a motive to repentance and conversion. He seems also to imply, that the fulfilment of this blessed promise would be hastened by the more rapid ingathering of souls to the Gospel fold. The great obstacle, my brethren, to the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and the fulfilment of his designs of mercy to his Church, is man's sin and man's unbelief: it is this which frustrates and opposes the means employed for the conversion of souls, and the spread of divine truth. If Messiah's kingdom is to be hastened—if the unbelieving Jew, with the fulness of the Gentiles, is to be brought in—if the Church of Christ is to be favoured with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the restitution of its moral order—it must be secured by a large ingathering of immortal souls. It is not by curiously prying into subjects of dark and doubtful interpretation, that we shall hasten the coming of Christ: it is not by eagerly inquiring into the precise time, or order, or signs of his return, that we shall bring forward the fulfilment of the promise. It is by seeking repentance, and conversion, and pardon, in his atoning blood for ourselves, and by promoting the conversion of sinners throughout the world.

Permit me, then, affectionately to call upon every one here present to repent of his sins. This is the commencement of the new life. Your sins have separated between you and your God; sin keeps up the present conflict of disorder in the world; sin hinders the accomplishment of the divine promise to the Church. Humble your souls, then, in deep and unfeigned penitence on account of it: seek that renewal of character and heart which the influence of divine grace can alone bestow. It is thus, and thus alone, that the black catalogue of iniquity will be blotted out; erased as obliterated writing from a waxen tablet; taken out of the book, and nailed to the cross.

What cause for thankfulness should we have in the review of our recent commemoration of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, if these blessed truths were applied by divine grace to some careless, thoughtless heart here present. These words of our text, coming from the lips of St. Peter, were accompanied with a mighty outpouring of the Spirit's influence: not less than five thousand souls were added to the Church by this and the previous discourse. How evil my brethren, are the times in which we live. Thankful would the minister of Christ now be to know, that one in a thousand had heard the word to the salvation of the soul. And yet the Spirit of God is not restrained; his power and grace are still the same. Instances of miracles have indeed terminated; but the ordinary influences of the Holy Ghost are now dispensed. Are we sufficiently diligent in seeking them? Do we not look too much to man? Do we not look only at the instrument, and forget, that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts?"

In drawing this subject to a conclusion, we must first observe, that *God will assuredly be faithful to his own prophecy.*

These prophecies are expressed in very general terms; and will probably not be fully understood until their actual accomplishment: but that they will be fulfilled is as certain as the existence of Jehovah himself: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away." Unbelief, indeed, may jeer at, and ridicule the divine word; but "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." The prophecy of

Messiah's first advent has been most minutely, most exactly, fulfilled; nor will future events in subsequent years weaken the validity of divine truth. And may we not hope that we already begin to see the dawn of a brighter day? Popery is crumbling to the dust; Mahometanism and idolatry are shaken to their foundations; light is breaking in on every side, and the spread of Messiah's kingdom is advancing.

But it is important to observe, secondly, that *God has in every age been pleased to employ the instrumentality of man in effecting his designs of mercy.* He works by means; he does not generally interfere with the ordinary course of his providence; he condescends to employ his creatures as agents in his great designs. This has been the case in every age. It was not angels with trumpets that announced the first advent of the Saviour; a human instrument was selected, as the forerunner of the Messiah, who was to prepare the way of the Lord. Apostles and teachers were sent out to proclaim his Gospel after his ascension; and men have been employed in every subsequent age for this purpose.

Hence I remark, finally, *the duty of every Christian to promote to his utmost, the various means which are employed, and blessed of God, for the accomplishment of these designs of mercy.* Begin, brethren, with yourselves. Let every heart among us inquire "Am I an obstacle or an assistance in promoting the cause of Christ? Have I repented of sin? Am I washed in the blood of Christ? Am I a new creature by adoption and grace?" Then look around you. openings for usefulness surround you on every hand; the Gospel is proclaimed far and wide; the distribution of the Bible, the bread of the Word of Life, is going forward; means are used, societies formed, for the hallowing and better observance of the sacred Sabbath—an object which every true Christian must have most dearly at heart, and to promote which, I trust, we shall find many coming forward from among ourselves in the present week. Schools are being established, too, for the instruction of the young. Christian benevolence has marked out for itself a variety of channels, through which the same great work may be promoted. May our hearts be inclined to co-operate with them; and may we this morning find comfort and relief at the table of our Saviour. May this be a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and may many hearts among us be strengthened, and converted, and established, and cheered on their heavenly road.

## WALKING SO AS TO PLEASE GOD.

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REV. J. H. EVANS, A.M.

JOHN STREET CHAPEL, KING'S ROAD, APRIL 8, 1834.

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“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”—COLOSSIANS, i. 10.

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ALL mere speculative knowledge is idle and profitless. It is so in things natural: if the whole world of science were before me, and I could traverse the whole of its fields, yet if the principles of it were not applied, practically brought out into active exercise, it might puff me up with contemptible pride, but it would be of no utility to others, nor profit to myself. If I were acquainted with that imaginary secret, which could turn all the baser metals into gold, and yet never brought out the principle into any use, of what advantage would it be to me? And if this be true in the things of nature, how much more in the glorious science of divine truth! I may have all knowledge, all the gifts of tongues, all faith that could remove mountains, and yet without that faith that “worketh by love,” and that “purifieth the heart,” it would be profitless and vain.

But there is one peculiar glory that attaches itself to divine truth: he that really, and for himself—that is spiritually—knoweth one truth, is not, and cannot be, wholly ignorant of the bearings of that truth. It is a glorious chain, that has involved in it link within link, and he that touches one, can move the whole. For instance: he that has a spiritual knowledge of God, loves God; and he that loves God, loves the will of God; and he that loves the will of God, desires to do the will of God: for it is not the mere knowledge of it as an abstract truth, but it is the knowledge of it in its intrinsic value and efficacy. So I learn from the connexion of this passage with the former: “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Speculators in divine truth are to be met with by thousands; but a real spiritual knowledge of his will, makes one to desire to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, and to be fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

In opening this passage, I trust the Lord the Spirit may enable me to open it in such a way as may commend it to our consciences, making the truth precious to your hearts. In the first place, observe what the Apostle immediately prays for: he prays that they might “walk worthy of the Lord,” and that in the way of being “fruitful in every good work.” Secondly, observe, he stirs them up to this on the high principle of pleasing the Lord in all things:

“unto all pleasing.” Then observe a great and most important truth (for so I understand it in the connexion in which the words stand,) that this pathway of holy obedience, is the school in which the Holy Ghost admits us into an increasing knowledge of it: “unto all pleasing, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Now, in the first place, **HE PRAYS THAT THEY MAY WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD.**

There are two or three passages of a similar nature. There is Eph. iv. 1: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.” Again, in I Thessalonians, ii. 12: “That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.” Now it is an awful thought, that every man living in his sins, dead in sin, is spiritually worthless; he is a cumberer of the ground, and only fit to be cut down: this is his worthiness. He is an unprofitable servant that buries his one talent in the earth: he is worthy to be cast out into outer darkness. He is a rebel, found in arms against his rightful sovereign; and he is worthy of instant execution. If he be a professor, (and the fifteenth of John can only apply to professors), he appears as if he were united to the true vine, but is a dead branch, worthy only to be severed from it, and cast into the fire, and burned. So that we may truly say, that every man living in his sins, or rather, dead in his sins, while he liveth, is spiritually worthless: and it is one of the first and greatest truths which the Holy Ghost teacheth the soul, in the grand and glorious work of conversion, that he brings conviction of this to the conscience. How the language, in Genesis, xxxii. 9, 10, seems to sink into the heart of Jacob, when he was speaking of God’s mercies. (One word, my brother: the more high thy views are of God’s mercies, the more thou dost sink; a thankful spirit is the great teacher of humility.) “And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.” So we find the godly Centurion feeling this: “I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof.” And thus the awakened Prodigal, returning to his father’s bosom, exclaimed, “I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” There can be no greater proof of a real growth in grace, than a sinking downward in humbling views of one’s own nothingness.

But although the natural man is so, and the spiritual man is made to feel his poverty increasing, yet does he stand in a new and glorious relation to God—wondrously so. Redeemed is he, and pardoned, and justified, and accepted; a dear child, beloved of the Father, a servant of the Living God: and hence that address to him in Ephesians, iv.: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, that you walk worthy of your vocation wherewith ye are called.” We have strong appeals to the child of God; there are addresses peculiar to him. We tell him what he has been redeemed *for*—eternal glory, for walking with God on earth, and being with God in heaven: we tell him what he has been redeemed *by*—the precious blood of God’s own Son: and we remind him of what he was in *himself*, a rebel and an enemy unto God by wicked works. These are the

motives that the Holy Ghost will make effectual to your souls, in teaching you to walk worthy of the Lord. It is a mark of death in any person to turn away from preceptive preaching. Whatever their numbers may be on the Lord's day, yet the men that turn away from preceptive preaching, have the mark of death in their own consciences: because the Word of God is full of it; and the Epistles, at least, are one-half composed of it. Yet, my dear hearers, in the midst of all this, it is the remembrance of God's mercy in Christ revealed to our hearts by the Holy Ghost, our consciences being cleansed by the sprinkling of his blood upon them, that moveth the affections, and draweth them out to the Living God. And hence it is in the remembrance of all that God hath done, that we beseech the dear family of God to "walk worthy of the Lord," who hath called them.

The Apostle includes in this exhortation, their "*being fruitful in every good work.*" It is only an enlarging on the former assertion: "That ye walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." The natural man cannot do a good work, any more than a bad tree can produce good fruit. First of all, a man must be purified in his heart by the power of the Holy Ghost before ever he can produce one good work, pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Now the first character of a good work is, that *God has commanded it*; and though that may not be the strongest motive, yet it is the basis of the precept. the basis of the precept lies in the command of God. Is this the revealed mind of God? On this part of my subject—I mention it as before God, and before you, and I mention it with sorrow of heart, when I tell you of the vast display I sometimes see of ungodliness, even in the heart of a child of God, who, knowing a thing to be the will of God, tampereth with it, and triflith with it, and maketh excuse for the not doing it: whereas the very basis of the command, the basis of the precept lieth in this—"the will of God concerning me." And this sweepeth away, as a cobweb is swept away in the morning, all the labours of self-righteousness, all the toilings of the mere natural spirit, all the self-workings of our proud and unsubdued nature, all those various devices by which we are so prone to make a sort of secret satisfaction to God. The very basis of the precept lieth in the command of God. Therefore, my dear brother, when thou turnest over the page to learn what is God's will, thou hast but one thing before thee: "Teach me, O Lord: without thee I am blind. Reveal thy mind to me, and make me willing to listen to it, and do it."

But observe also, it must be *the result of faith*; for without faith, it is impossible to please God. But faith has a double respect: it first of all pleadeth the finished righteousness of Christ as all its ground of acceptance, and then it layeth hold of the strength of Christ for all its power for performance. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength:" and no good work will ever be wrought in the soul of man, but as it is the fruit of that faith that worketh by love, and that purifieth the affections.

Now observe what is involved in these words, "being fruitful in every good work." That is a sweet word of the Psalmist in Psalm cxix.: "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Reserves in obedience are among the greatest hindrances that lie in our path, for a close, happy, peaceful, walking with God; the want of a sincere, upright desire, and endeavour to do the will of that God that reveals his mind to me in his own sacred word. Herod could do many things, but he had his Herodias: Saul could kill many of the Amalekites, but there was one he did not kill. Now the

Word of God cometh up close to us, as children of God. It demands submission, though it be painful as the cutting off a right hand, and though it be mortifying as plucking out a right eye. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "I esteemed," says David, "all thy precepts to be right." Blessed truth! No sooner are we brought into the kingdom of God on earth, than we are introduced into a new world; we become, in some sense, the centre of a certain circle. More is dependent on us than we can well imagine; our influence extendeth further than we have any conception of; our manner, our principle, our words, our conduct, and often our very look. Influence is a talent, money is a talent, intellect is a talent, learning is a talent. No sooner is a child of God introduced into this new world, than he finds *that* he is, more or less, the centre of a circle around him, in things private and things public, things in the world, and things in the Church, things with the saints, and things with the ungodly, things secret between him and his God, and things open between him and those around him.

Now, the precept is, "Be fruitful in every good work." And herein I would remark (may the Lord make the remark a blessing to your souls, if it be in accordance to his own word) that we see in our blessed Lord the union of the most entire opposites. We see activity, and meditation; we see the boldness of the lion, and the gentleness of the dove; we see in him all willingness to turn the right cheek, when smitten on the left, and yet all bold, intrepid, and fearless, regardless of the countenance of man. But when we look into the Church of God, how much flaw do we see, how much defect, how little of these opposites! We see great courage in a man who wants meekness. Who can read the life of John Knox and not admire the great grace of God that was in him, constituting him a bold, fearless, courageous defender of the truth? But, at the same time, who can look at him without seeing that a little more meekness, gentleness, lowliness, a little more of the tenderness of our Lord were wanting in him?

Now, that which the Apostle prays for is, that the Colossians "may be fruitful in every good work." There are some who are men of the closet, but they are not men of the street: they are men of prayer, but they do not distribute tracts or Bibles, or talk to the ungodly: you do not find them exercised in missionary societies, but that they are too prone to find fault with their defects, instead of putting their own shoulder to the wheel; or rather, to drop the figure, you find them wrestling more with God than laying themselves out for his glory. May the Holy Spirit lay this on our hearts deeply, and powerfully, and effectually, that in order to walk worthy of the Lord, worthy of our high calling as God's ordained family and called children, as his adopted ones, we be "fruitful in every good work."

Now, observe, secondly, the Apostle exhorts us TO AIM AT THE PLEASING OF THE LORD IN ALL THINGS. For so I understand the passage: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

Again a solemn truth presents itself to the mind: The natural man cannot please God: "without faith it is impossible to please him." Even a child of God often does many things that are most displeasing to God. There was but one who pleased God in all things—"My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But, in a *legal* sense, the people of God always stand before him

acceptable. Never forget this truth (may the Holy Ghost be our remembrancer here: it is a truth we are prone to forget) that, notwithstanding all one's changes, and decays, and fluctuations of thought, and mind, and principle; notwithstanding all one's wanderings to the right, and wanderings to the left; yet, as a believer in Christ, one always stands before God acceptable in Jesus Christ; having an interest in him, one always stands before God pardoned, and "made the righteousness of God in him." It is a sweet and blessed truth: it is the sheet-anchor of the soul in the midnight tempest. And how some can go on their course without the imputed righteousness of Christ, satisfying themselves with the pardoning blood of Christ, laying altogether aside his imputed righteousness, has often been to my soul a marvel. You, that know the inward plague of your hearts, you that turn over the page of conscience, you that reflect upon the journey that is gone, you that are made to know somewhat of God's purity and of what your own hearts have been; let me ask you, In what can you stand before God for one moment but "the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe?" Be assured that this is faith's broad sheet-anchor, the very substance of a living hope, and of a dying hope. The ground-work, the basis, the foundation of all our confidence is to be found in this—that, legally and as before God, his people stand in Christ Jesus acceptable before him.

Yet forget not that the child of God, though accepted in the Beloved, though pardoned, redeemed, and made the righteousness of God, can do those things that are displeasing to God; and he can, through grace, do those things that are pleasing to him. An unreserved obedience, a desire to obey God in all things, in little matters as well as in great, is that state of mind that is pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ. And why is it so? Because this is the very fruit of the Spirit. All these things in the soul of a man, whatever there is of purity, whatever there is of spirituality, whatever there is of simplicity, whatever there is of uprightness of principle in them, it is the blessed fruit of God the Eternal Spirit on their souls, causing them to pant after the Living God: and hence these things are pleasing and acceptable to God. See how they come up, perfumed with the much incense of the perfect work. My dear brother, there was enough spot in that tear of thine to cause God to cast thee for ever from his presence. There was enough of sin in that prayer of thine when thou wast most broken hearted to-day, when thy mouth was most laid in the dust to-day, when thy repentance seemed to break forth in inward contrition; there was enough of self in those groanings that could not be uttered, to have caused them, if the Lord had looked at them in themselves, to be utterly rejected by him for ever. But what makes them come up in sweet memorial before him? It is the much incense of God in our nature, of Him who, having taken away our sins, presents our holy things in his infinite merit; and thus do they go up as a sweet-smelling savour before our Father and his Father, before our God and his God.

Besides, this humble, filial, prayerful, watchful walking with God, is in itself pleasing to God. The glorious doctrines of free grace have always been suspected of a loose and licentious tendency. Never feel the least wonder at this; only pray that you may give no occasion nor pretext for the accusation. But the natural man knoweth not of any real motive wherefore he should love God: when you take from him that which he thinks the only motive, which is but a false and deceitful one, he imagines there is no other: and as he considers there are but two motives wherefore he should love and serve God, that of purchasing

eternal life, and that of delivering himself from eternal woe—when you cut these things down, root and branch, and acknowledge no such efficacy to be attachable to them, what effect is produced on his mind? He supposes there is no motive at all. But we know that the very grace of God that bringeth salvation to a man, delivers him from the curse and ban of the law, draws him to the cross, and through the cross to the Father. We know that the principle is that which softens his heart, melts his spirit, subdues his will, makes him careful, and watchful, and prayerful, and holy. And it is the will of God that this should be exhibited; it is his will that his people should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; that they should justify their faith by their works; that they should declare it to be a genuine faith by the fruit it produces.

By these means, too, it is that others are stirred up. See how Paul's conduct at Rome made others, who were before cowards, stand forward, seeing he took his life in his hand, and was willing to endure all things for Christ's sake. These things are pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ: they are the fruit of his Spirit; they are perfumed with the much incense, and they have in themselves that which God loveth.

See, then, how high, how vast a motive you have before you. Is it for life? No. Is it for acceptance? No. Is it for justification? No. Is it to purchase the favour of God? God forbid. It is because it is pleasing to God. Observe how this wrought in the mind of the dear servant of God, the Apostle Paul; 1 Thess. ii. 4: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." Is it not a lawful thing for a man when he ascends the pulpit, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the presence of God? And yet so small a point was, that in the Apostle's mind, it seemed lost altogether. As when a man looks at the cathedral of St. Paul's, looking at the glory of the building he loses sight of the little compartments; so when the Apostle looked at the majesty of God, he lost sight of all those to whom he preached, and said, "That is my motive, not as pleasing man, but God." It is a happy motive, if in all that you undertake, if in all that you meditate, if in all that comes into your minds, if in all that you plan, if in all that you pray for, your heart is lifted up in this one question—"Is this pleasing to God?" Do not think any thing is too mean; I thank God for two instances, especially, in which the Lord has written out, as with a sunbeam, the nothingness of man. And who can say in common affairs, It is not so. Some of the greatest events of our lives have turned on little pivots. If you and I ask how many little things were needful to bring you into this chape, and me into this pulpit, we must see that the little wheels worked with the great wheels, and they were under the management of the Great Builder of them all. In things minute as well as in things great, our question should be, "Is this pleasing to God?" Even in eating. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Even in the article of dress; "Too little," some would say; so says not the Spirit of God. See in 1 Peter, iii. how the Holy Ghost lays stress upon it, and ask whether or not some that are called, and are Christians, do not have some false comment upon this text of God's word, and do not forget the question, "Is this pleasing to my God?" "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of



wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;" (making one think "I wonder how much thought and time that has taken you to day:") "but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands." Here we find, that in these two things, considered by many trifling, narrow, insignificant, even here the Christian man and the Christian woman should say, "Is this pleasing to my God?" Ye fathers, consider it: ye children consider it; ye husbands consider it (the husband is the head of the wife): bring it to the touchstone of God's word; try it by "Thus saith the Lord." And when God fails in providence to make you know, that little things lead to great events, then you may think, that your little omissions, that your little commissions, may be of small importance before God. God give you and me a wise understanding, and loving heart, for that must throw its beams upon the precept; otherwise we shall legalize the precept, and turn the Gospel into law.

I love, too, to see how the Lord can bless one who seems to have been led by it. I love to quote that instance—I have quoted it before; the instance of old Anna, in Luke, ii. 37. She was "a widow of about fourscore years, which departed not from the temple, but served God." How did she serve God? "With fastings and prayers." Here we find a way in which we might, however unfavourably situated, however debarred, however kept back, yet here is a way of serving God, in things comparatively incongruous with any such idea. Here was Anna serving God, who could only serve him in fasting and prayer before the Lord. To take this to common life, see how it applies to the article of Christian service (I do not mean the service of Christian masters, for it is not Christian servants obeying Christian masters, but unchristian masters); "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart:" engaged, as I understand it in the common, what we might call the drudgery of life, the common occupations of the day, and yet doing it as the servants of Christ, doing it as the will of God. How does it dignify the operation, and raise a man above it: not in the temper of the present day, that of servant being master to his master. You don't find that in this book, but you find it in Satan's book: this book is peaceful, and holy, and pure, and from above; the other is fleshly, carnal, devilish, and from beneath. See, my dear Christian brethren, whom the Lord hath placed in servitude, see how you can please God, even in the common occupations of the day. How sweet shall it be for you to ask, "Is this the will of my Father; pleasing to my God through Jesus Christ?"

Observe, lastly, that THIS FORMS A SCHOOL IN WHICH THE LORD BRINGS HIS PEOPLE INTO A GREATER ACQUAINTANCE WITH HIMSELF. It is not in the school of theory; though I do wish that our people, and the inhabitants of this country, were taught the theory of divine truth. It is a really wonderful thing, that after so many thousand preachers of the Gospel in these realms, the great mass of our population should be as theoretically ignorant of the basis of Christianity, and of the system of divine truth, as heathens themselves. But it is not mere theory that teaches a man the substance of truth.

Now, observe, the order of the divine procedure here. The Apostle first prays, that they might know the will of God; then he prays that they might do his will; and then he mentions, urging it as a motive, that in the doing his will they should be brought into deeper acquaintance with himself. There are two or three passages of Scripture, that seem to throw some light on this point. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God:" "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Then shall we know, if we follow on to know. We are to understand this, that if we walk with God, in the way of simple, child-like obedience, we shall know and experience, and find the value of, that truth: then shall we truly know if we follow on to know. David says, he knew more than the ancients. Why? Because he kept the precepts of God. It is in the school of obedience that God shines on his own work.

My dear hearers, there are two reasons for this: in the first place, when we are brought to walk humbly with God, as a child with his father, by faith in Jesus, leaning upon him, our Beloved, resting our hope upon his great and glorious work—then we are led out to desire, to consecrate ourselves to his service. This is a pure and holy atmosphere; and what wonder is it, if in the pure and holy atmosphere, we see objects more clearly and more distinctly? What wonder is it, that we increase in the knowledge of God, when God has brought us into this more clear, this crystal atmosphere? The soul that walketh most near to God will practically become more acquainted with God and himself.

Then, observe, there is another reason, that the Lord meeteth those that rejoice, those that walk in his ways, and remember him in his ways: "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." And if the Lord meets the man, breaking in upon him with light, and life, and love—by clearer developments of his own character, and of his tenderness, and of his grace; then we have the secret unfolding, why it is he shall increase in the knowledge of God.

I have thus given an outline of my subject, which is one of great importance. I will acknowledge, that among the many things that encourage me at this moment, there is nothing that more encourages me, than to hear of people willing to hear preceptive preaching, based upon the glorious foundation of free grace salvation; for, I will not believe that a people, loving the doctrines of grace, do not love the precepts of grace, and desire them to be written out as with the engraving of the Holy Ghost. May that be your portion and my portion, and God shall have all the glory.

## THE NATURE OF THE LAW.

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REV. J. P. DENHAM. A.M.

ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET, MARCH 7, 1830.

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“ Wherefore, then, serveth the Law ? ”—GALATIANS, iii. 19.

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**T**HERE is a supreme importance attaching to the subject of the Law, arising, not merely from its grounds as connected with the Divine Being, but also from the close connexion it bears with your everlasting salvation. I hesitate not to affirm, that there can be no real religion without some knowledge of this subject; and that, where the principle of religion really exists, it is likely, by the divine blessing, to be increased in proportion as our knowledge of this subject is enlarged. A perception of the Law of God, can alone prepare us to receive, in all its fulness, the Gospel of Christ; while your minds being thus instructed, that Gospel will appear in every part, not a mere detail of uninteresting facts, but as one harmonious plan, exhibiting, in the most eminent degree, the wisdom, the goodness, and the power of its Almighty Author.

To a mind thus enlightened, no repugnance will be felt with respect to the representations the Bible gives of the justice and holiness of God. The person and agency of the Holy Spirit will become subjects of the utmost importance. Humility, instead of being regarded with aversion as mean-spiritedness, will be recognised as the holy meekness of the soul. Gratitude will be supplied with inexhaustible fulness, zeal be furnished with permanent motives for exertion, faith will be found worthy of the importance attributed to it, being, first, the means whereby the soul receives the salvation that is in Christ, and then, the never failing source of holy obedience; while devotedness to God, to the utmost extent of all our powers, whether of body, of soul, or of spirit, will be considered as our most reasonable and most delightful service.

These assertions, I doubt not, will be readily agreed to by those who, in any degree, understand the subject. But should any other be unable to give full assent, I would beseech them to wait till the proof of these assertions is furnished; which I trust to do under the proper head:

The attention of all my hearers is most earnestly invited, since it may be repaid by the communication and increase of divine knowledge, in every mind present. But, in order to obtain these happy results from the investigation, we must pursue the subject in the exercise of prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to guide men into truth, and whose influence is promised in answer to supplication. “ If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? ” “ If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be

given unto him." Fully recognising this important truth, our Church hath taught us thus to pray, in one of her admirable collects; which, let us, in entering upon this important investigation, endeavour to offer up in the spirit of supplication:—

“ O Lord, who didst, in old time, teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right understanding in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour; who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end.”

The subject on which we now enter, namely, that of the Law of God, seems to offer itself as included under four parts:—first, the nature of the Law: secondly, the spirituality of the Law, or, the quality of the Law by which it extends to the spirits and thoughts of men: thirdly, the uses of the Law: and fourthly, the curse of the Law. On the present occasion, we will direct our attention to one of these topics only—namely, the Nature of the Law.

In the first place, I will endeavour to define WHAT IS MEANT BY THE LAW OF GOD IN THE ABSTRACT.

The simple sense of the term Law, and the most general sense, is this—It is that mode by which an agent proceeds. The mode by which the government of a country proceeds to rule its subjects, is called the law of that government. The term will be found to have the same signification when applied to the very highest class of objects—I mean, the government of God: the constant procedure of the divine will, with respect to any object in any part of his dominions, is called the Law of God, in respect of that particular object. The natural philosopher finding that, throughout the universe, matter gravitates—that is to say, that a less portion of matter exhibits an undeviating tendency to approach a larger mass—the natural philosopher says that gravitation is a law of nature; or, it is that mode whereby God proceeds in the government of the material universe. The same remark might be made respecting all the Laws of Nature, as they are called, whether chemical or mechanical; the sense of the term, law, being, the mode in which an agent proceeds in respect to that particular object. The sense of the term is, also, precisely the same when applied to the moral government of God: by which we mean, the government of God over the understandings and affections of mankind. Here the term signifies that Law, or those rules, whereby he designs to regulate the affections and actions of men.

While we are upon the Nature of the Law, let it be observed, that these modes by which the Divine Being governs either the moral or the natural world, are not merely arbitrary regulations imposed upon its objects solely with a design to exercise his authority; but, that they are the necessary perceptions of the divine mind, as to what is proper or benevolent, in regard to each of the objects to which they relate. Whence it follows, that the Law of God, in relation to any class of beings in his government (but, in relation to man, pre-eminently) is the result of infinite wisdom and infinite goodness, the Lawgiver himself being infinitely wise and good. The law is always an expression of the will of the lawgiver; or, in other words, an expression of the character of the lawgiver. This is pre-eminently applicable to the Law of God. The things which it requires, are the things which God requires; the things which

it approves, are the things which God approves; the things which it delights in, he delights in. To suppose any thing different, is to suppose that the Divine Being had disguised its character, and given to its creatures, the most direct proof of its moral insufficiency: for, while it is true that a different measure of the Divine will may be revealed to creatures possessing different capacities, corresponding to those capacities; it is also true that these different portions of the Divine will must be all capable of harmonizing with each other, and with the whole character of God.

One more remark may be added, which is, that the Law of God being the transcript of his own benevolence and wisdom, proposes and accomplishes the best possible results. The only ultimate good is happiness, by which I mean enjoyment; but the original and essential glory of God, is to promote happiness to the utmost extent of which the object to which it is communicated may be capable. This is the inherent, eternal perfection of the Divine mind; it must, consequently, have influenced all his regulations in regard to his rational creation; it must be the end proposed by his infinite goodness, and which the resources of his infinite power were employed to achieve.

It may be further observed, in relation to this subject, that this Law may be expressed and promulgated by different modes. It would be possible for God to impress this Law, as we see he has done, upon mute inanimate matter, causing it to act as a matter of necessity in the way he has. It would be also possible and proper, to impress his Laws upon the instincts of animals, in causing them to act as we observe and experience them to do. At the same time, it would be equally becoming, to promulgate them and propose them to his rational and accountable creatures; thus inducing them to obey, not as a matter of necessity, but as the result of their own choice; this being a state of things in which alone obedience could be the subject of approbation and reward, and disobedience the subject of disapprobation and punishment.

But, then, we say, that while the Divine Being has impressed upon all nature below man, the various laws by which he governs that part of his dominions, he did create man in a state of probation, and with powers which render him capable of becoming an accountable creature; and did not impress his laws upon him, rendering the obedience a matter of mechanical certainty: but proposed his Law to man in such a manner as to render his obedience the result of free choice. The distinction I am now endeavouring to lay down, appears to be expressed by the poet in language which I cannot explain and understand consistently with the subject—"And binding nature fast in fate, left free the human will"—unless by *fate* he means law. This is the very state in which the universe was originally created. Nature, the kingdom of inanimate matter, was bound fast in laws impressed upon it, under which it was compelled to act; but the mind of man was an exception, it was left free, and rules proposed to it, rewards and punishments provided for it, and motives suggested to it, whereby the obedience of his powers should be constantly a matter of free choice and capable of reward, and his disobedience of punishment.

The origin of these Laws is in the wisdom and benevolence of the divine mind: the origin of the whole constitution of things being a desire on the part of Deity to communicate happiness. Consequently, when God prescribed the law to the creation, which he did in Eden, his intention was, that, mute inanimate matter should take the forms of greatest beauty, loveliness, and utility. of which

matter was capable; and, no doubt, in the long-banished bloom of Eden, all this was observed in perfection. He did, also, when he prescribed law on the mind of Adam, and proposed laws to him as the creature of moral probation, exercise his powers in such a way as to render him capable of reward, translating him to higher stations of existence successively, and leading man to the highest possible degree of happiness of which that created nature was capable.

This leads me, secondly, to consider, THE MODES WHEREBY GOD HATH PROMULGATED HIS LAWS. These are two. He wrote the Law *originally* upon the mind of Adam in the garden of Eden; and when it was effaced in a great measure by his apostacy, and almost obliterated from the mind of man, through the love of sin, he republished it to the world in the form of *the Decalogue* on Mount Sinai.

The first promulgation, which was by writing it on the heart of Adam, was nearly obliterated by his apostacy, but not altogether: for, what are all the moral precepts ever recommended, but never practised, by the heathen philosophers? What are the proverbs of ancient sages, but fragments of the Law of God originally written on the conscience, and gathered up by man after the shipwreck of nature? And what now do we mean by conscience, and the dictates of natural conscience, but the glimmering of that divine light which shone within man originally? This is the view taken of it by the Apostle Paul: "For, when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another."

When the Law thus written became effaced by the Fall, it was necessary it should be republished to the world; which was done, partly, amidst the threatenings and thunders of Sinai, and partly, in that forty days of seclusion on the Mount, in which Moses received the complete body of the Law from the hand of God. This second republication of the Law, together with the complete Law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, is perpetuated, in what we call the Five Books of Moses: which leads me,

Thirdly, to remark on THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF THE LAW, which we must distinguish in perusing the Holy Scriptures.

Although all that was republished on Sinai to the Jews, and at all other times, goes under the general term of the Law of God; yet, upon close inspection, this Law will be found to consist of three kinds, which are clearly distinct from one another. These three kinds of Law are, the judicial Law, or, the state Laws of the Jews; the ceremonial Law, that is to say, that Law which prescribed the religious rites and services of the Jews under the Old Testament dispensation; and the moral Law, which prescribed their conduct, and our conduct, as men.

Respecting the *judicial* Law, it was binding on the Jews only, there being no precept, nor even intimation, that it was to extend beyond; but, on the contrary, there being several declarations that the Jewish Law was to cease when the Jews ceased to become a nation: and so, now, the judicial Law obliges men no further than as the general Law of equity requires. Thus, in the book of the Exodus, you will find a code of Laws for the regulation of the Jewish state,

which Laws are just like any other code of laws which exists under any other state. "When the Shiloh"—that is the Christ—"shall come, the sceptre shall depart from Judah, and the Lawgiver from between his feet." It is evident that when the executive part of the government should fail, there would be a termination of the judicial part of the Law.

The second part of the Law is the *ceremonial*: that part which prescribes the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. These rites were typical of Christ, and were obligatory only till Christ had finished his work, and had begun to erect his own church. "And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham." "The tabernacle then standing was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them till the time of reformation." "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." And in Daniel we read, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Words cannot more strictly and entirely intimate, that the ceremonial law was only temporal; it was to cease when Christ came. "The Law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect."

These passages prove, that the ceremonial part of the Law was to cease on the appearance of Christ, in whom the ceremonial rites and sacrifices were fulfilled; and, consequently, their uses, as pointing to Christ, ceased when he, the great Antetype of the Law, came.

The typical character of the ceremonial Law, was one of the chief uses of that dispensation; another use being to distinguish the Israelites from all the surrounding nations by the peculiarity of their services; and thus to draw the attention of surrounding nations, and to keep the Jews from mingling with surrounding nations. But, although the Law was typical, the question is, to what extent? As far as my knowledge yet extends, I think that the Scripture doctrine of the typical extent of the ceremonial Law is expressed in that passage, "The Law having the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things"—the reference is to the shadow cast before the rising sun; the Sun of Righteousness was coming, and cast forward the shadow of the good things through the means of the Law; but it had a shadow, that is, an outline, and not the very image of the things. While, then, we must allow, that much of the Law is typical, because much is declared to be typical, does not the use of the term, "the shadow of good things," make a broad distinction between some things in the Law being typical, and all being typical? And is not the attempt to discover a meaning for every thing in the ceremonial part of the Law, discouraged by this use of the term by the Apostle, and his declaration that the ceremonial Law had but the image of the things?

The third kind of Law, that which was promulgated from Sinai by the mouth of God himself, was called the *moral Law*; that is to say, the Law which regulates men's manners as men, and which is contained in the ten commandments; which ten commandments contain the sum of all the duties man is required to perform, or could possibly perform, toward God, and toward man. The moral Law is not like the judicial Law, binding only on the Jews, but the moral Law

is binding on every child of Adam: nor is it like the ceremonial Law, only of a temporal nature. But the moral Law, comprehending those ten commandments, contains every possible duty we are required to perform. The moral Law of the ten commandments was intended to be perpetual in all places, and over all people for ever.

It has been inferred that the moral Law was intended to be perpetual from the very mode of its promulgation. Let not this be dismissed as trifling. Every thing in the promulgation of the Law, was the effect of premeditation on the part of the Divine mind, who doeth nothing in vain. Every part of it had a signification attached to it. The judicial part of the Law, and the ceremonial part, were delivered to Moses privately, during the forty days in which he was on the Mount: but the moral Law was delivered from the mouth of God himself, in the presence of the whole assembled camp. The ceremonial part of the Law was written in a perishable book; the moral part of the Law was written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone, the emblem of perpetuity; and afterwards, when the first tables of the Law were destroyed by the zeal of Moses, they were restored by the same finger upon two other similar tables. Now, we must be persuaded, that every particular in that solemn event of giving the Law was the result of design: and that the moral part of the Law was intended to be perpetual, seems the most probable meaning of the distinction made in the mode of promulgating the ceremonial and the moral Law.

But we have conclusive argument to prove the universal obligation and perpetuity of the Law. That it is intended to be universal is most evident, because it was only the republication of the Law which was imprinted on the mind of Adam in Eden, and which was effaced from his mind by his disobedience. But, as Adam was the head and father of all, and as all that had been prescribed to him first was intended to be taught to all his posterity, we infer, that the moral Law was intended to be perpetual and universally binding.

Again, it is one great requisition of the Gospel, that it should be preached to every creature; and that its object should be to testify toward Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God. But, if repentance be required of every creature, it follows that every creature is a sinner. Yet, every creature cannot be a sinner by disobedience to the judicial Law, which was only for the Jews as a nation, nor by disobedience to the ceremonial Law, which was to cease at Christ's coming. But, by the disobedience of *Law*, mankind became sinners, and consequently, the subject of the Gospel must be the moral Law; therefore, the moral Law is universal.

The precepts of the moral Law, have all of them respect only to the moral character of man, properly so called. They relate not to outward observances—not to the things which go into a man, but to the things which come out of him, namely, the thoughts and intents of his heart. Our Lord said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven or earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." This could not be the judicial Law, which was to cease with the existence of the Jews as a nation. It could not mean the ceremonial Law, which was done away by Christ. This declaration refers to the moral Law, and there is ample reason for believing that his assertion should be true.

That the moral Law is the transcript of the Divine mind, is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness: obedience to it would constitute the supreme



happiness of all its creatures ; and consequently, it is the indispensable means of manifesting the divine glory. Were God to change the moral Law, it must, being already perfect, be changed for the worse. Were he to give up the moral Law, it would be to renounce his own glory, to annihilate his own schemes for the happiness of his creatures. But these ends united, constitute the very reason for which heaven and earth were made. In the case supposed by the Redeemer, the heavens and the earth would exist to no purpose worthy of Jehovah, if one jot or one tittle of the Law were to fail. Thus one great point is established, the universality and perpetuity of the Law.

In making a few observations upon this subject, I shall begin by reminding you, that you and I are constantly under the obligation of the moral Law. We are not under the obligation of the judicial Law, which ceased with the state of the Jews. We are not under the obligation of the ceremonial Law, for the Law was the shadow of good things to come ; it was the preaching of the Gospel under the Old Testament dispensation, but was fulfilled in Christ ; and these lesser lights of information have been all absorbed in the full effulgence of the Gospel day. But we are each one under an obligation to fulfil the moral Law : every individual in the whole world is entirely subject to its demands, as much as were the trembling Israelites, when it was addressed to them amidst the thunders of Sinai. Now, should not this consideration, which you can neither gainsay nor deny, awaken your thoughts to the inquiry, whether you have or have not obeyed the Law ? Should it not excite serious inquiry, stir up all our affections, our love, our fear, our desires, our hopes, to be engaged in the question, Have I obeyed the Law ? Is it nothing to be living under a Lawgiver of infinite knowledge, whereby he discerns every deviation from his commands ? Is it nothing to be living under a Lawgiver of infinite holiness, whereby he must avenge every iniquitous thing ? Is it nothing to be living under a Lawgiver of infinite power, whereby he is able to punish those who transgress his commands ? Such as you and I are bound to obey the laws of men, and receive the disgrace or the punishment of every violation of them : and do you think it unimportant to know, whether you are or not chargeable with any violation of the commands of Him who can torment both body and soul for ever, and who has threatened to do so ? "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." Think not, because sentence is not speedily executed, that either the Judge is indifferent to the honour of his government, or that his indignation will lose its power. I have sometimes thought, that the reason why we are so insensible to our danger, and why we are so little sensible of the necessity of seeking pardon, is, because sentence against evil works is not executed speedily. And there is something like soundness in the observation, when you consider what would be the effect, if in this country all criminals were apprehended, but that sentence were not to be fulfilled for ten, or fifteen, or twenty years. The example of the punishment, which is a great means of deterring those who act from no other motive, would be lost in the mean time ; and there being no public execution, no sickening lowering of the gibbet meeting the eye of those who are inclined to commit evil, the effect would be to encourage licentiousness ; men would have a sort of compromise with the fear of what might be in ten years. So it is with us : "because sentence is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are always set to do evil."

But, you should observe, it is consistent with the Divine intention in the present system of divine government, that the sentence should have a protracted term, during which men may have tried upon them all the motives and appeals of the Gospel. This it is that sums up their iniquity, and that gives the crown and finish to their transgression: this it is that renders their punishment so just. Whereas, if punishment were to follow immediately, every individual would be cut off—a mode of procedure utterly inconsistent with the present state of things as a probation.

This subject of the Law, and especially the perpetuity and obligation of the moral Law, furnishes us with most affecting views of the evil nature of sin. "Sin," says the Apostle in the most accurate definition of it, is "the transgression of the Law:" that is, sin is such a disposition of the heart, such a conduct of the life, as is opposed to what the Law requires. It is opposed to the designs of infinite wisdom and goodness; it is opposed to the glory of God, and to the good of all intelligent beings. Of all these, the Law is the blessed grand exemplar: so far as sin operates, it operates to the formation of all evil; and its native tendency is to prevent the glory of God. This malignant quality of sin does not lead to the possession of the power to achieve what it would accomplish if it had the power. The sinfulness of sin consists in the nature of its disposition. The question is, what would be the effect of sin, if sin could operate without restraint? The malignity of sin, could it operate without restraint, would transcend all computation. You see this truth revealed in the present world: all the misery, all the wretchedness, and all the crime with which this unhappy world hath abounded, and doth still abound, is the effect of sin, yea, and of one sin, the sin of Adam. The effects of that one sin have been operating in all circumstances for nearly six thousand years. Sin blotted Paradise out of existence, and substituted barrenness and guilt. Instead of the celestial smile and bloom of our first parents, instead of tasting their pure original, and the unsullied calmness of their spirits, we behold the odious forms of wrath, and bitter agony, and misery. Instead of the confiding friendship they enjoyed in Eden, man is an enemy to man; and, if it *be* possible to lull the fear of the future, or to soothe you with a dream, you shall awake to the odious result, and find the friend of your bosom laying snares for your happiness, and endeavouring to militate against your peace. Where is the song of gladness, and the grateful sounds of purity and happiness? They are exchanged for the cry of injustice, and the sigh of remorse. Where is the intercourse which our first parents held with God himself? It is exchanged for a fearful looking for of judgment, for a disinclination to meet the Divine Being face to face; it is exchanged for a casting of the back upon him, and hiding in the conscience an enmity against him.

What, then, would the evil nature of sin be, if sin were let loose on the universe? Who can picture the desolation that sin would cause, if sin had invaded heaven? What mind does not shrink under the thought of its ravages throughout eternity, when all created things would be sullied, and blighted, and depraved by it, the rational creation having all its intellectual qualities tainted by it; and, notwithstanding, every being dwelt in pain and misery, yet, all immortal, all unable to die? Do I venture, in speaking thus, too far into the realms of imagination? Do I transgress the bounds of probability? This condition, at this moment, is realized in hell. Multitudes of every angelic rank—fallen angels, distinguished among the dominions, thrones, and powers, the

mocking infidel, the scoffing philosopher—all these in one undistinguishable host, all depraved, and all unhappy, and yet, all immortal, for ever and ever, attest in the regions of hell, what sin would do were it let loose on the universe, what sin would do in heaven itself; what sin would do, not merely within the petty range of time, but through the everlasting ages of eternity.

We may learn from this subject, the extreme folly of the Antinomian heresy. The Antinomian heresy consists in the avowal that, because Christ hath fulfilled the Law, and we receive, by his hand, the benefit of his obedience imputed to us, that, therefore the believer is exempted from obligation to the commands of the moral Law. A dangerous and unjust conclusion, from a most true and blessed doctrine. A foul perversion of a holy doctrine; and they are always foulest which are perversions of the fairest fountains. Christ hath suffered the curse of the Law—Christ hath redeemed from that curse all that believe, as it is set forth in the written word: “There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” But, I am willing to hope, that this error, is an error of the judgment, more than of the affection; an error, merely, of reasoning: but it is an unwarrantable conclusion from a doctrine most true. Let us never forget, that he who is born of God, loveth God, and knoweth God; and that this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. In my view, there is but little reason to fear, that one who has wept at the foot of the cross, with tears of genuine contrition, should fall into a principle so totally opposed to the spirit of the Gospel. Sinful and full of infirmities, as the most faithful believers are, I do not hesitate to say, that, the universal character of the family of God is, that they are to be holy as God is holy; and that the prayer of the Catholic Church is, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: as thou art, so let us be.”

From the contemplation of this subject, we may derive an additional argument for the truth of the Bible as a revelation from God. It is a refined argument, but it has a due proportion of strength. It is an additional thread to that complicated system of probabilities, which render it absolutely impossible that the Bible should be untrue. This divine Law has the stamp of divinity upon it in its simplicity. I state it on good authority that the Hindoo guide, for the moral conduct of the professors of Brahminism, consists of seventy thousand precepts, which have been thus multiplied in order to attempt to give a precept for every possible case; and every different case having different shades, there must be a new principle for each. It is so in the statute law of England, which consists of twenty volumes folio, and fifty volumes octavo, besides what is called the unwritten law. Now, all these constitute the labour of a life to learn; and, very frequently, after searching them through, you cannot find any parallel for the case respecting which you inquire. Behold the finger of God in the simplicity of the moral Law—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.”

May each one present be led to contemplate this solemn truth, that we are living under moral obligation; that we are living under a divine and holy Governor, who takes cognizance of every thought; who is, by the necessity of his nature, induced to punish every violation of his Law. And let me point you, for it may be for the relief and comfort of some soul present, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is, you know, our attempt to

convince you—and it will be our attempt to convince you more systematically—that all have gone astray like lost sheep; and that God has laid help on one that is mighty. The Lord has laid on Christ Jesus the iniquities of us all; and in Christ, the curse of the Law is removed, and we are entirely justified by the righteousness of God in Christ. Apply to Christ; study the character of Christ; launch forth, with every affection of your soul into the promises made over to dying sinners. It is a sure and never fading refuge; a tried stone, in whom wosoever believeth shall never be confounded, world without end. May it be your happiness, and mine, thus to believe on Christ; and, living, and dying, to be found in him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.

“THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.”

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“‘THE resurrection and the life;’ these are thy magnificent titles, Captain of our salvation! And therefore we commit to thee body and soul; for thou hast redeemed both, and thou wilt advance both to the noblest and most splendid of portions. Who quails and shrinks, scared by the despotism of death? Who amongst you fears the dashing of those cold black waters which roll between us and the promised land? Men and brethren, grasp your own privileges. Men and brethren, Christ Jesus has ‘abolished death.’ will ye, by your fearfulness, throw strength into the skeleton, and give back empire to the dethroned and the destroyed? Yes, ‘the resurrection and the life,’ ‘abolished death.’ Ye must indeed die, and so far death remains undestroyed. But if the terrible be destroyed when it can no longer terrify, and if the injurious be destroyed when it can no longer injure; if the enemy be abolished when it does the work of a friend, and if the tyrant be abolished when performing the offices of a servant; if the repulsive be destroyed when we can welcome it, and if the odious be destroyed when we can embrace it; if the quick-sand be abolished when we can walk it and sink not, if the fire be abolished when we can walk through it and be scorched not, if the poison be abolished when we can drink it and hurt not; then is death destroyed, then is death abolished, to all who believe on the ‘resurrection and the life;’ and the noble prophecy is fulfilled (bear witness, ye groups of the ransomed, bending down from your high citadel of triumph) ‘O Death, I will be thy plagues; O Grave, I will be thy destruction.’

“‘I heard a voice from heaven’—oh for the angel’s tongue, that words so beautiful might have all their melodiousness—‘saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.’ It is yet but a little while, and we shall be delivered from the burden and the conflict, and with all those who have preceded us in the righteous struggle, enjoy the deep raptures of a Mediator’s presence. Then, re-united to the friends with whom we took sweet counsel upon earth, we shall recount our toil only to heighten our ecstasy, and call to mind the tug and the din of the war, only that, with a more bounding throb, and a richer song, we may feel and celebrate the wonders of redemption. And when the morning of the first resurrection breaks upon this long-disordered and groaning creation, then shall our text be understood in all its majesty, and in all its marvel: and then shall the words, whose syllables mingle so often with the funeral knell, that we are disposed to carve them on the cypress-tree rather than on the palm, ‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ form the chorus of that noble anthem, which those for whom Christ ‘died, and rose, and revived,’ shall chaunt as they march from judgment to glory.”—REV. H. MELVILL, A.M

## THE HUMILITY OF JESUS A PATTERN TO HIS DISCIPLES.

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REV. P. ELLABY, A.M.

PERCY CHAPEL, FITZROY SQUARE, MARCH 2, 1834.

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“ But I am among you as he that serveth.”—LUKE, xxii. 27.

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THESE are the words of Jesus ; and while he uttered them, his actions spoke more loudly than his words could do. Endeavour, if it be possible, my dear friends, to realize the scene which was present to the disciples to your own mind. See, at least by faith (for this is possible), the Lord of lords, and the Master of masters, becoming really and literally the servant of servants. “ Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich :” and ye know that he is as he was, that one, and that only one, “ which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty ;” “ who being in the form of God, and who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” yet was himself of no reputation ; took another form, even “ the form of a servant, and appeared in the likeness of man ; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Now this is a blessed point : it is the humiliation of Jesus ; it is the Eternal Son coming down to us ; the Son of God becoming the Son of Man. And there follows another point, a blessed point, a grand point in divinity : it is the exaltation of Jesus ; and the exaltation of Jesus is so sublime and glorious a topic, that our thoughts, and desires, and affections, should ascend where Jesus is exalted. But the point of the humiliation of Jesus, which is before us, and of which we must not lose sight, is especially meant for our instruction ; and we so deeply need the instruction, that it behoves us to dwell often, and with great solemnity, upon it.

Now we read, in the twenty-fourth verse—“ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at meat ? But I am among you as he that serveth.” You see, beloved, it is the Lord’s will against pride, against high-mindedness, against a disposition which is common to men, and common to good men too, to be thought highly of, to be esteemed and lifted up among the rest of men. I am, therefore, first of all, to call your attention to this very remarkable reproof, and the remarkable way in which the Lord administered the reproof.

You perceive that his disciples were indulging vain thoughts, and you have read that the Lord saith, "I hate vain thoughts:" their conduct, therefore, to him, at this moment, must have been exceedingly trying, for they were examining and inquiring, which of them should be greatest. But look to the words, in order to discover the magnitude of this, which at first appeared to be but a little offence. Think of *the time*. It had been a grievous thing at any time, that disciples of the Lord should divide with one another to see which should be greatest; but at such a time as this—at the time immediately after the institution of the sacrament—at the time, a little before the Saviour's offering—at the very eve of his agony and his bloody sweat, his cross and his passion, his death and his burial; can you conceive any thing more unsuitable, more to be deplored, than that such a strife among brethren should be discovered at such a time?

My friends, I feel reprov'd in my own soul this day, for having been led often to envy these men, who I perceive were vain in their imaginations, although disciples, and the first disciples, and who I perceive were rising up in pride one against another. Ah, I have sometimes groan'd under a sense of unworthiness; groan'd under a sense of manifold infirmities and great corruption, and many sins, and I have been ready to say, "Oh, had I but lived and been numbered with the Apostles! had I only been numbered with the martyrs and confessors! Surely, though at such a time as that, I might have shared in the hardships they were called to endure, yet I should have been deliver'd, as they were deliver'd, from those things which now so harass me, so beset me, and so overcome me." But I perceive that this thought of mine, this idea, was a very vain thought, a vain idea; for I remember, that among the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, there was a Judas, a thief who carried the bag, a traitor, one among the twelve who had a devil, at whose ear also, and whose heart, the great tempter, the master of the legions of devils, was ready and at hand, enticing and propelling him to commit the unpardonable sin. I perceive that not only was this the case with regard to one, but that this same tempter was busied among the Apostles, and that the Apostles were men of like passions with us; that the martyrs themselves were men of like infirmities, and that they were all prone, as it were, all tempted by the same things by which we are tempted, and subject to the same trials to which we are liable. I learn, therefore, that I, and every other man ministering in the Gospel, should rather receive the reproof which the Lord giveth in this present state, than that he should desire to be found in another. Oh, it is a better way to prepare ourselves for reproof, than that we desire to change our circumstances. There was a strife among the disciples, which of them should be greatest, which of them should be most caressed and most esteemed among men, and which of them should be most popular, most venerated, which of them should be most idolized. Oh, how natural, how common, my friends.

But think again, at such a time as this, when the Saviour was about to suffer; when the master was taking leave of his household to go his journey; when the friend was giving his love-tokens to his dear friends, whom he no longer called servants, but friends; when the brother was about to redeem the inheritance—oh, at such a time as this! What shall we say to it? Brethren, we sometimes hear of relatives and children, who are waiting for the places which their parents or their friends inherit; we sometimes hear of priests, or of statesmen, waiting and looking for the places which others now have: we find persons in

various states of life waiting for the dead. This is the idea of waiting for something that shall be; and when we think rightly, nay, when we think naturally, as men ought to think, we are sometimes surprised, and we are made to feel a righteous indignation against such conduct as this. But there is much vanity in all this; for the heart of man is vain, vain as it is deceitful, and desperately wicked.

My dear brethren, let me come very nigh to you, and speak not only to your ears, but let me speak to your hearts this day. Oh, this was not only common to the first disciples; it is common, and perhaps very general: it is applicable to us indirectly, if not directly, at this very time. At such a time as this, oh, how unsuitable! For think only on that high and proud look; think for a moment of that thought, that vain thought, which escaped you; then call to your recollection that vain, that sinful imagination, which arose in your mind. In a word, think of the contempt that arose in your mind at such a time as this—either a little before the Lord's supper, or immediately after it. Oh, dear brethren, seal up those two eyes of yours, and send them to your hearts; see what there is in that cage; it has been called "a cage of unclean birds:" behold the state of that heart; it is Satan's throne, if the Lord be not enthroned there. Oh, see what is the language of that deceitful and desperate heart of your's, and then you shall neither censure nor envy any other; but you shall be prepared to take the reproof which Jesus by his servant would administer this day.

NOW THE REPROOF is this. The world possesses, and the world practises, many things which you would possess, and which you would practise. The hearts of the people of the world go forth after the very things to which your hearts are likewise prone; and they that have authority do exercise lordship, sometimes not in a lawful, but in a tyrannical way, over their masters; and you, according to your own natural propensities, are ready likewise to exercise authority in this undue and unchristian manner: and if ye do it, what are ye more than they? Now I charge you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to hear and receive reproof this day. Look unto Jesus, and hear his voice; believe he is before you at this moment, and he seems to say (oh, that he may be heard!) "Here am I serving; not now washing the feet of my saints, but washing their souls with my blood: here am I serving; here am I ready to serve; administering to them the bread and the wine, which I have commanded should be received to the end of time: and here am I teaching, that, if it be in love, a cup of cold water in my name, shall not lose its reward. And behold, I am now, in the fullest and plainest manner, among you as he that serveth. Be ye also reproofed; and from henceforth be ye in love with serving."

The second point to which I would call your attention is, THE EXAMPLE WHICH THE LORD GIVETH BY HIS CONDUCT. "But I am among you as he that serveth." Now, my brethren, there is a secret here which the Lord may give us to reveal; for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he shall shew them his covenant." Now the secret is love; love divine, love that dwelleth in Jesus our head; the love which was with the Father (and God is love); the love which caused the Father to give the Son; the love which brought the Son into the world. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. To do his Father's will he came; as it is written—"Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will,



O God." He came to do the Father's will ; and, in accomplishing the Father's will, behold he served the children of men—he is found serving among his brethren. And this is his love: the love of God and the love of man, so prepared his soul, that he was equipped as a man ; as a man he served his Church.

Now let us refer you to something which the weakest and the least may understand, in order that you may perceive how exceedingly needful and necessary the right preparation of the heart is for the service of God. My brethren, if we have no appetite for our necessary food, then, though the greatest delicacies the season can afford, though the most delicious meat may be set before you, yet we cannot eat. If we have but an appetite, then, when the plainest fare, the most homely food, is presented to the taste, we eat and drink with joy. So, my brethren, if we have no spiritual appetite, if we have no longing after God, yea, the living God, then the most able and the most skilful minister will minister in vain to us ; we have no appetite ; we cannot eat, we cannot drink. But if we have that soul hungering and that soul thirsting after righteousness, then the weakest instrument, serving in the name of the Lord Jesus, will feed us with food convenient for use. Look at the fourteenth verse, and see in what manner the Lord Jesus himself was to prepare to serve : " And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer ; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves : for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." Thus, you perceive, having the desire, the burning desire, of love, he was ready and anxious, even as he was qualified to serve. And immediately after this he served us ; for he instituted that sacrament, of which it is our privilege to be partakers ; and in instituting that sacrament, of which we, after the same manner, have the privilege to be partakers, he commanded that it should be kept, and that it should be done in remembrance of him till he should come again. " He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." These things we understand he referred to, when in the language of my text he said, " But I am among you as he that serveth."

Let us next remark, that THE RELATION OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE LAST SUPPER BY THE EVANGELISTS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SIMPLICITY, AND THE BEAUTIFUL SINCERITY, WHICH WAS PECULIAR TO THEM. A fuller account, perhaps, of the things which took place, had neither been consistent with the nature, nor with the design, of the sacrament itself. Otherwise I can imagine, that the circumstances must have been overpowering and affecting beyond description, and endearing and interesting beyond degree: so that I can suppose they must have been at this time overwhelming. I cannot suppose that the disciples could have sustained themselves, any more than when they were, two of them, in the place of the transfiguration ; and I can only account for the fact that they did sustain themselves in it, because it was powerfully instructive and prospective : practically perhaps they were tempted to think improperly, because they were thinking, at the same time, perhaps, who should administer his feast to the Church of God in succeeding days.

But when we return again to the subject, when we think of them vying with each other, and striving with each other, not about which should be the greatest, but who should be called the greatest, among them: when we return to this fact, we may surely cry out—speaking the truth and no libel—that the heart of man is indeed deceitful: surely we must quote the words of the Psalmist, and say, “Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie:” if weighed in the balance, they are found lighter than vanity itself. For what is it we now perceive? We see the disciples with the Great Master, we see him favour them with his great and unparalleled example, and yet we see them at the very time he is serving them, striving with one another about ruling: when, lo and behold, according to his unspeakable mercy, he administers reproof to them in so gentle and sweet a manner, and such reproof as should point out to them the example they ought to follow, and the conduct they ought to imitate: for he said, “I am among you, while ye are contending for the mastery who should be the greatest; behold, I am among you as he that serveth.” Now this, my brethren, was pouring divine contempt upon all that is earthly and sensual. This was exhibiting the true dignity of serving for God: this was, indeed, ministering the bread, or the wine, or a cup of cold water; not being ashamed to serve, but delighting in the high dignity of being allowed to serve. “Behold, I, who am the Son of God, am now the Son of Man, that I may delight to serve; and, behold, I am among you as he that doth serve.”

Thus, we have noticed the reproof: and we have brought before you the Lord as an example. Let me, in conclusion, take occasion, my brethren, to speak unto you out of the fulness of my heart, touching THE PASTORAL OFFICE. Christ, as a shepherd, watched as a watchman his sheep, and watched over them as the keeper of a city: “I am the Good Shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep.” Christ’s servants, therefore, should follow his example, not in preaching only, but in watching. I would to God that this were more attended to, and that it was more duly appreciated. Ministering in Christ’s name—what honour so great? Ministering and administering the elements of bread and wine, and receiving the tokens and emblems of a Saviour’s dying love—doing these things in the sanctuary, where, behold, we are among you as they that serve: and not only so, but beseeching and exhorting, publicly, and from house to house, in the family and at the social board, speaking the Word of Life, and being among the people as they that serve.

But, alas, my brethren, I can feel well how difficult circumstances have rendered the performance of a service so lovely. I can feel well how difficult it is where worldly compliances, and worldly associations, and worldly habits are practised, which are so uncongenial; and I can feel well, how difficult it is where instability, where fickleness, where inconsistency, and mere half-heartedness, paralyze the shepherd’s arm, and sicken and wound his heart. But I know also, how very blessed, how indescribably blessed and precious it is, and how great the advantages are, when the pastor is among the flock in truth and love. And very anxious am I this day to make every one of you perceive it; and I can only do it by contrasting circumstances: to the circumstances so contrasted, I pray you to give diligent heed. Behold, my brethren, nineteen out of twenty of the individuals of this great city, nineteen out of twenty of the families of this overgrown place, are as sheep having no shepherd; and they love to be as sheep having no shepherd. Hence, they go wandering about

from pastor to pastor, engaging no pastor's eye, engaging no pastor's prayer, calling for or desiring no pastor's attention. And if such a person, who is not desired in seasons of health, is constrained or called upon to find out their abode, or to visit them in time of sickness, oh, then he is such a stranger, he seems like the bringer of evil tidings. It is as if the King of Terrors had sent his death-warrant. And then the physicians of the body, who are wise in their generation, are perfectly alive to the consequences thereof; they dread the excitement, they dread the conflict; and well they may: therefore they issue their mandate, that no such persons must visit their patient: and the poor, thoughtless, worldly-minded sinner, or the negligent professor, who regards not the pastor's voice, but avoided and refused his care, is now prevented hearing that voice; now cannot hear, dare not hear it; and now is left to his own resources; a sheep made a prey to the wolf, having no shepherd, none to serve.

But very different it is when the case is reversed; very different it is where a spirit of meekly enduring fellowship in Christ is maintained; where a hallowed and Scriptural intercourse is kept up: for there the Great Physician is healing the soul and body; there the Master's voice is gladly heard, and there is no excitement to injure the body, but a sweet calmness; no emotions to alarm; nay, but peace which passeth understanding. And there the holy supper, not as the extreme unction of the priest, not as the passport to take the soul to heaven—there the holy supper, in peace and love, commemorating the dying love of Jesus, is indeed a feast, and he that serveth, and they that partake thereof, do know that it is a feast—and there as the servant, there as the ambassadors of the King of kings, and there as the representative of the Great Shepherd and Bishop, there the pastor rejoices in the fulfilment of his office, and there he says, in the joy of his soul, "But I am among you as he that serveth."

Now, my dear brethren, our record and our reward are on high. But have we not a reward below? That dear child of whom I spake last week with joy of heart, and yet with tears, stretched out her hand a little before she fell asleep with a view to bid farewell to her pastor; she bid farewell, and called for a blessing in prayer on his head and his heart; and her heart bidding a farewell, because his voice and his message had been thankfully received by her, because the message never caused commotion, but always whispered peace by the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin.

I want you, therefore, to realize the whole scene which the text is intended to depict before you. First, behold the Lord Jesus himself serving in his Church. Secondly, think of the proneness of the very disciples' hearts to revile, and never trust your own hearts, no not in the house of God: no, never trust your own hearts as though they were friends, but watch them as enemies. Thirdly, receive and apply the Lord's reproof, and learn to profit by his instructions.

But you especially who are taught of God to love one another; you especially who are subjects of the grace and love of which we have been speaking; you especially who love the Lord Jesus because he hath bought you with his blood; and you who esteem very highly in love the Lord's servant for his work's sake; present yourselves, I pray you, to the Great Shepherd who bought you with his blood; present yourselves at the table of the Lord; come and find peace and love in Jesus; present yourselves at the table of the Lord, and so gladden the heart of your pastor, and let him see you coming as dear brethren around the

table of the Lord, while you shall see him standing and saying after the example of the Lord exhibited to you, "But I am among you as he that serveth."

And not only so, but let me speak a word to the lambs of the flock. My dear brethren, bring yourselves, and devote yourselves to God. You perceive how good it is for the shepherd to serve among the lambs of his flock. You perceive that the countenances of all are lightened up, and that by the favour of our God, our hearts do help one another; so that the countenance shines as when a man comforteth his friend: and you shall see that our hearts are getting bold by the Word of God, and the truths which we administer. You shall then see that the shepherd among these lambs shall adopt these words: "Behold I am among you as he that serveth." And let the young people who are desiring and looking forward to confirmation and the Lord's supper, be diligent in the reading of the word and prayer; and let them with prayer look forward to the time when they shall be going into the greater matters of God's word, and when out of the Word of God he shall also serve them, and be among them as he that serveth.

And finally, let me speak a word especially to those who are drawing near to the table of the Lord, and not to them only, but to all others. My dear brethren, learn to encourage your pastors. If they speak among you the Word of Life; if they minister to you the bread of life; if they open their mouths, and the Holy Scriptures are made to flow forth as living waters; if by this word your souls are refreshed, not only in the congregation, but at home; then encourage them; not as the world would encourage, not by the tokens by which worldly men are encouraged; but encourage them with those things which the Lord himself was delighted with—those things with which the men of God are encouraged: encourage them by your devotedness, by your holy walk and conversation: encourage them with your works of faith and labour of love: encourage them by bringing forth fruit, by caring first for that good Spirit which can alone produce such fruits; by producing through the power of God the Holy Spirit the fruits of righteousness, which in the sight of Jehovah are of great price. Come, my dear brethren, those of you who feel your deep need of a Saviour; come those of you who are caring to be washed in the blood of Jesus; come those of you who would live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world; come those of you who desire to be justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God; come all such; draw near and take the holy sacrament to your comfort: for behold in our Master's stead, we are among you as they that serve.

## THE NECESSITY OF A STANDING MINISTRY.

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AMONGST the inquiries which honourably distinguish the Christian Religion from all that had subsisted before it, and which are amongst the marks and evidences of its divine origin, is the necessity of a ministry, the separation of a body of men to be the guides and teachers of the people, in things pertaining to God. Without the public solemnities of devotion, private and individual piety would quickly languish and expire. The lamp of religion must be trimmed and replenished by all the aid of human diligence and zeal, as well as by the Spirit's presence from above: without the former, it would yield but a glimmering light amidst the darkness of a corrupt world; without the latter, it would emit only the fearful glare of superstition, or the fitful and delusive flashes of enthusiasm. It is therefore, one of the great mercies of God in the Gospel dispensation, that by his blessed Son, he founded the visible Church in the world, which should be for a memorial of the authority and importance of religion, a depository and dispensary of the written Word of God, an institution of perpetual duration as to its elements and principles, although admitting of modifications as to its outward aspect accorded to the exigencies of those for whom it is designed.

The most important feature of this provision for the maintenance of Gospel truth, is the appointment of an order of men to preach the Word of God, to administer his sacraments, to be devoted to the spiritual welfare of their brethren, to set good and evil before the people, to stand at the gates of the sanctuary, and invite all men to come in and taste the goodness of God, to admonish the careless, rebuke the ungodly, comfort the afflicted—in a word, to do the work of an Evangelist, for which our Lord came himself on the earth.

The division of men considered as religious, being into two classes, those who teach, and those who are to learn, would have been a necessary result of their condition and circumstances, even although it had not been appointed by God himself. The natural inequality of talent, and the accidental disparity of their outward advantages, which in every other science, and in questions affecting their personal rights, make mankind willing to be instructed, guided, and governed by a few, would dispose them to a like submission in the pursuit of religious knowledge; and the more readily, as it is the object of an inquiry unconnected with secular advantage, and bringing no present gain or reward. This consideration makes pure religion to be an object of so little interest to man, in his unregenerate state, that it would not long continue to subsist, were there not an express provision for its preservation. And it is not easy to consider any provision that can so answer the end, as the dedication of a particular class of men, to be the religious instructors of the people, to minister before them in holy things, which are indispensable to the existence of religion: to be the light of the world, the ambassadors of divine mercy, watchmen to awaken mankind from sin, stewards of the Word of God, and dispensers of his truth.

With respect to the Christian Religion, the evidences on which it claims our obedience to, and belief of, the records which contain its doctrines and precepts, are of such a nature as to demand inquiries for which the greater part of mankind are unqualified. For the results of those inquiries, they must rely on the

testimony of others, who have had leisure and opportunity to prosecute them with effect, or who, at least, are appointed by competent authority, to deliver such truths as are necessary to their eternal interests. People must therefore know to whom they may look for instruction in questions of such importance: and from this follows the necessity of a standing ministry.

Not only in the doctrines of the Gospel, not only in its precepts and constitution, has the divine wisdom consulted the wants of those for whom it was designed; but also in the provision made for its continuance. That which would have been, in any case, necessary for man as a religious being, the object of a revelation, has been rendered obligative by the positive appointment of Jesus Christ, and those messengers whom he invested with authority to build his Church, and provide for its support. I say nothing here of our more specific and holy designation, as administrators of those distinguishing ordinances of our religion, by which the grace of God, purchased for us by his Son, is conveyed to his elect; being willing at present, to trace the authority of the Christian ministry on the appointment of Jesus Christ, ratifying that provision for the spiritual wants of his people, to which the wants themselves must naturally have conducted them—the separation and constitution of an order of men to preach the Gospel to their fellow-men, and watch over them as they that must give account. But although such an institution is natural and necessary, and has been a feature of every religion in the world, yet the Christian ministry is characterized by features peculiar to themselves, and strongly indicative of the divine benevolence and wisdom. The religions of the heathen world, have no office corresponding to the ministry of the Gospel; nor even had the chosen people of God: they had, it is true, a holy priesthood to offer sacrifices, but their office related to outward forms and ceremonies, the shadows of better things to come. Holy men were also from time to time raised up to bear testimony against wickedness, and to foretell the righteous judgment of God. But there was no practical, express exposition of God's Word, no friendly admonitions to individual sinners, no watching over souls as a charge to be accounted for to God. This is a characteristic feature of the Christian Religion, and bears the stamp of that consummate wisdom and goodness, that knew the wants and weaknesses of our nature, and made ample provision for them in the final dispensation of his mercy.

In the next place, let me say a few words as to the ministerial authority with which we are invested. It is held by some Christians, that to the right ordination of a minister, nothing is requisite but his election by a particular congregation, and a formal declaration of their choice, accompanied by prayer to God. Now, if the choice of a minister be ordination, it follows, that if a majority of his hearers be displeased with him, they can unordain him, and he will have no resource left but to be re-ordained by another congregation, and be more pliable to their sentiments and their caprices. The mischiefs which result from the dependence of the teacher on those whom he is appointed to teach, are of themselves an unanswerable argument in favour of that form of Church government established in this land; the ministers of which, under the most awful responsibility, have been appointed in succession from the Apostles themselves, to supply fit and able ministers, and to take care, as they value their own peace of mind, that none enter the sacred office who are not qualified for the performance of its duties.—FROM THE FAREWELL SERMON OF THE BISHOP OF LONDON, AT ST. BOTOLPH, BISHOPSGATE.

## THE RELIGIOUS CLAIMS OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.

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JEWIN STREET CHAPEL, ALDERSGATE STREET, APRIL 10, 1834.

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“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandize they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”—EZEKIEL, xxviii. 14—16.

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THIS is a passage of inimitable beauty, but of most awful import. As one of the most powerful and the most beautiful of the creation of God, Tyre is described with overshadowing wings, embracing the nations; herself the very perfection of excellence and of majesty. It would seem as if no counterpart to her could be found among the empires of this world; and heaven itself is made tributary, amidst the first of her thrones and dominions, her principalities and powers, to describe the magnificence and glory of this proud and affluent state, whose walls were the sea, whose merchandize was the wealth of the earth, and whose wisdom and resources appeared to be inextinguishable.

The king is the party addressed; because Providence had placed him at the head of his country, and subjected to him the controul of all its resources. He was absolute in power, according to the abject usages of the East, and exposed to corresponding peril, arising from the unchecked indulgence of pride and passion. He is reminded of the purpose for which he was invested with authority—that he might stretch the wing of his protection over his people, and that they might find shelter under the paternity of his government. He lived in splendour and security, as though he had been translated to Paradise—radiant with jewels, as though he walked in the midst of the stones of fire—elevated, as though he dwelt in the holy mountain of God: nothing appeared to be wanting to seal up the perfection of his beauty. But his heart was lifted up with pride, and iniquity proved his destruction.

It was not, however, individual transgression which procured his ruin, otherwise it might have been limited to himself; but it was national guilt, arising out of national prosperity, combining with his personal character, and pervading his empire. It was the iniquity of their traffic that kindled a fire from the very midst of them, that devoured them. The greatness of the prince must always depend upon the greatness of his people; and the prosperity, nay, the security, of a people, upon its moral and religious character. All other advantages are adventitious and uncertain; all other resources must eventually fail; and for nations, as for individuals, there is a day of judgment and of retribution.

To the state, therefore, we transfer the appeal, “Thou art the anointed

cherub that covereth ; and I have set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God ; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandize they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned : therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God : and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

It is delightful to see such a state in its glory ; but it is mournful to see it in ruins—its religious privileges extinguished—exiled from the sanctuary which it had defiled by the multitude of its iniquities—divested of its affluent prosperity, when every precious stone was its covering—deprived of the power which it had abused, and abased from the throne of its glory. It may, however, yea, it must be instructive, to learn the causes of this extinction, and to mark the stages of its decay. Let Britain recognize, not merely the elements of her greatness in her commercial relations, but the type of her majesty in a state, planted like itself in the midst of the seas, enthroned queen of the nations whom she overshadowed with her powers. Let her look at the character of her own crimes, and consider the peril of corresponding visitations ; let her look to her obligations and her responsibilities ; and, as the chief of these, hearken to the claims of her Colonies. For I despair of advocating these claims without considering the duties of the parent state, exhibiting her vast responsibilities, unveiling her crimes, pointing out her danger, and enforcing her professed principles. But if this can be successfully executed, the claims of her Colonies are established, and she can no longer be in difficulty.

First, then, **THE OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM HER POSITION.** "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth ; and I have set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God ; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created." If this glowing and magnificent description was true of Tyre, it can lose nothing in its application to Britain. Wielding a power, possessing a dominion, and displaying a majesty, surpassing that of the country to which it was applied primarily, in the very zenith of its glory, she is set upon a pinnacle of greatness, at once the envy and the admiration of the nations. In arts and in arms, in commerce and in agriculture, in facility of local position and fertility of soil—secure from invasion, prolific in produce, rich in cultivation, replenished with merchandize, powerful in political relations, redundant in population—above all, unrivalled in religious advantages ; all these secured by a civil constitution peculiar to herself, balancing the national interests, and destroying the elements of internal discord and division : what more can be enjoyed to give national prosperity and pre-eminence, or to appropriate the eulogy—"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created ?"

But whence flows the tide of greatness ? and to whom is Britain indebted for her supremacy ? It is not self-produced ; it cannot be self-sustained : "I have set thee so." When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to his own good pleasure ; he assigned to each their habitation : and verily, the lot hath fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have gotten a goodly heritage. Not to know, not to feel, not to acknowledge this, is the source of national decay and ruin ; and "God, in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways,



hast thou not glorified," was the prophet's charge against Belshazzar; and the handwriting upon the wall records his doom, and the downfall of his empire—"Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

The whole connexion of the passage selected for our admonition, shews that it is God who changeth the times and seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings. Here is the secret of the rising and falling, the splendour, decline, decay, and extinction of empires: their position, their power, their prosperity, their continuance, are of God. Pharaoh was raised up for the express purpose of shewing the power and justice of God against oppression; then is hurled from his throne and life together. The Assyrian is the rod of God's anger to chastise his people; and then is broken, never to be re-united. Babylon is the stately prison provided for the captivity of Israel; and when her doors are open to give them liberty, she becomes a shelter to unclean birds, a den of serpents, an habitation for the wild beasts of the desert. The butterfly floating upon the breeze is not more powerless and dependent in all the accidents of its fragile being, than is the mightiest empire upon the Providence of God for its resources and existence.

And who should understand this better than our countrymen? And who among the nations is more deeply indebted than Britain? I appeal to her obligations as the rule of her duties. But still the hand of God alone hath made her great: he hath wrought out the elements of her pre-eminence from her colonies; he hath made the east and the west tributary to her wealth and magnificence. The splendid descriptions of the influx of merchandize upon Tyre, from all countries, is but a shadow of the commercial and colonial supplies of Britain: and while the unwearied liberality of the Disposer of all events is to be gratefully acknowledged, the channels through which his munificence flows to us must neither be overlooked nor neglected. We are exalted to sovereignty, and entrusted with dominion, that the parent state may be to her widely-spread and numerous Colonies "the anointed cherub that covereth." She owes them political protection, to gather them under her wings, like the eagle: but she owes them more than political protection. Why is she the anointed cherub? Why compared to the first and purest of the sons of light—the cherub? For what is she anointed? She owes them a hallowed protection; she owes them religious instruction; she should engage in a holy traffic, infinitely advantageous to them, and, for the wealth which they pour into her bosom, repay them with durable riches and righteousness. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so." It is a work which God hath prescribed; and we are under indispensable obligation to perform it. It is a debt which is due to our Colonies, and Britain is bound to discharge it.

Another consideration presents itself, secondly, **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HER VAST EXTENT OF TERRITORY.** It is not a figure of speech, but an astounding fact—such is the colonial sovereignty of Britain, that the sun never sets upon her dominions. If we could pierce the diameter of the globe, a part of her empire would be under our feet; her sceptre is extended over both hemispheres; and from whatever quarter the winds of heaven may blow, they fill the sails of her greatness, for they have swept over some portion of her possessions. The statesman may contemplate this prodigious dependency upon the crown of his country with unmixed emotions of pride and exultation; I see in it, primarily, a corresponding magnitude of national responsibility. The

voice which rebukes the presumption of the individual by the challenge, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"—in describing the position of Britain, as shadowed forth in that of Tyre—"thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty," hath added, "and I have set thee so." Shall it be imagined, that the responsibility of an individual rises in proportion to his ability; to whom much is given, of him much shall be required; and that a principle so just, so equitable, so necessary, shall not extend to a country? The principle cannot be controverted; let it then be brought to bear on this highly important subject.

It is not territorial extent abstractedly that presents itself; our Colonies are not barren tracts, or occupied by a population thinly scattered over a wide surface of country. In India alone, one hundred millions of subjects have been added to the parent state; and this is but one, although the greatest, of her present dependencies. I have said her *present* dependencies; because Australia is opening her bosom, as a new world, to receive her redundant population, who are winning cultivation from the waste, and from the wild, from the forest, and from the mountain, and driving the savages from the precincts of civilization, perpetually advancing, deeper into his native fields. It were superfluous here to recount the names and localities of her dominions; but it is of importance to call to mind, that the Colonial territory of Britain has put under her responsibility, not only so many more bodies, but so many more souls; that it is not over inert matter, but over spirit and life, that she rules; that a population vastly surpassing her own, is of equal value with her own; that one immortal spirit of all these millions, is of more worth than the material universe, and must remain indestructible, in happiness or misery, when the heavens are no more; and that the present all-fluctuating, transient, uncertain existence, is the only period to fix its destiny irreversibly and for ever.

Her responsibility is heightened by the moral condition of that vast extent of territory over which she rules; and which, participating the depravity of a fallen nature, common to all, presents peculiarities of corruption or of destitution, characteristic of the particular states in which they are respectively placed. The African, violently torn up from his native soil, or still rooted there, his faculties unraised or uncultivated, or repressed and debased, sunk in ignorance, and abandoned to barbarism, discloses the fermentation of corrupt passions, in forms of corresponding degradation. The Hindoo, in possession of civilization, in the pride and boast of philosophy, has refined upon every thing, even upon sensuality, and supplied cultivation, to produce greater abominations than the unprompted depravity, even of fallen nature, would suggest; while he is involved by a superstition, imposing more terrible bondage upon a large class of society, than the tyranny of abused civil power ever inflicted. The wrongs of the Negro vanish before those of the Sudra: depending upon the station in which he was born, and left without hope and without remedy; taken, as it is imagined, from the feet of Bramah, he was created a slave, to whom no master can give emancipation, and to whose condition no alleviation can be offered. The very writings which are held to be sacred, he must not hear; and the attempt to listen to that in which he believes his salvation to consist, incurs the infliction of torture, or even of death. Thus by unparalleled criminality, exercised not as a punishment of a crime, but as the infliction upon a condition, unexampled in other countries, the body is necessarily enslaved, and the soul abandoned to perish.

Where is the covering cherub? Shall not the outcast of India find shelter under the wings of Britain, and, robbed by the arbitrary distinction of caste, be restored to the dignity of man, and elevated to the hope of the Christian? This is to be effected, not by physical force, but by moral influence; by imparting the knowledge of that system, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but in Jesus Christ a new creature. And this shall be done when the nation wakes to a sense of her responsibility, and with united effort scatters the blessings committed to her trust, in dependence upon His grace by whom they were bestowed upon herself; and like the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, shall carry the boon to the remotest corner of the most distant provinces of the empire.

The mode of colonization argues a considerable degree of responsibility, when it is considered in its strict usages, in reference to the body of the people transferred from the parent state, to some distant possession. It usually commences in the transportation of criminals, unfitted to be allowed in civilized societies, whose laws they have broken, whose peace they have violated, whose order they have disturbed, and whose protection they have forfeited; and these generally not incipient offenders, but hardened in guilt, and irreclaimable by milder modes of correction; carrying with them, superadded to all their vices, the brand of infamy. Powerful restraints must be necessary where former discipline has proved abortive; and not in pity only to themselves, but in especial reference to those with whom they must come in contact, an imperative duty arises, to apply the most effective means to remove the contagion from among themselves, and to prevent the contamination of others. For not only the original inheritors of the soil are there, to receive every baneful impression, but the overflowing of a redundant population pour in upon them by spontaneous emigration from the mother country. And the state of society in which are necessarily commingled the precious and the vile, the respectable and the debased, the virtuous and the vicious, the innocent and the criminal, requires no common guard, is to be influenced by no ordinary principles, and imposes upon the parent state no small responsibility. Thus the religious claims are as urgent as they are indisputable; and to meet this, is to supply every essential want, and to furnish every necessary guard to a population so constituted; and nothing else will do it.

If there be a doubt of the power and sufficiency of religion for so noble and mighty a purpose, we may well waive arguments to substitute facts; and an example is before you, in one of the greatest and most prosperous countries on the face of the earth, emanating from ourselves—it is to be seen in the United States of America. To her shores were banished the violators of the laws of God and of man; and in her were to be found outcasts whom their native land had disowned. But persecutions arose at home, and there went forth a holy seed, voluntary exiles from the temples and the sepulchres of their fathers, that they might hold fast faith and a good conscience; these they carried, with their Bibles, their consistency, their righteous examples, their enlightened instructions, their inextinguishable love for civil and religious liberty, to a community so abandoned, and planted them in a soil so unpromising. Religion effected every thing; the moral waste became a spiritual garden; the wilderness and the solitary place were glad, because of them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed

as the rose : instead of the thorn came up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier came up the myrtle-tree : it hath been to the Lord for a name, and shall be for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.

I have understood the term "Colony," and employed it, in its most comprehensive sense ; as including territorial acquisitions and commercial settlements, as well as planting new lands with an exuberant population, emigrating from the parent country. I have done this advisedly and intentionally, for the purpose of demonstrating, from the power and dominion of Britain, the force of her obligations, and the extent of her responsibilities, without losing sight eventually of that particular object held in view primarily, and that branch of duty intended to be especially enforced by the appointment of the subject of this day.

In stating the religious claims of our British Colonies, another argument arises, thirdly, **THE REPARATION DUE FROM HER OPPRESSORS.** "Iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandize they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned." Ambition has been charged, and justly charged, with trampling upon the rights and liberties of mankind, turning the fruitful land into barrenness, beating down with unsparring force and cruelty whatever withstood its advance, outraging every principle, if expediency required its sacrifice, wasting human life remorselessly in furtherance of its plans, and deluging the earth with blood. What has Commerce to say, in answer to the accusation, should every one of these imputations be alleged against her? Have her crimes been fewer? Have the injuries inflicted upon society been less aggravated, and has the love of money been less powerful than the love of fame? Has the lust of dominion been more persevering and reckless than the cupidity of accumulation? Let the Colonies of Britain, even *Christian* Britain, stand forth and give their testimony, in vindication of the sentiment of the text. The cries of the burning widows in India, the shrieks of the victims crushed under the car of Juggernaut, testify. These have been tolerated, if not encouraged ; until lately, if not even still, a revenue has accrued from the licence of these accursed rites, and she has taken, what even the chief priests did not dare to take—the price of blood.

It will be said, this is but the toleration of existing evils, not the infliction of new ones. Well, then, the participation of the crime being, at least, admitted, we will pass on to the violence which was employed to win, and the cruelty which has been often exercised in keeping, these territorial acquisitions. The enormities perpetrated, the flagrant injustice committed, the extortions practised, are not the reports of enemies, but the subject of judicial inquiries which have come before the public, when the plunderers of the East have been cited in the face of their country. Fortunes and families have been made ; provinces and colonies have been pillaged. When the charge of oppression is alleged, Africa demands to be heard ; the West has accusations to bring against the violence of her merchandize ; and it stands connected with those Colonies which have recently excited so much attention, and which awaken at this moment so lively an interest. These possessions have been, hitherto, cultivated upon a system of slavery, revolting to British feeling, upon the abstract principle ; aggravated by repeated excesses in labour, in treatment, in the whole management of this colonial department. New and fearful combinations were formed in the commercial relations of this great and free city—"the merchandize of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple,

and silk, and scarlet, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

We can afford to concede much, without weakening the argument; and, to suppose for a moment what never can be established in the fact, we will imagine that the condition of these poor captives was as insufferable as it has been represented in their desert country; that the roaming savage sent his miserable captives to the market; that their native bondage was carried to every possible extent of severity; that the prisoners of war, if not thus disposed of, were subjected to death under the most terrible forms of torture; that they were almost constantly in a state of warfare, involving these atrocious consequences. We will not now pause to ask, whether the power which now interposed to tear them from their country, was dictated by benevolence or by avarice—whether the power which broke the yoke of wood did not impose a yoke of iron—whether the whip from which they fled was not supplanted by a scourge of scorpions—nor even whether the supply demanded by the Colonies was not more frequently furnished by the man-stealer, against whom the law of God has pronounced sentence of death, lurking in the bushes until night afforded an opportunity to fire the village, and to drag the overpowered and surprised victims, male and female, manhood, youth, and infancy, to the floating prison. We will suppose their condition in the Colonies, thus supplied, to be such as the friends of slavery could wish to represent; and to admit of as much comfort, to have been met with as much humane consideration as, in many distinguished instances, did occur. We will shut our ears against the sound of the lash, the brutal language, the still more atrocious actions, of those who overlooked them, in other manifold admitted cases. We will waive now all discussion of the right by which man assumes authority over man, to make him the slave of his caprice, if not the victim of his cruelty—the principle so utterly indefensible of any being subjected to the contingency of disposition on the part of others, and the still greater contingency, that the power over them and their children is transmitted from generation to generation, while the same tide of life flows equally in the veins of both, and the same God made both equally free. We pass by all this, to fix upon the link connecting the capture with the sale: the undeniable and undenied horrors of the middle passage, are more than sufficient, in the long-endured, long-encouraged slave-trade, the crime of centuries, to impress the brand of indelible infamy upon the parties engaged in it, and leave an ineffaceable stain of national transgression on the country which so long suffered and countenanced it. Wrongs were inflicted, on which we cannot endure to think. The steams of pestilence arose from the hold of the slave-ship, where an immovable compression mingled the living with the dead. The blood which flowed on the deck, the torture inflicted on the sullen and unsubdued captive, the yells of despair, the cries of pain, the groans of the sick, the still more fearful silence which succeeded, and the frequent plunge into the deep—the owner meanwhile, sitting down coolly to calculate how many he could afford to lose, and yet gain by his voyage—presents altogether an aggregate of atrocity, which we with difficulty associate even with the semblance of humanity. This terrible record is sufficient; we want no other, as we can have no greater, instance of oppression; when in the midst of the ocean the sea-monsters gambolled around

the execrable bark, in expectation of the feast provided for them, and, as she approached the shores, the vulture snuffed the tainted atmosphere, and scented the prey from afar.

When all this is viewed, when principle is opposed to cupidity, right to expediency, justice to oppression, equity to power—whatever parties may be accused or implicated, whatever instrument may have been employed or suffered, whatever participants in the wrong or in the spoil may have been admitted; we cannot conceal from ourselves that the crime has been national, and that the restitution ought to be so likewise. Whoever spread the toils, and hunted down the prey, the country batted on the quarry, and divided the plunder. Long had the cry gone up to heaven before Britain would listen: long had the wail been poured into her ears before she would regard it; long had she conceded the validity of the principle before she would relinquish the graspings of interest. She created a property, founded upon violence, holding out large returns of profit, in which she allured others to embark widely, sharing the pillage, and compelling its continuance afterwards on the plea of state necessity. We leave the statesman to digest the disorder which the national plan had created, to calculate and appease claims which centuries had changed into inheritance. We contend for such reparation of these wrongs as alone are available to the depth of their character and the breadth of their extent, and call for national atonement for the national guilt, and a prompt and corresponding attention to the *religious claims of the Colonies*. It is true much is without remedy: the early victims of oppression are out of the reach of the oppressor; even a nation's repentance cannot recall a single departed spirit from its dreadful abode: but the children are in the place of the fathers. A debt of crime is incurred which the consecrated energies of the nation alone can repay: let the inheritors of the wrongs of their ancestors remove and redress all their grievances in the ample compensation which the parent state has it yet in her power to effect, in sending to them the glad tidings of salvation. The slave trade has been abolished in vain, and in vain are you now proclaiming liberty to the captive, if this great obligation be neglected. You have not given freedom to the slave thoroughly, until you have given him the Gospel; heavier, invisible, infrangible chains remain when you have taken the yoke from his shoulders and struck the fetters from his limbs. The slave and his master are equally in bondage by nature; sold under sin, led captive of Satan at his will: heaven alone can furnish the emancipation.

“ He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside.”

But if the Lord shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. And the precious deposit is lodged in the hands of Britain, pre-eminently, as if to give her opportunity to heal the wounds which she has inflicted, and which admit of no cure, and no alleviation besides.

Another consideration bearing on this subject is, fourthly, **THE SENTENCE PRONOUNCED AGAINST NATIONAL GUILT**. “I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.” This judgment proceeds on two principles: The one is a *personal* degradation: “I will cast *thee* as profane out of the mountain of God.” It is *national* irreligion. The privileges of the Gospel have been

neglected or despised: they shall be removed; they shall be insulted no longer, the prosperity that made them of no account shall be withdrawn also. The other principle on which judgment proceeds is relative, commercial, colonial, bears expressly upon the point discussed. "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." "By the multitude of thy merchandize they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

This is the judgment of Tyre. Go and look at her now, with every monument of greatness overthrown; every trace of power and dominion obliterated; the very site of her emporium a barren rock, upon which the fisherman spreads his net, amidst silence, and solitude, and desolation. And what has Britain to say in arrest of judgment, when the sentence against merchandize proceeds upon the ground of violence and iniquity? "Shall not I visit for these things, saith the Lord? shall not my soul be avenged upon such a nation as this?" If Tyre was not spared, so neither was Jerusalem—Jerusalem, assimilated no less with us in religious pre-eminence, than Tyre in commercial and maritime power and distinction. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish your iniquities." And what is particularly alleged against this professed and privileged people? "In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned." Every part of this sentence is full of meaning. It is the soul that has been trifled with; it is the blood of souls that is required; it is the blood of the souls of "poor innocents," who knew not what they did, abandoned to ignorance, to negligence, to misery. The negligence is palpable, multiplied; the consequences deplorable; yet insensibility and security fortify the guilty city, even in the midst of impending retribution; and they justify themselves under the scrutiny of that eye from which nothing can be concealed. The judgment threatened is just.

Again, as in a glass, the crimes, the danger, and the duty of the country, are alike apparent, and the religious claims of her Colonies depicted. Jerusalem is not, because of these oppressions, combined with this other neglect of the souls of those depending upon her: and shall *we* altogether escape? "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we know it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" The appeal lies here to the conscience of every individual, while the charge goes forth to the country. But woe to the land, and to the professors in it, against whom the complaint shall be raised by the perishing individuals of its Colonies—"No man cared for my soul." "Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandize, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandize, and all thy men of war that are in thee, and in all this company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of thy seas, in the day of thy ruin."

“ therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

The religious claims of the British Colonies resolve themselves into, finally, AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL TO HER CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. “ Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God.” This is the highest of all possible distinctions; the greatest of all possible blessings. And if it were but a presumptuous imagination in the heart of the king of Tyre, or a figure the strongest that could be imagined, of security and felicity, it is unquestionably a reality with us; a reality in respect to privilege; whether a reality in respect to principle, remains to be perceived, and will be determined by the hold which the appeal, so irresistible in its own nature, made to these principles in reference to these claims, shall have upon the conviction, the concurrence, and the energies of the nation at large, and upon the hearts, consciences, and exertions of professors of religion in particular. For it is the work of the nation, and it is the work of the nation in her magnitude, and it has wherewithal to occupy all the labour and talent that can be brought to bear upon it. It is a fitting re-action for benefits received: surely, a portion of the fulness which has poured in through these commercial channels may flow back in other forms of communication upon the colonial relations of a country. Even interest might dictate such a reparation, as certain to make returns more valuable intrinsically, for that which is thus applied in the formation of character, the cultivation of morals, the excitement of zeal and affection, and the establishment of fidelity. If in this single instance the children of this world are blind to their idol, expediency, the national honour claims something on the score of consistency as a nominally Christian nation, which cannot, therefore, be supposed to be wholly indifferent to the state of religion in the world, and which ought to be peculiarly affected to it in its own dependencies.

Professors of religion—I mean those who under some form, and by some name, make a more distinct profession of attachment to religion than those who are merely called Christians by courtesy, and as falling into the mass of a population and a country so denominated—are called upon to listen to the claims advanced, and to act upon them without the least delay. They ought also to remember through every denomination, and to be influenced by the conviction, that it is not a separate interest, nor should it be the isolated work of a party. Here differences should be merged in the prominent object of general concernment, of universal utility, and faithful allegiance to our common Lord. Here, if ever, all envy and strife, all doubts and surmisings, all malice and evil speaking—at all times so unbecoming the Gospel of Christ, so unworthy Christian character, so hateful in themselves, so pernicious in their effects, so opposed to the spirit of our Master—should be laid aside; remembering, that during the time that is consumed in contention, the work of God must stand still. Here there should be no emulation, but such as should call forth holy ardour and brotherly affection, and stir up to love and to good works. Here devotion and labour will advance the design, if prosecuted with unity of heart and spirit; and differences may for once produce advantages, if while the watchmen see not eye to eye, with the voice together they shall sing while the Lord buildeth up his spiritual Zion. Let then the labour be divided, but let the spirit be one; and professors lose the littleness of party in the magnanimity



of their occupation Let the nation feel its duty and interest united; and let all ranks and classes combine in an object so majestic and so benevolent. Let our country lead the way to the throne of the Son of God, that the kings of the earth may follow in her train, and bring their glory and their honour unto it.

The religious claims of the British colonies may appeal safely to Christians indeed on principle. These will require no argument to convince, no eloquence to plead, no circumstances to excite them; the most that can be necessary, and this is far more profitable, is to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance. All arguments, all pleadings, all excitements, all that can be necessary to the most active exertions, and the most entire devotedness to this great cause, is found within them: these are lodged already by the Holy Spirit in their own bosoms; and the love of Christ simply and alone, in all the greatness of its single force, will constrain and support them. What they do they will do heartily, as to the Lord, and not to man: they will not stay till temples are built, and forms are established, but remembering that the loss of a moment may place an immortal spirit out of their reach, they will take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea; they will find the cathedral of nature's own construction in the East, with long drawn aisles, and fretted roofs, and religious shade, and majestic extent, and unmatched, unrivalled by human art. In every colony they will find a sanctuary, on the mountain, or on the plain, or in the valley, or by the river, or under every green tree. These have been desecrated to idolatry, or polluted by vice; let them become hallowed by religion and consecrated to God. What Christians indeed do, they will also do liberally; so that what cannot be effected by them personally, may be accomplished by the dedication of their property, through the instrumentality of others: God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. It is time that the moral scene should change, and that the kingdom of the Son of God should come. It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law. With the religious claims of the British Colonies the cries of the universe are heard, and the groans of the whole creation arise on every side. The history of man is a history of guilt, and of misery: blood spots the imperial purple, the ermine of the legislator and the magistrate, the robe of the priesthood. Blood is the trade of the warrior. I see blood every where. I turn to thee, O God of love and of peace, the avenger of oppression, unto whom the voice of our brother's blood crieth; to the word of reconciliation, and unto the world of everlasting rest and felicity; and there at length find a sure defence, and unviolated repose.

## THE DECEITFULNESS AND WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

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REV. R. VAUGHAN.

KENSINGTON, APRIL 13, 1834.

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“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”  
JEREMIAH, xvii. 9.

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ALL saving acquaintance with religion must be preceded by a degree of true knowledge in reference to ourselves. Religion now is not as it was when man came forth pure from the hand of his Maker. It then consisted in the natural, the pleasing, and the delightful expression of all the thoughts and emotions of the human spirit. Religion now, however, presents itself to us in the character of a remedy for those who are diseased. It is no longer the mere utterance of devout thought, of holy emotions, the excitement of simply pleasurable feelings: it supposes a condition far removed from that in which human nature was at first: and we shall only judge correctly in religion in proportion as we shall be found to have judged correctly as to the extent of the inveteracy of the malady which it is now intended to counteract.

It is on this ground that the subject to which the text calls our attention is so manifestly involved. The language which the prophet employs must not be understood as referring to any particular class of men, to the men of any age or country. It is language studiously set forth apart from all restricted application: it is of man, in all the broadest of our broad conception of human nature that the prophet thus speaks. Nor must we suppose that in speaking thus, forcible as the language is, he employs strong eastern modes of expression, which are to be subject to very much explanation and softening, ere we arrive at the real amount of meaning which his terms were intended to convey. On the contrary, the passage is a statement partaking of very little ornament; and is meant, therefore, to be received by us according to the usual signification of the terms in which it is expressed. There is no escape, without disingenuousness, from the humiliating contemplation which it urges upon us relative to the present state of human nature. We may regard it as a stain on humanity, we may consider it not a little discreditable to us that it should be at all true; but it is nevertheless the saying of God. That it should not occur to us at once as an accurate description, is to be anticipated from what is generally taught on the subject, in the Scriptures themselves; for here we are especially told that it is not enough that the doctrine relative to the present condition of the human nature should be stated in Scripture, but that, in connexion with all such statements, however forcible and explicit, there should be grace vouchsafed to man to enable him to perceive the truth of these humiliating and alarming descriptions.

When it is not only said that the heart is “deceitful,” and “desperately

wicked," but the inquiry is put, "Who can know it?" it may seem at first as though a charge of presumption would apply to any man who should attempt to ascertain the complex and the subtle character really attaching to it. Yet those Scriptures which tell us of the importance and necessity of knowing our own heart ere we can be partakers of any thing that will constitute a ground of hope towards God; the Scriptures which, beyond this, urge upon us to connect prayer for divine light with the careful perusal of such Scriptures, lay the truth before us in the most obvious and impressive terms. I must urge it, therefore, on you, my dear hearers, very seriously—if the statement in our text should not present itself to your mind, on the first view, as a statement to be literally taken—to be very careful that this be not a conclusion suggested by that natural feeling of self-importance and self-confidence, which we know from Scripture, and from observation, to be inwrought with the essential state of humanity upon all moral subjects.

We are to advert to what is stated here as to the heart; first, to its deception—"deceitful above all things;" secondly, to its wickedness—it is "desperately wicked: Who can know it?"

With regard to ITS DECEPTION, we perceive the indications of this in the readiness with which it can misrepresent things—with which it can conceal from us the tendency of things—and with which it is found even to impose upon ourselves.

The deceitfulness of the heart is manifest from *the readiness with which it misrepresents things.*

The effect which the fall has had on the human intellect with regard to natural objects is not, of course, the object of the present inquiry. How far it has impaired our powers of discernment with reference to what is just, or proper, or beautiful, in art or science, is another question: that its effects have left humanity only the wreck of what it was, may be clearly inferred from Holy Writ.

We have to do at present with more serious matter. How readily does this treachery manifest itself in *the mistaken views which men entertain of God himself.* The perfections of the divine nature are not viewed according to the exhibition of them in Holy Scripture by men in general. Not only do men withhold their assent from certain things which are taught of the Divine nature, assuring themselves that they are not verities; but they are found attributing to the Divine Being what is alien from his true character. Accordingly the natural man, the man who is untaught by Scripture, and by the Spirit who has indited Scripture, is described as being "at enmity against God;" his mind is not subject to the law of God, in consequence of the enmity that is in him in reference to the divine nature. The sovereignty of the Divine Being, for instance—the traces of which we can observe quite as much in the system of nature and of providence as in any thing that is disclosed in Holy Writ itself—the divine sovereignty is commonly felt by men as though it were a wrong inflicted on man on the part of Him who presides over human affairs. The purity and the rectitude of the divine nature is not received as it should be, when men can dare to violate to the extent they do the laws of purity and the laws of rectitude; concluding, obviously, one of two things—either that God has not prohibited these things, or that he is not sufficiently their enemy to visit them with punishment.

The same is true with reference to many other particulars. The fool is ready to say in his heart, "There is no God;" and multitudes, who do not reach this extent, substitute a god having no existence but in the eye of their own depraved imaginations, and the view of that All-glorious Being whom it is the great object of the Sacred Scriptures to make known. Here, as in other respects, the deceitfulness of the human heart manifests itself, disposing men continually, from the views of the divine character which they ought to receive with all readiness and affection, to indulge in vain conceptions of their own, simply because they would have the God to whom they profess to do homage such a one as themselves.

The same is observable in *the estimate which men form of every thing in the present world*. They look to the riches of the world, to the honours of the world, to the pleasures of the world, not as things which have in them, indeed, somewhat of worth, and are worth somewhat of effort, and things which, if conferred, should call forth gratitude to God; but they look to them as things in which they are to find their chief good. It is from their wealth, it is from these honours, it is from these pleasures, that they expect to derive the essence of their well-being. Make them rich, and they think you make them happy; give them honours, and they imagine themselves to have reached interminable bliss; admit them to pleasures, and they think that their heaven is come. What is this but a power of fascination equal to any thing that human imagination can conceive? Where is the immortal creature who has ever separated himself for one solitary hour to think of these things, who does not, in the exercise of his own reason, see that all this is folly and madness itself? Yet here men are persuaded that their chief good is to be found; they have learned through the deceitfulness of the human heart the power of the deception that is going on within them; they have learned that it is an evil thing to have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and to hew out to themselves cisterns that will hold no water.

The same again is obvious with regard to *every thing of morality*. How often does the treachery of the human spirit betray itself here. What kind of standard is that which you find generally obtaining among men, in reference to what is moral and what is not moral? Do you not find names strongly misapplied in regard to their feelings and their states of mind? Are not pride, anger, revenge, even cruelty, too commonly described as nothing more than proper spirit—covetousness nothing more than prudent care? And many are the forms of selfishness in which man is alienated from his fellows as well as from his God, far indeed from being descriptive of their real character. Among the ancient nations of Greece and Rome, there was not a term to express the idea of what we intended by the word "humility:" they had no conception of that which Christians designate by the term "humility," as being in itself an honourable thing; their expression was "base-born:" they wanted the term because they wanted the reality. We say not that nothing is true in reference to the morals which men adopt apart from Revelation, but we contend that throughout every system of morality which man has adopted, this deceitfulness of the heart is continually manifested by such false representations.

The same, again, is true with regard to *religion*. What is the system of religion that the majority of persons professing themselves to be Christians entertain? That a man should declare his belief in certain doctrines, to belong to a certain ecclesiastical connexion; that he should give some decent

measure of attention to the outward services of religion; that he should be seen at times, at least, if not very regularly, in a church or a chapel; that he should, of course, abstain from any thing morally improper: if he professes to believe thus, and gives this degree of attention to religious services, all is supposed to be right. And all this with the Bible open before him! All this with the Book unfolded which tells what men must become before they are fit for the transit from this world of corruption to the world of unsullied purity and holiness, The very state of mind which the Bible enjoins as that which is alone religion, is regarded by a large class of persons as enthusiasm, as excess of feeling, as something which betrays the want of sober thought; while disgraceful names are invented, and fluently applied to the persons in whose character these indications are seen.

The heart is seen to be deceitful, further, in *the readiness with which it can conceal from us the tendency of things.*

Where is the man who, when he first yields to sin, really looks forward to, or is seen to possess the power of anticipating, the probable consequences of that first step? And when he does so, does he really feel with Solomon, that "the beginning of sin is like the beginning of strife, as the letting out of water," which, when it has once made a passage, will gather strength and bear away every thing as with the force of an inundation? We cannot believe any such thing. Yet in a state and nation that should not be subject to the fascinating and bewildering power that is working in man, cases of this kind are obvious. They see it as distinctly as they see the succession of day and night on our globe. If men are obliged to anticipate a future reckoning, how many of them persuade themselves that the time will come when they shall repent, and when they will avail themselves of certain means which they conceive to be within their reach for the repairing of the condition into which they are come. Ask the man, while he was yielding to temptation, if he thought with any thing like correctness of the consequences that might attend his criminality: he will tell you that the dominant, the almost all-absorbing feeling of his mind was, a feeling of desire towards the pleasure that was before him; that it was this that influenced him, that he never thought of the future: but, if he did turn his thoughts for a moment to consequences, the power which the pleasure possessed of bringing into existence in his soul the idea of a future time of misery, no language can describe.

What is all this then but the work of deception? The man is led on in the paths of transgression, blind to the perception of their results; and all this flowing from his own mind, all this resulting from his own guilty thoughtlessness, from his own guilty inattention to the responsibility of the state in which he is placed, and to the voice which bids him look higher, that he may be saved from the consequence of his iniquity.

That this is so, you may perceive from the general sentiments contained in the language of Deuteronomy, xxix., where the state of mind to which we have just now referred is described, and the consequences that result from it pointed out as having an intimate connexion with the just retribution of Him who will deal with men according to their deserts: "And if it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that

are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."

It is not, therefore, you perceive, a matter of fatal necessity that a man should be blind, but there is *a treachery in his heart which practises this kind of imposition on himself*, which leads me to remark, in the third place, that it is especially obvious on this point.

Various things are described in Scripture as deceitful; but these things are not deceitful in themselves; they are so in consequence of the mistaken conceptions with regard to them which the mind is disposed to form. They become the occasions of fatal contention and bitter disappointment through the wilful misconception which men entertain of them. Satan is himself represented in Scripture as the being, next to the human heart, in whom there is the greatest amount of treachery; but we are not allowed to suppose that even he is so far the dupe of self-treachery as are men. The extent to which that kind of intoxication which results in regard to all the exercises of the understanding where the passions are disordered and depraved, the extent to which this is the case we cannot determine: but we cannot suppose that when he speaks a lie, he does not know that it is a lie: he is aware of the distinction between the true and the false, however we are to account for the infatuation by which his career is sustained: "the devils believe, and tremble."

But the human spirit imposes upon itself. The man, for instance, who is trusting to a form of godliness, while he is told that he must possess the power, persuades himself that all is well. Point out to him with all possible plainness that that in which he trusts as religion, is no religion; that it is morally certain, external things on which he confides have no necessary connexion with the state of the soul religiously considered: do this as the Saviour did with the Pharisees who stood around him—tell them that they are blind, and what will be the effect? They will ask with astonishment, "Are we blind?" Readily will they admit that the depraved and the ignorant are deceived and perish, but that with *their* degree of attention to what bears the character of religion, that *they* should be blind is not to be comprehended. But so it was: "blind leaders of the blind." Men may persuade themselves (such is the power of this deceitfulness) that they are doing God service, while they are inflicting the greatest miseries on the best men on earth, the very favourites of heaven. Paul thought that he "ought to do" the things that he did, as a persecutor of the Church of God. And even when the force of this treachery shall have been somewhat broken, light from on high shall have been vouchsafed to the soul, and the spirit shall be separated from the broad road that leads to destruction, and be in the narrow path, even then much of this will remain. Was it not so with the disciples when they would have called fire from heaven to destroy the inhabitants of the Samaritan village because of their want of hospitality? But Jesus said to them, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Was it not so with Peter, when full of this world's anticipations concerning his Master's triumph, he would prevent his going to Jerusalem, where our spiritual redemption was to be accomplished? "Jesus said unto him, get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Peter thought that his conduct arose from pure attachment to the Saviour, not aware of the amount of worldliness and selfishness that had become inwrought with him, and which was at variance with the spirituality that should have prevailed in his mind.

Another particular that ought not to be overlooked, is, that men who actually deny all this, or, at least, to a very large extent do so, as applicable to themselves, admit the truth of it in reference to others. *They* are not the dupes of which we have been speaking; they have been wiser; they have analyzed their motives, their habits of thinking, their feelings—they have sought means of information; they know the path they tread: they are not to be numbered with the dupes who are on their right hand and on their left. They are sure, however, that the world is *full* of this sort of deception: they hearken to no man's profession: they know that the noisy patriot is nothing more than a selfish demagogue; they know that the religionist who stands out from the mass by the apparent solemnity of his walk and conversation, is a man not to be trusted more than others; that in all cases there is an under current, there is a mystery of unrevealed motive at work. Is it not strange that a man's vanity should so far blind his understanding as to make him believe that *he* is a wise man, and that all are fools besides—that *he* is an honest man, and all are rogues besides?

There is no end to this subject: the further we go with it, the more does it develop itself. "The heart is deceitful above all things:" it is a depth of treachery which none but the Omniscient can fathom: and the man who is least prepared to admit this, is just the man in whose instance there is the most striking confirmation of this truth.

We are to advert to what is said of THE WICKEDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART. We do not hesitate to say that the text is intended to teach that the human heart is universally wicked—unsearchably wicked—incurably wicked.

When we say the human heart is *universally wicked*, we do not, of course, mean that it is wicked to the full extent of which it is capable of being wicked. On the contrary, it is very obvious that there are degrees in human wickedness, just as there are different degrees of strength and weakness in the human understanding, and different degrees of culture with regard to the individual character. We do not mean to say, therefore, that there is not much of what is morally worthy in the hearts of men; there is a regard for what is honest, there is an amiableness of disposition, there is a considerable degree, even of generosity, throwing a pleasing halo around many a natural character. But we must contend, after all, that in reference to no one exercise of the human spirit can it be said that it is what it ought to be. The taint is universal; the stain attaches to the purest and the most generous tendernesses of the human heart. There is none that doeth good, save one, that is God. There is no movement of the human spirit, considered merely in reference to our fellow creatures, that has not some inordinate selfishness, some blemish connected with it in the sight of heaven, that deprives it of all its fancied unsullied beauty: there is wickedness in it.

With regard to the many, wickedness constitutes, obviously, a very large amount: but if we pass from the circle of what may be considered mere morality, and come to that which is spiritual and holy, the wickedness of which we speak is manifest to a great extent. Men are in a state of alienation to the spirituality of the divine nature: their understanding is darkened, their will is perverted, their affections are sensualized, their appetites are inflamed, their whole nature has become estranged from that temperament, that light, that tendency, which are necessary to their finding their heaven in the service and favour of God.

In this view it is, then, that we look on the wickedness of men as being universal. It affects their whole character; it has caused them to be, with regard to every thing that is spiritual, dead in trespasses and sins; it has severed their connexion with the heavenly world, as entirely as does the stroke of death sever the connexion between the body and the physical world. The mind, as far as the region where seraphs dwell—as far as the sympathies which appertain to cherubim, and the holy natures before the throne of God—the mind, as far as these are concerned, is as though it were not; there is death upon it, and, with reference to every thing merely moral, there is evil inwrought with it all.

The wickedness of the heart is *unsearchable*: “Who can know it?” We are far from admitting this at first; but the more we think, if we are at all students of our own mind, the more we must become aware of this truth. The human spirit in this respect is like those chambers of imagery into which the prophet Ezekiel was conducted by an invisible hand, where, as he passed from one portion of the building to another, and as he went across threshold after threshold, the voice was heard to say, “Come, son of man, and thou shalt see greater abominations still.” There is nothing more common in the experience of devout men than to be astonished at the development of the remaining sinfulness of their own nature—astonished that these things should have been in them so long, and have been discovered so late—astonished that, after they thought they knew themselves so thoroughly, they should thus find that they have known but little indeed.

But while this is the fact, of course we have reason to believe that it must remain for a future world to develop all the evil that belongs to the mind. We are not competent, in the present state, to bear the disclosure: God in his rich mercy makes us acquainted with it by degrees: as we pass on from stage to stage he unfolds successively the depravity which attaches to our best states of mind. And this authorizes us to anticipate that it is only in that world where every thing is perfect, that we shall become fully aware of our obligation to Him who has interposed to become our Mediator.

We said this wickedness is *incurable*. The text describes it as “desperate.” Considered with regard to the provision made for it in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, there is no state of this wickedness that can be considered as in the least degree desperate. The most guilty may be pardoned through the intervention of that blood which cleanseth from all sin: the most benighted may be illuminated through the intervention of that power which of old commanded the light to shine out of darkness: the most hardened may become children of God in spirit, and hope, and desire—of Him whose it is to take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh. But in regard to *themselves*, there is a desperateness in the evil, palpable, destructive, attaching to this condition of human nature—a desperateness that is displayed by all that which is on the page of human history, by all that we witness on our right and on our left, by all that we have ascertained, as well as the experience of our own minds. Where is the man who can really believe that he is possessed of power enough to purify his understanding, to sanctify his soul, to effect the needed renovation of his fallen and miserable nature! The man who has attempted this with the greatest solicitude, with the greatest energy, in the belief that it may be accomplished by himself, is just the man who will have the deepest conviction that he has a depraved nature, that it is beyond a human remedy, not to be cured by human reason or human suasion.



All this demonstrates the necessity of that new birth which the sacred Scriptures enjoin upon us, so seriously and so often. Well might the Redeemer say, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God." This birth also must involve something distinct from and greatly superior to water-baptism of any sort: it can be effected only by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, shedding his light upon the darkened spirit, and pouring his transforming and quickening power over the chaos of the deadness of the human soul. This is obvious where there is the slightest degree of earnest desire to be taught; for how is it possible it should be otherwise? He that is born after the flesh minds the things of the flesh, but he that is born of the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. The tendencies of men are naturally to be careful of what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed; and those who rise at all above this, still rest in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The present, the earthly, constitute the boundary of hope; the region in which the objects are found call forth the solitudes and the energies of the human soul. Only admit the broad and obvious fact of man's immortality, and who can believe that this is a proper spirit for humanity to be found in, that a being should be destined to live for ever, and yet be unmindful of that *for ever!*—that he should be born for good or evil throughout eternity, and live in carelessness of that eternity! This is not according to the nature or fitness of things: far, indeed, is it from being according to what is stated in the Scripture, as necessary to well-grounded hope for the future. There must be the change of heart which the Scripture enjoins: the mind must be brought under the teaching from on high, the heart brought under the renovating power from on high, under the influence of faith, and hope, and love, and the dispositions which fit us for the service of God and the kingdom of God. These must be ours, and we must become, in some measure, aware that in us the change has been wrought, that enables a man to say, "My treasure is in heaven, and my heart is there also. Place before me this world's gain, even in the form in which it has been most attractive; and place before me the hope of the upper, and the better, and the purer world, and I will part with all that is present for the hope of that which is future. I will forego every gratification that is unlawful for those pleasures that are in store at the right hand of God." Now, without this state of mind, there is no religion. If the condition of human nature be what it is, you will not wonder that so much importance is attached to this state of mind in the language of Holy Writ.

Learn from this subject, further, to see your need of an interest in that Saviour whose salvation it is the great object of the Scripture to announce to men. Can you hope for the favour of God on any other ground than the merit and intercession of a higher and purer nature than your own. What can be so fit to culprits like ourselves as that there should be a Mediator between us and God? Where is the service to which we can look as that which we will take to us as our ground of claim into the presence of God? Is there a single moral achievement—not to say a religious one—that we can coolly review, and feel ourselves satisfied concerning it, that it is altogether even as the eye of infinite purity would have it? When our dying moments come, it must be indeed a strange amount of infatuation that would allow us to suppose this concerning any action of our lives. But if this be not in view, what shall we say of the amount of impurity attaching to all the rest? Our

guilt is accumulated also before the bar of God by our neglect of duty as well as by our violation of duty: that which we have left undone, there will meet us along with that which we have done contrary to the divine will. These things, if we have moral courage, moral honesty, to keep them still (if I may so speak) before the eye of conscience, that we may examine and judge well concerning them, will bring us to his state of mind who said, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith." "Men and brethren, be it known to you, therefore, that through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins, and that those who believe on him shall be justified from all things from which they could not be delivered by the law of Moses."

Finally, learn self-examination. It is important to us in all departments, but in reference to every thing religious, where we are most disposed to err in this respect, it is of the utmost consideration. "There is a way that seemeth good unto a man, though the end are the ways of death." "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." These are only some of the many Scriptures that occur to tell us of our liability to err in this respect. How often will the formalist be found to be among the most ardent in anticipating the favour of heaven and admission there! "Lord, Lord, open to us," is the very language with which they are described as approaching the gates of the celestial city itself. The man, also, who is a talkative professor of religion, the man who, because he holds certain doctrines, and professes to be attached to certain articles, but whose spirit is unamiable, censorious, in whom there is little, if any thing, to be seen indicating the spirit of the Gospel, will entertain the same confidence as the former, and is as sure to consider himself right because of his being persuaded that certain things are true. Extremes meet in this case, and no man can have been long acquainted with religious parties, and not have met with instances of this kind. Now the escape from this is obvious and imperative: the men who are thus self-deceived are self-deceived with the means of instruction; and it is because they have not yielded to that instruction. There is an awful passage in 2 Thessalonians, ii. 11, 12, where it is said that God would "send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We have reason to believe that it is the law of the divine government that the time comes when men who have trifled with the convictions of conscience, the solemn warnings of Holy Scripture, the affectionate expostulations of Christian ministers, and who have continued formalists in the face of all this, or who have continued to rest their hope of heaven more upon their own creed than upon the Christian character of their heart and feelings—after a while they are led to believe that these things are as they would have them to be: the Pharisee dies, and the Antinomian dies, and a lie is in their right hand. Brethren, guard against this. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

## THE DUTY OF THE STATE TO PROVIDE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION FOR THE PEOPLE.

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RIGHT REV. C. J. BLOOMFIELD, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S, PICCADILLY\*, APRIL 20, 1834.

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“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”—HEB. x. 25.

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THESE words are part of a solemn address, in which the Apostle enumerates the principal duties and privileges of the Christian, as a member of the visible Church upon earth—faith, charity, steadfastness, devotion, and, as instrumental and conservative means, baptism and the ordinances of common worship. “Having,” he says, “an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

“The day” which was then approaching, was that fearful day of retribution which was about to terminate the existence of Jerusalem, and the national polity of Israel; a day of such calamity and woe as hath never passed on any nation—so indiscriminate and overwhelming, that the believers would have perished with their brethren, had not their Master prayed, that for the elect’s sake those days might be shortened. At such a crisis, when the approach of tribulation and anguish was preceded by the malignant activity of error, the members of Christ’s Church, which was then but newly planted in the world, and at enmity with the world, would stand in need of all the consolations and supports which their religion could furnish—all those blessed assurances and convictions which the Spirit of life and help could fix in believing and fainting hearts, and all those aids and appliances which were found in the ministry of the Word, and the ordinances appointed by the Founder of the Church, and his Apostles, for its edification and security.

This was no time, then, for carelessness, or indifference, or selfishness: nothing but the “full assurance of faith,” an ardent and devoted zeal, an abiding remembrance of their baptismal covenant, holy emulation, charity, continuance in prayer, mutual encouragement and consolation—nothing but this, applied and made effectual by the Comforter, would be sufficient to bear them up against the trials of that awful scene. Therefore we find many passages in the writings of the Apostles, as well as the writings of our blessed Lord, intended to prepare them for the moment of conflict, to increase their diligence, to quicken their

\* For the Incorporated Society for Building Churches and Chapels.

faith, to strengthen their confidence in God. They are exhorted to be "instant in prayer;" they were to be "sober;" to "gird up the loins of their mind;" to admonish and teach one another; to be strict and regular in the assemblies of their religious worship, as well as mutual edification and comfort. And powerful, no doubt, was that consolation which those holy men experienced in the stated ministry of the faithful, where the Apostles themselves, or those who had been ordained by the Apostles, enlarged upon the divine truths and precepts of the Gospel, set before them in vivid portraiture the example of the Holy Jesus, conducted the common sacrifice of prayer and praise, and administered the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood. No wonder if, as we are informed, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

It appears, however, that there were, even then, some careless or conceited persons, who purposely and habitually neglected the ordinances of public worship, and refused to imbibe the graces of the Spirit through channels of his own appointment; it was "the manner of some" to "forsake the assembling of themselves together." These, no doubt, were of the number of those persons who, as the Apostle says, "consented not to wholesome words;" whom another Apostle describes as being "presumptuous and self-willed"—as having "once known the way of righteousness," and afterwards "turned away" from it. Some, perhaps, there were who contended that there was no outward service due to God from the disciples of a Master who had taught them that his Father was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; a precept which, although it was most positive and precise as to the necessity of spiritual worship, did not exclude, nor even by implication condemn, but rather takes for granted, the use of outward means and formularies: and they might have learned from the example of Jesus Christ himself, and from the practice of his Apostles, that the "assembling of themselves together" for religious purposes, was a duty that they owed to God, to their brethren, and to themselves; to God, as a mark of their dependence upon his power and goodness, and an expression of the honour due to his name; to their brethren, for example's sake, and for encouragement in times of rebuke and blasphemy; to themselves, for edification and spiritual strength.

And these are reasons for the duty of religious assemblies and observances which are of perpetual validity: the lapse of time, far from impairing, has strengthened the obligation of that duty. For if it were necessary for those who had received the word of revelation from the Apostles themselves, confirmed with signs and wonders following, who had witnessed the special operations of the Holy Spirit, and had themselves partaken of his more direct influences—if, I say, it was necessary for them to assemble themselves together for the purpose of mutual exhortation, and refreshment, and for performing the common exercises of piety, much more requisite must it be for us who have derived our religious belief and principles through the ordinary channels of information, and who are exposed to spiritual dangers of a more varied, if they be of a less appalling kind.

When the Church of Christ was persecuted from without, when, even if its members escaped the dreadful alternative of apostacy or death, the least they could expect was that all men should speak evil of them for their Master's sake—they were forced to a nearer consideration of that momentous question—Which is to be adhered to, Christ or the world? Religion became, of necessity,

a matter of the most personal concernment; it was the chief subject of inquiry and reflection. The awful importance of the question would drive them to earnest and frequent prayer, and the endurance or the anticipation of evil would make them feel the necessity of seeking all the means of consolation which religion had to offer; fellowship in prayer, the spiritual communion of Christ's body and blood, and the ministry of his blessed Word. But in times when the profession of Christianity is neither dangerous nor discreditable, when the course of this world is peaceably ordered, and the visible Church is permitted to serve God in quietness and security, there is nothing in the constitution or circumstances of society which forcibly directs the attention of mankind to the awful business of religion; there is nothing which constrains them, by an over-powering necessity, to consider the grounds and obligations and assurances of the faith which they profess: and if they had nothing to remind them of this duty but the suggestions of their own conscience, or the occasional recurrence of providential warnings, experience teaches us it would soon cease to be performed. Some authoritative ordinance, some duly appointed memorial is required to recall the thoughts of mankind to the most important of all questions—some perpetual and conspicuous monument which shall rise above the dead, unprofitable level of worldly cares and enjoyments, and point the way to eternity.

If Jesus Christ founded a Church upon earth, and that, too, with peculiar emphasis of authority—if he appointed a ministry, and that, too, with a commission at once universal and perpetual—it was that the light of his Gospel might be placed upon an eminence, a beacon-fire to a benighted world, a visible memorial of religion, a city set on a hill that could not be hid. But this end can only be answered by the public performance of the common acts of religion. without them not only would private devotion be ineffectual for the purpose of example and edification, but it would soon cease to exist. The duty, then, of public and common worship is a duty which we owe to the honour of God's name: it involves the very maintenance of true religion; it is the visible expression of its supremacy; and, as practised in the Christian Church, it is the perpetual record of the sealing miracle of the Gospel covenant: for if Christ be not risen from the dead—as every Lord's day observance proclaims he is risen—then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Were we to regard it only in this point of view, a strict attention to the public ordinances of our religion would be a duty binding upon the conscience of every true servant of Jesus Christ. The assembling of ourselves together on the day of sacred rest, is a grand and solemn attestation to the truth of the Gospel revelation. Observed at the same moment in every part of the civilized world by the members of Christ's Church, it is a standing and continually recurring confutation of infidelity—it is a perpetual renewing of belief. The whole Christian family lays aside those pursuits which have reference only to a transitory state, and turns its eyes towards the glory of eternity. While the sounds of business and pleasure are hushed, it raises its voice in glad acclaim to Him that sitteth on the throne for ever and ever. Such at least ought to be the case: such ought to be the Sabbath triumphs of the Gospel over the pageants and the cares of the world that abideth not: and oh, that every one who nameth the name of Christ would consider how glorious would be the consequence, if all would, in good earnest, set themselves to sanctify that day, the great object of which is the doing honour to the name of God and Christ. How would

the cause of true religion be strengthened, and the beauty of holiness be set forth! How would the devout unanimity of Christians silence the blasphemers, confound the cavillers, awaken the careless, shame the profligate! How great, on the other hand, must be the inconsistency of Christians, in this respect, bring discredit on its profession, and encourage its adversaries to press forward their designs!

But if it be thus apparent that the assembling of ourselves together is a duty which we owe to the honour of God and the cause of Christ's Gospel, it is not less evident that we are also bound to it by a regard to the Christian welfare of our brethren. Indeed, the two objects are so connected with each other, that the one may be regarded as the end to be sought for, and the other the means by which it is to be attained. God is glorified first in the sanctification, and then in the salvation of sinners: and it is because men are thereby brought within the verge of divine instruction, and the gracious influences of the Spirit, and of closer communion with the Saviour, that we speak of our religious assemblies as contributing to the glory of God.

The Apostle having set forth the universal efficacy of Christ's death, to the redemption both of the Jew and the Gentile who should call on his name, says of the latter, "How shall they call on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" This gradual ascent from the spiritual necessities of the people to the authoritative commission of the teachers, applies to every age of the Church. It is to the institution of public assemblies for the common worship of God, and for the instruction of his people, without which the commission of his ministers would be a dead letter, we are to ascribe, under the influence of his grace more especially promised in such instances, that his Name is hallowed, his Word understood and remembered, his Sacraments sought for and received, and, consequently, religious knowledge and religious feeling diffused throughout the community at large.

Unless the great truths of religion are not merely set before mankind, but forced on their notice, they will be disregarded; for there is an apathy, and incuriousness, in the great mass of mankind, even respecting the things which are of infinite concernment to them, which requires to be excited from without: they must be invited, exhorted, admonished, rebuked, by those who have authority to do so. The servants of the Lord must go forth into the high ways and hedges of the world, and compel those who are loitering there to come in. Over the doors of every one of the Lord's houses, wherein his word is faithfully preached, is written, in characters of light, unseen by the carnal-minded man, but discernible to the inquiring eye of teachable humility, "Whosoever is athirst, let him come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The observance of the Sabbath, and the setting apart of times and places to the offices of religion, are mementos which prevent religion itself from going into decay and oblivion in the ministering of those who are appointed to feed the Church of God, or the means by which the Bible itself is rendered available to the ends it was intended to answer. And it is at those times, and in those places, and by those ministrations, that the promised aid of the Spirit may be sought for with the assurance of obtaining it. The Spirit has been promised to the Church of Christ, an abiding and a sanctifying Spirit, even to the end. It is by his aid and power that each individual member of that Church must realize the privileges of the Gospel, and apply to himself in particular the benefits which Christ has purchased for mankind

at large without it, not a step can be taken in the path of righteousness. We may bear the name of Christ, our foreheads may have been sealed with his cross at baptism, we may have all the outward badges, all the tokens of discipleship; but if we have not the Spirit of Christ we are none of his. The capacity of having such a portion of it which makes it possible for us to ask for and obtain more, is imparted to us at baptism; that power of asking, and obtaining, and improving, is the great privilege of discipleship—the great instrument of the benefits we derive from being translated from a state of nature into one of grace. But then the Spirit of God ordinarily works by the instrumentality of man, and he must be resorted to in the use of them: he was known to mankind, to all the world, first by giving the volume of inspiration; then by enlightening their minds to the discernment of its meaning, by the ministry of instituted teachers, by the sacraments, by all the means of grace, and all the methods of education. It becomes, therefore, the sacred duty of every Christian community, to take care that the Lord's people shall not lack opportunity of profiting by those means; that they shall have places and times for the public worship of God, and for the ministration of those ordinances to which the promise of the Spirit is annexed. This is the best method we can adopt for preserving our poorer brethren, not only in the unity of the Church, but in the bond of peace, and in quietness of life, and in habits of sobriety and industry, and in obedience to the laws.

What, then, is the inference which I would persuade you to draw from these considerations, with reference to the object of this discourse? Is it not too obvious to need explanation? Does any one who now hears me, believe that this country can be saved from the dangers which threaten its peace and security, by any other means whatever than that of a great moral regeneration, or that such a regeneration can be wrought by any other instrumentality than that of religion? Is it not a false and delusive empiricism, which holds out to us for the evils that afflict, any other panacea than Christianity? Is there any radical cure for pauperism, any infallible antidote against listlessness and insecurity, any specific remedy for intemperance and dishonesty, but the Gospel? Will any thing, think you, short of vital religion, neutralize the malignity of those elements which have long been fermenting in the depths below, and are now heaving the surface, and may at any moment explode beneath our feet? Government may legislate, the arm of justice may be bared, the sword of vengeance may be unsheathed—nay, more, associated charity may exhaust her energies and resources; but, after all, it is upon the faithfulness, the zeal, and the diligence of the ministers of religion, and upon the Spirit of God blessing their righteous efforts, that you must depend for ultimate security. And, if we mistake not, the time is not far distant, when Christianity, not perhaps without a tremendous conflict, shall vindicate its own supremacy, and authority, as the true foundation and cementing principle of government and social order. “It is our conscious belief,” says one of the most profound and eloquent of modern writers—“It is our conscious belief, that our established Church is an indispensable safeguard against the desolating floods of irreligion. Leave us our existing machinery, and provide that right and efficient men be appointed to work it, and the country may still be saved; and humanly speaking, its Christian instructors will be its only saviours. The reformers of our national morality will be the reformers that will do us good: this is the great specific for the people's well-being; and however traduced it may be by

the liberalism of our age, or undervalued in the estimation of merely secular politicians, it is by the Christianity of our towns and parishes that the country shall stand or fall."

But, then, our existing machinery, excellent as it is in itself, is not sufficient to meet the existing demand for its produce. It has not grown with the growth, nor strengthened with the strength, of the rapidly increasing population. Neither has the field been widened, nor the number of shepherds augmented, in any just proportion to the increase of the flock. Something, indeed, was done, in more auspicious times, by the legislature of this Christian country, towards preserving and perpetuating its Christianity, by grants of money for the erection of additional churches. And I would fain be told by those who complain of such an expenditure of the public resources, I would fain be told whether the people at large would have been benefitted in an equal degree, whether vice and profaneness would have been equally checked, morality and virtue equally promoted, the interests of society equally strengthened and advanced in every direction, had the same amount of money been expended on bridges, or tunnels, or jails, or edifices for the attainments of science, or the receptacle of the arts. For what was then done, inadequate as it was to the wants that require it, we are thankful; and our poor brethren, too, in the country ought to rejoice in the reflection, that by such an expenditure nearly three hundred thousand persons enjoy, and will continue for generations to enjoy, the advantages of religious instruction, and the opportunities of common worship, and the means of edification and grace, who were before utterly destitute of it.

But for the means of supplying these advantages to the multitudes which are yet unprovided for, we may no longer look to the legislature of this Christian country; we must depend upon the Christian liberality of individuals: and individual liberality has already nearly equalled in its results the benevolence of the state; for it has effected an increase of church accommodation in nine hundred and fifty-nine parishes, and an amount of two hundred and forty thousand additional sittings, of which one hundred and seventy-eight thousand are free, and appropriated only to the use of that class for whom it is the especial duty of the Christian Church to make provision. The Gospel is to be preached to the poor: and yet how utterly inadequate is the provision which it has hitherto been enabled to make, when compared with the breadth and depth of the spiritual destitution that requires it; and how inconsiderable are the sums that have been contributed towards a society, which, in proportion to its numbers, hath wrought a larger amount of unmixed good than any other which claims the support of the Christian public: a society, which I am bold to say has a paramount and sacred claim upon the charity of every member of the Church of England, whom Providence has endowed with the means of doing good. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." If it be said, as sometimes it has been said, "Let the clergy look to it, they are the persons chiefly concerned; let them contribute:" we answer, They have contributed, and they are contributing—I will not say beyond what might be reasonably expected of them, but far beyond their due proportion, as compared with the lay members of our church. But will any one venture to assert, that it is the peculiar concern of the clergy; that it is not his own interest, that it is not every man's interest, as well as the interest of the clergy, that the country should be religious and moral, that the land should be Christianized, that it should be peopled with well-instructed,



well principled, well ordered members of society, in every class, and especially in the lower orders, overrun and desolated by drunkards, and spendthrifts, and robbers, and incendiaries, and assassins? And will any one deny, that the alternative must depend on the instruction of the people, and that therefore it is the interest of individual societies? for it is the duty of every Christian to do all that can be done to increase the means and opportunities of sound religious teaching to the great mass of the population. And, oh, is it not a sickening thought, is it not a lamentable proof of our inconsistency as a Christian people, that the amount of money collected in this city, in fifteen years, should not exceed one-twentieth of the sum every year paid as the duty upon that poisonous beverage, which is destroying the bodies, and ruining the souls, of so many of our poor brethren?

Be not offended, then, if I entreat you, before you determine upon the amount of your contributions this day, to propose to yourselves these questions: "Next to the working out my own salvation (and I thank God for the means and opportunities which his Church affords me for doing that), can any thing be more important than that I should contribute to the salvation of my brethren, and place within their reach the means and appliances which I myself am fortunate enough to possess? Can I in any other way more directly, or more effectually, contribute to the glory of God, to the progress of his Gospel, to the well-being of my country, to its present safety and its future prosperity? And, in the furtherance of this object, so important, so sacred, so dear in the eyes of God, so benevolent to mankind, what have I hitherto contributed? what efforts, what prayers, what portions of my worldly substance? And if on this occasion, which presents a distinct and unquestionable opportunity for setting forward God's glory in the salvation of my brethren, if I withhold that which is in my power to give, in what other way do I intend to evince my regard—on what other object shall I bestow the means I deny to them?" Shall I suggest the answer? By some object of mere secular and transient interest; by some of the pageants, or amusements, or the vanities of that world which we are commanded not to love.

Let me add one word, in conclusion, with reference to the Apostle's closing argument: "And so much the more as ye see the day approaching." That "a day" is approaching, of awful interest to the Church of Christ in this nation, nay, that it is already come, no one can doubt who has noted the signs of the times, and watched in their combinations and workings the elements of our civil and religious polity. The conflict between good and evil, which is and ever will be waged, until the Gospel shall have achieved its final triumph, has for sometime past assumed a more determined aspect. That the crisis, which appears to be drawing nigh, will issue in the final exaltation of the true Church, we have an assurance in the recorded promise of Him who has built it on a rock. But surely it is a time for all those who desire to avert the fiery trials by which it must otherwise be purified, to exhort one another as they see the day approaching, to increased degrees of vigilance, of personal holiness, and a greater exemplarity of devotion, and a more decided acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Jehovah, and to larger measures of charity: provoking one another to good works by a combined and vigorous effort in the cause of God and Christ.

Such, my brethren, is the solemn call which the Church addresses, through its unworthy minister, to every individual that now hears me. May that Holy Spirit which sanctifies and sustains the Church, dispose you to obey it.

## THE SOUL AND ITS CAPACITIES.

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\* And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.—GEN. ii. 7.

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SUCH is the account of that mysterious principle within us which we call the soul; that part of our nature, in which resides the power of thinking and desiring, of hoping and fearing, of suffering and enjoying. It is not like the visible and tangible body, which is described as being formed out of the dust of the earth by the plastic hand of the Creator; but it proceeded immediately from God, who breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And on this account, man is said to have been made in the image of God, after his likeness. It is the soul, and not the body, of man, which bears the image of God. God is a spirit; and the soul is immaterial: God is all-wise, all-good, all-intelligent; and the soul partakes of these properties, is gifted with intellect, and is capable, in a low and humble degree, of that wisdom and goodness which the Almighty possesses in perfection.

I propose to direct your attention this morning to this, and to the properties of this, the superior part of our nature. It has an immediate bearing on the subject which we are desirous to promote, the education of children, the nurture of infants in the fear and admonition of the Lord; and it is a subject, which, by God's blessing, may be profitable to all. It tends to shew, that the care of the soul, the spiritual and immortal soul, is the first and great concern. May those who make it so, be strengthened and confirmed; may those who neglect it, be brought to a better mind.

First, then, among the properties of the soul, let me consider ITS CAPACITY OF ENJOYMENT, AND ITS CAPACITY OF SUFFERING. I could appeal on this point, to the experience of every one who has lived but a few years in this fallen world: few have done so who cannot bear inward witness of what the soul is capable of *suffering*. How acute is the sense of disappointed hope. How sad the anticipation of expected evil: how bitter the feeling of desire, long indulged, and still deferred, making the heart sick: how intense are the pangs of sorrow; how intolerable the agony of remorse! The Holy Spirit, who knows what is in the heart of man, has given a fearful description of the misery in those words of Moses, which forewarned the Israelites of the consequences of disobedience: "The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou

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shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." How intense must have been the sufferings of David, under the violence at once of natural sorrow, and the consequences of the indignation of God. David, we read, "besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And again, when his son Absalom rose in rebellion against him, and the only safety of the father was in the death of the son, the King went up into his chamber and wept, and as he went, thus he said: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Need I add another example? The case of the Lord Jesus Christ will forcibly occur to all, when, in the garden of Gethsemane, he kneeled down and prayed, saying, "Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground."

Such is a specimen of the sufferings of which the soul is capable. I will only remind you, that God, who in his justice remembers mercy, seldom dispenses in this world unmixed suffering. To the wicked, even, there is commonly some hope of relief, which mitigates the sense of suffering; to the righteous, there is always an alleviation. Think, then, what must be the weight of unmitigated suffering, aggravated by the assurance, that it must endure for ever. Think of the description which is given in Revelations xiv., of those who "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."

In proportion to the capacity of suffering in the soul, is also its capacity of enjoyment. We have some knowledge of this likewise. We can conceive the joy by which the heart of Jacob was elated, when his sons "told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." We can conceive the feelings of David—for such is human life, that the same character (and it will be commonly found) will afford us instances both of sorrow and of joy: we can conceive, I say, his feelings when he found himself seated upon the throne of Israel, and the promise made unto his children after him, and the natural satisfaction arising from greatness and prosperity was enhanced by the spiritual gratification of the consciousness of Divine favour: "Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come." How intense again must have been the delight of the aged Simeon, when the sight which he had been so long expecting was granted to him, and it was revealed to him, that the child which his parents were now presenting in the temple was indeed the promised Saviour, and he exclaimed in the joy of his heart, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

But as in this preparatory world, sorrow comes attended with mitigation, so there is always some draw-back to our joy. Even if the joy itself were perfect, there is fear it would be short lived; and He that gave may see fit to take

away. There will be no such diminution of the eternal enjoyment prepared for the righteous in his heavenly kingdom: nothing to disturb the happiness of those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Such is a slight description of the happiness which the soul is capable of enjoying, and of the misery which it is capable of enduring; and in this its capacity, we find the explanation of that miracle of mercy, Christ crucified in the flesh. Then when we contemplate the stupendous method of man's redemption, we are lost in amazement. There have not been wanting those who have dared to call the means disproportionate to the end. But when, on the other hand, we estimate, or attempt to estimate, (for in truth we cannot reckon it,) when we contemplate, then, the capacity of the soul, and when we add eternity to the calculation, our wonder ceases, and becomes what it ought to be, lowly and obedient gratitude. Here, then, do we see the force of that touching question put by him who testified that which he had seen, and spoke of what he knew—"What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

I come now to consider another capacity of the soul—ITS CAPACITY OF GOODNESS AND OF WICKEDNESS. I speak, you will observe, not of any goodness which it naturally has, but of that of which it is capable. The natural imagination of man's heart is evil, and that continually, since he fell from the innocency in which he was created: and the consciences of every Christian will respond to the confession of St Paul, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The soul, however, which was created in the image of God, and which has lost that likeness, is capable of having that image restored. It is capable of much which our reason tells us is good in itself, and which Scripture tells us is pleasing in the sight of God. How beautiful is the conduct of Abraham, as recorded in Genesis, xiii., when the land in which they were dwelling grew too strait for himself and his nephew Lot, and it became needful that they should separate: "And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." How admirable is the affection of Moses towards the Israelites, and the disinterestedness with which he entreats God to spare them. God had said, "I will smite them with pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." Moses thus might have become the stem, from whose seed all the nations of the earth might be blessed; but Moses pleads with God, pleads against himself the promise of God, and the glory of God, and the mercy of God, and entreats him by all his attributes. "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." I will not take example from the perfect excellence of the Lord Jesus, because in him, it may be argued the divine nature was added to the human nature,

even though I might reply, that every soul is capable of this union, and that every sincere believer partakes of it, and is only good in proportion as he partakes of it. He dwells in Christ, and Christ in him; he is one with Christ, and Christ with him. But to leave this, look at the resignation of Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Look at the piety of Daniel, who though he knew the writing was issued, which should condemn him before an earthly tribunal, yet, "his window being opened in his chamber before Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and he prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Once more, admire the spirit of the martyr Stephen, who returned blessing for cursing, and kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Even at a very early age the soul is capable of this goodness. All who are in the habit of attending institutions like that which asks your aid to-day, must have been convinced of this fact. Let me mention one case that fell within my own knowledge. A child, in a school of this kind, in consequence of superior docility and attention, had been set above the child of a neighbour. This so incensed the mother of that child, that she waylaid the one whose merit had been thus rewarded, and beat her severely: the parents of the injured child naturally resented this, and resolved to make it a matter of serious complaint on the following morning. In the middle of the night the mother was surprised by being called by her child, who said to her, "Mother, I am afraid from what I heard you determine last night, that you have not forgiven such an one (mentioning the name of the offender.) I am taught at my school that we are to love our enemies, and to pray for them that despitefully use us. Let us forgive her, and think no more of her wickedness." The soul, then, is capable of goodness; the fruits of the Spirit may grow upon it, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.

There is less need of proving that it is capable of wickedness; for "from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adultery, murder, fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemy; and these defile the soul;" they have defiled it ever since the time that Adam transgressed the command of God, and brought sin into the world. What envy, hatred, and malice were in the heart of Cain, when he rose up against his brother Abel and slew him; or of Esau, who "hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him: "And Esau said in his heart, 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.'" Look at the history of Pharaoh, one while entreating and repenting, and promising obedience, and then repenting of his repentance, and defying the power of God. Or take the case of Judas, daily hearing the word of righteousness—words such as never man spake, doctrines at which the people were astonished—yet not subdued, not converted, cherishing a secret sin, indulging covetousness, and appropriating to his own use what was designed for the poor. I feel, that upon this distressing truth it is needless to enlarge, needless to prove what every man's experience too certainly convinces him to be true, if he attends to his own heart, and observes what is passing in the world around him. We must all have too intimate a knowledge of the wickedness of which the soul is capable.

Let me now proceed to remind you, in the third place, **THAT BETWEEN THIS WICKEDNESS AND MISERY, AS ALSO BETWEEN GOODNESS AND HAPPINESS, GOD HAS APPOINTED AN INSEPARABLE CONNEXION.** "The righteous shall go into life eternal; into that world where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for

evermore; and where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" but the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." We do not stop to enter into the question of what is meant by this "second death:" whether it speaks of actual material fire, or whether the fire be figurative, it expresses the greatest imaginable misery. But this we know, that the unrestrained wickedness of the unrenewed heart leads on to misery in the way of natural consequence; it needs not the idea of material fire to form an addition to bodily anguish. The souls of the wicked, as well as of the good, are immortal; separated, indeed, into their respective folds, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats, but still continuing immortal. The luxurious and un pitying Dives had his immortal soul, as well as the patient afflicted Lazarus. The wicked collected together, with all their evil passions—one like Cain with his envy, another like Esau with his revenge, another like Pharaoh with his pride and cruelty, another with his lust, and another with his covetousness—and with the power of tormenting themselves and one another (and it is very great, the power which evil passions can furnish.) but without the power of destroying or being destroyed, that is, of putting an end or limit to their misery: and imagine over them Satan and his bad angels, not for the proper purpose of government, to restrain the wrath, but to stir up all that is malicious in their nature, and ferocious in their daring; and it is this to which Scripture leads you when it speaks of those who are "cast into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

This then, brethren, is the natural end of wickedness in the immortal creature. It may be called its punishment; but it is, in fact, its natural consequence. He dies; his body perishes; but the soul remains unchanged and unchangeable. Instead of growing better, it has been sinking deeper and deeper in sin; and what is there to change it in the process of dying? What room for repentance and reformation in the grave? He, then, that is unjust, will be unjust still, (mark how the conclusions of reason and how the words of revelation agree): "he that is unjust let him be unjust still; he that is holy let him be holy still." The unholy men, with the wicked, and the devilish, shall be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

This is no abstract speculation; though, if it were, it would still be interesting and astonishing; but it is not; we must not so consider it: it concerns ourselves and those around us. Those around us have souls capable of all that suffering, and all that enjoyment, which I have feebly endeavoured to describe. And we, too, have souls which may add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. We, too, have souls which on the other hand may be filled with idolatry, in-civiousness, adultery, hatred, wrath, strife, deceit, heresies, and may have all the characters of which the Apostle tells us, that they who are marked with them shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Here, then, you see—and this is one point to which I would bring you—you see the importance of that culture which we this day entreat you to bestow upon the infant soul; on those souls which are springing up under your eye, and in your neighbourhood, either for everlasting misery or for everlasting glory. I have shewn that the soul which is to dwell in glory must be prepared

for it; but there is a process going on in all for the one destination or the other. You know, and well know, whether without a careful Christian education there is any hope of a Christian life; whether without culture, and restraint, and instruction in righteousness, there is any hope of a righteous practice; and whether those whose youthful minds are left neglected, are likely to follow the example of good, and not of evil. Even the most careful culture is sometimes counteracted by the wickedness, by the badness of the soil, by the unfavourable elements of a deceitful world. But where no culture is bestowed, no good seed sown, there can be only tares. Nay, I will go further, and say, that such is the difficulty and labour, that had the consequences been less momentous, had the soul less capacity to suffer or to enjoy, as the description of eternal misery or eternal happiness and glory, we must be content to leave these infants in the condition of their fallen nature; leave them to the grossness of ignorance, or to the habits of vice; but we cannot do this with the confession on our lips, that we "look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come;" we cannot do it with the title on our foreheads of disciples of Christ, who, because such was the need of ruined and corrupted nature, came from heaven to redeem us from ruin, to seek that which was lost, to save that which was condemned. Brethren, let the love of Christ constrain you; let the example of Christ instruct you; he pitied the condition, not only of those, but of all mankind: but especially shewed a tender compassion for those young children that were brought to him. He took them up in his arms and blessed them. He knew too well the nature of that world to which they were exposed, to send them into it without his blessing. And, in truth, in every case, even in what may seem the most favourable circumstances of life, the child is an object of trembling anxiety to a Christian mind: he has the world (and what a world!) to pass through, and it leads him to eternity. This we cannot alter, this we cannot change; the soul, whose present joys or griefs hardly extend beyond the moment that is fleeting, is destined either to joys or griefs which will be infinite and everlasting. This, I say, is the condition in which it hath pleased the Almighty to place man; if I ought not rather to say, that it is the condition to which sin has reduced him.

But that condition may well excite pity, which moved the compassion of the Son of God; and we may well do all that is in our power to render this his mercy available. These children whose cause I plead, are placed within your reach by the dispensations of Providence. Let it be your care, that souls so precious be fed with the sincere milk of the Word of God. Provide that in their early thoughts, happiness should be associated with obedience to their Maker, and misery with the ways of sin: they will find it to be too surely so associated in their own experience; oh, let them know it by caution and by Christian teaching. Provide that they may be taught to bring under their passions, and keep them in subjection, before they are cast among those, as it is too probable they may be, by whom passions are commonly indulged; before they learn to blaspheme the Name of God, as it is too much to be feared they would find those who would so instruct them, let them be taught His name is holy; before they are plunged into a world which is their passage to eternity, acquaint them with Him who stands forth in righteousness, mighty to save; acquaint them with the true Shepherd, that they may hear his voice and follow him, for it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish

## THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

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RIGHT REV. H. RYDER, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY.

SIR G. WHEELER'S CHAPEL, SPITAL SQUARE, APRIL 20, 1834.

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“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”  
1 CORINTHIANS, xiii. 13.

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THIS is indeed a text and a subject which seems, at first, particularly familiar and trite to the generality of hearers. Converted, as it has too often been, into a simple exhortation to alms-giving, it has met with the ready acquiescence and approbation—it has flattered the vanity, and soothed the misgivings, of many a soul on account of deficiencies in innumerable other Christian duties. It has built up many in self-righteousness and fatal security; it has afforded others a convenient compromise or compensation for general ungodliness, and even for practical unbelief. It has been singularly wrested by perversion, and abused to the injury and perdition of the unlearned and unstable, and even of those who are wise only as to this world.

But, rightly understood, combined with the context, this text is surely fraught with profitable admonition, and, engrafted by the influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and put forth into action, admirably calculated to bear the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. It will then be found amply and adequately to promote the object entrusted this evening to my ministerial care, in instilling right and scriptural motives; it will be calculated to draw forth from well instructed and willing hearts a liberal contribution. Instruction, thus in season, may bless those who have to give, as well as those who have to receive.

For the right understanding of the text, we must premise, that the word “charity,” in the original language, and in the primitive meaning of our own language, signifies love: as it is well expressed by the divine Hooker: “The Christian virtue of universal love: love to man, in obedience to the command of God, and for the sake of our Redeemer; love to our brethren for whom our Christ died.” Let us then, inserting “love” for “charity,” enter into the text, in conjunction with the chapter of which it is the close and consummation.

The members of the Corinthian Church appear to exhibit a considerable remainder of indwelling sin, manifesting much that is satisfactory and pleasing as evidence of their faith in Christ, and these amidst a remarkably rich abundance of spiritual gifts and endowments. The Apostle, therefore, suited his address to their proper wants and necessities, and after a suitable introduction, deals much in direct and in indirect reproof. Originally brought up in the lap of wealth and luxury, and addicted to the indulgence of the licentious and malignant passions, the Corinthian disciples were, by the operation of con-



verting grace, materially delivered from the dominion of these sins; but perhaps they remained liable more than others to such temptations; and from time to time, in consequence of such, were defiled by backsliders and inconsistent believers. But, as was likely to happen at first to the awakened conscience, the sin of evil temper seems to have made a most formidable inroad upon this flock of Christ, and, what is the master-piece of Satan, to have turned into evil the very abundant privileges which they had received from above. Pride, contention, and ill-will, sprung up from the very greatest of spiritual endowments and talents, and made these instruments, and sources, and causes of perdition to the possessors. The Apostle, by a variety of arguments, in the twelfth chapter, endeavours to root out this evil spirit of unholy ambition, rivalry, and jealousy: as the means of drawing off these men from such objects, these gifts which fed the flame of earthly passions, he lays before them, in all its excellence and beauty, that grace which was the very opposite to these passions, that grace of charity and universal love: "covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

The chapter divides itself into four parts, and ends in an illustration, a complete illustration, of Christian love. It is first described for the purpose of contrasting it with what it is not; and by its character of indispensable necessity, to render profitable all the very qualities and endowments, and privileges, of which the Corinthians were so proud. Secondly, it is delineated as it is, in all its array of positive excellences—"the very bond of peace and all perfectness." Thirdly, the superiority of it over these gifts and endowments, by a comparison of their partial and temporary nature, with its prevailing and predominant power, and its character of purity, permanence, and everlasting duration. And the whole is crowned by its still further exaltation, not only over these bodily and mental gifts, but even over spiritual graces. They are not indeed spiritual graces, merely partial and temporary, they are in time to be consummated: but even they must yield to it in some points a degree of excellence. "And now abideth, faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." The qualities of this indispensable Christian condition, thus illustrated and commended to our regard, will be considered at the close of the discourse, and then will appear the truth of the expression, that charity is "the greatest of all."

Behold, first, the indispensable nature of Christian love. Behold **WHAT WILL NOT AVAIL, OR IN ANY WAY BE PROFITABLE WITHOUT CHARITY.** The gift of tongues, and of prophecy, of understanding mysteries, and all knowledge, of miraculous faith, even so as to remove mountains, will all, unless sanctified, as it were, and consecrated to God, by this combining principle of love, be nothing; even no more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. This was striking at the very basis and root of the sins of the Corinthian disciples; these were the glorious advantages upon which they prided themselves, and for which they despised and envied others. These gifts were unattended by Christian love: they were, therefore, of no value in the sight of God; they made the possessors contemptible, and worthless.

Oh, my brethren, is there no heart here that will acknowledge the solemn application of this annunciation, that will say, "Is it I?" With miraculous endowments you have no concern; it may be well, as you see, for your souls, that you have not; but may not a superior faculty of expressing your ideas

with force and impression, a superior intelligence, a higher degree of learning, a closer acquaintance with the truths of religion—may not these produce a similar effect on some souls here, and leaving you without charity, proud and contentious, inward despisers, or enviers, may render you, who think yourselves to be something, nothing, and worse than nothing, before God! Little, perhaps, are we aware, of the slight difference which exists between these, which give rise to all those sins of the heart, no less odious to God than ruinous of our salvation, and those more open and publicly condemned transgressions. Spiritual pride, on account of greater knowledge of religion than our neighbours, may be the inmate of a cottage, and rise high under the meanest clothing.

Again, let me beseech you to consider, not only what will constitute Christian charity, but what, however it may seem to be, is not charity. “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” Indeed, is it not a contradiction in terms! Can the most abundant, prodigal alms-giving, can the most costly, self-denying sacrifices for the sake of others, for friend or favourite cause, can these things deserve the name of charity? Yes, it is even so; they may all adorn a character in the eyes of men, and make the man idolized, but in the eyes of God it may leave him uncharitable. Self-love, not Christian love to our neighbours, may be at the root, and all the fruits thence arising, will not be charity, will want the savour of true Christian godliness, and will be cast away as unprofitable. How many a fair fabric of self-righteousness sinks and crumbles into dust, under a more discriminating and sifting view of it. How many a self-satisfied man of the world, made easy in his own estimate of compensation for many a positive transgression of the law of God—how such a man must exclaim, “I am poor, and naked, and blind, but this was my rest, and my rock: on this I depended; whatever I was in other respects, I was charitable; but I am poor, and destitute of the very virtue which was my all in all.” So far then, on what does not consist Christian charity.

What, then, is this Christian charity? Is this Christian love, so indispensable, so much wanting, about which there are so many mistakes, and so much interest for it, is it an unsubstantial shadow, the phantom of a vain and enthusiastic imagination, without body, without form, without life?

Listen, then, secondly, to the Apostle's description of WHAT IT IS, and let that satisfy every inquirer as to its nature. Its properties form such a series of evangelical graces, and its features are so exquisite and so consummate, as scarcely to be described without obscuring its lineaments, or to be dilated upon them without weakening their effect. The passage commences with a general view of its passive and active qualities. Christian “love suffereth long, and is kind.” Under these two heads all the particulars of its character may be defined. The opposite of these is self-love, is to pull down and keep under subjection: and thus full scope is given for the operation of Christian love. “It is not puffed up;” that is, with self-conceit. It shews no traces of self-exaltation in the world: “It vaunteth not itself.” It shews no self-interest in the dealings and transactions of life: “It seeketh not its own.” And under the government of this principle, the whole course and behaviour accommodates itself to all the various circumstances and obligations of social life: it admits of no such transgression of courtesy and benevolence; no such inattention and slights to the feelings of others, as the impulse of self-love too

often excites: "It doth not behave itself unseemly." Having thus subdued the counteracting force of self-love, a principle which acts with more or less influence on the conduct of our fellow-men, "it envieth not;" he who is actuated by it, cannot feel regret at the superior gifts or advantages of others, as he has no conceit of his own superior merits. Again, "it is not easily provoked;" he has no quick sensibility to affront, or even injury, because he has no high opinion of self, nor excessive regard to his own interests, to be hurt and offended. "It thinketh no evil;" he thinketh no evil from others, and thinketh no evil against them: his thoughts are peace and good-will, and all his affections, are ranged on the side of brotherly kindness. It "rejoiceth not in iniquity;" his sorrow is excited by the iniquity of others—even those who may have been his bitterest enemies (if such a character can have a bitter enemy); he grieves over the dishonour shown to God; he has sympathy with poor sinners. But he "rejoiceth in the truth;" that his fellow-sinners embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, and that they manifest the power of the truth by constant love and confession of the truth: and is most anxious, to be abased and humbled, if the truth by such means could only be magnified and exalted. And, to sum up this character, Christian love "beareth," or, as may be translated "covereth," "all things"—even the multitude of sins; overlooks, conceals, extenuates, so far as faithfulness to God and the truth itself will allow, the faults of others. "Endureth all things;" forbears and forgives till seventy times seven. "Believeth all things;" perseveres in a candid interpretation of conduct and character, as long as sound judgment will permit; labouring to the utmost in support of private opinion, and when compelled, by undeniable and continued evidence, to give up present connexions, still hopeth all things; indulges a charitable hope, that he who is the offender, may yet repent, change his ways, and become a worthy object of regard and kind affection.

Oh, my brethren, has this animating and perfect picture given by the Apostle of Christian love, caused us to discover more clearly what it is? Has it failed to excite our curiosity, approval, and warm admiration? But has it not in spirit condemned yourselves? Fellow-workmen, competitors in trade, professional rivals, examine the life, the year, the week, the day, that is past by this standard—the dealings in business, the conversations in society, the judgments of the mind, the thoughts of the heart; and, compared with this standard, does not your charity appear lamentably deficient in each of these respects? Is it not very far (this Christian love) from the habitual tone, the habitual tenor, of your actions, and the spirit of your feelings, the frame and temper of your hearts? Oh, might we not all bow down under this conviction and condemnation, and confess, that that of which we were most proud, and most content to rest upon, is taken from under us, and that we want some support, not of our own, to stand the severity of God's judgment, and to make us turn from that which shall be utterly worthless?

But consider, further, in the next place, THE SUPERIORITY OF THIS BLESSED COMPREHENSIVE GRACE OVER EVERY GIFT AND ENDOWMENT, WITH THEIR IMPERFECTION AND TEMPORARY DURATION, IN COMPARISON WITH ITS EVER-GROWING MATURITY AND EVERLASTING CONTINUANCE. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." These miraculous gifts were bestowed in the early ages of the Church upon

individuals, not only for the general benefit, but often only on particular occasions; they were limited in exact measure and proportion to the special use; and when the particular object was accomplished, the props were removed away, and put aside, as soon as they had promoted their design, the edification of the Church, as soon as these were attained in a religious community, as soon as they kindled the lowly, but fervent desire after that knowledge of heavenly things which will only be consummated in the future state of blessedness. But their increase and their continuance was not to be expected or desired; they were best fitted to the infant state of the Church, and as it advanced to its riper age and fulness, they would be done away with. Thus also in the individual Christian character, all the powers and properties of the mind, which contribute to carry forward our attainments in scriptural knowledge, shrink into nothing, in comparison with the new heart and the spiritual mind, with the prevailing principle of Christian love, which, springing from the incorruptible seed, grows and advances through life, and maintains its purpose through the countless ages of eternity. It will be inquired hereafter, not only, nor so much, how we read, how we understood, but how we felt, how we spake, how we acted in correspondence with these feelings, and the guidance of a sound Christian judgment. This is the manhood, this the maturity of true charity; having put away elementary things, this is according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Jesus Christ.

Thus, indeed, only through the medium of a believing conformity to Christian love, do we see Christ, though still through a glass darkly. But thus, as fully associated with him in love, shall we see him face to face; thus only in the intercourse and communication of spiritual love shall we know him, now in part, and know him hereafter even also as we shall be known.

But it will be said, lastly, where is the root from whence this goodly tree arises; where is the blossom and the fruit? Is not the Apostle inconsistent with himself? Is he not undervaluing that faith which he so often extols as the instrument of justification and the parent of all godliness? No; to this and its sister grace of hope, he assigns its proper place, and, with them, Christian love which he exalts now so much. He brings them together. And they all have that peculiarity, that they are not partial and temporary in this life, but abide: "And now *abideth* faith, hope, charity, these three." They are indeed the three main and principal Christian graces and virtually will include all the rest; and they must increase in each *redeemed* soul, in its progress through life, and combine to form the fabric fitly framed together, the dwelling of Christian holiness, the temple of the Holy Ghost. "But the greatest of these is charity." This truth would appear from the different offices these three Christian graces unite, and their state in eternity. "Faith is but the hand (as our homily expresses it) which lays hold of Christ, which receives implicitly divine revelation as its guide and its salvation, which forms the soul's relation to the Saviour, and the vehicle of communication to it; and hope is the anchor of the soul, which, as it were, retains the hold of Christ and eternal life, sure and steadfast, and keeps the soul firm in obedience, and patiently waiting through trials, to death." But love is the emotion and the feeling which springs from the one and is sustained by the other, and by which they both act for the honour of God, and the eternal benefit of his Church and mankind—the basis and the prop, so essential to the house, that without them they would fall to the ground; but without the house, they are but a useless and unprofitable pile of stones, and may therefore be said to be the greatest, the indispensable

result by which they produce any effect. the means by which they do any good.

And the superiority of charity, is crowned by its immortality. Faith will soon be lost in sight, and hope in the enjoyment of its object; there will be no more to believe and to hope when we see and when we enjoy. It is love which is here the evidence of our title to eternity, our meetness for that holy and unspeakable felicity in the blessed earnest of it; and when hereafter we are made perfect, and free from all human alloy, it will be consummated and perpetuated in the love and the favour of God for ever and ever.

Now, then, to what practical conclusion does this long and surely interesting discussion lead us? Let this be the test. Do we in any measure thus work by love? Do we bear such fruit in some good degree? Without such fruit we are barren, and fit only for the burning; without such fruit we are dead. Christians in business—Christians in the world, in the various relations, and intercourse of society—Christians in returning and meditating on the state of your own heart, read often with prayer from the third to the seventh verse of this chapter, inclusive, and try to prove your own state by it. If you find yourselves here deficient, if you find indeed you have given way in the various trials of your love—if you find you have been, indeed, uncharitable in your thoughts, words, and deeds—without delay seek a real change in your views. You are yet in your natural unconverted state, and you must be made a new creature, or your very faith will condemn you, and make you an associate, not of Him whose name is love, but of the father of lies and the murderer from the beginning. And if after such an examination you find you are guilty in some measure, still humbly beg for his astonishing, distinguishing mercy, and cast yourselves unreservedly upon the atoning, interceding love of Christ, for the pardoning of your souls' manifold failures; on his inconceivably bounteous love, for the supply and increase of your faith and growth in love.

To conclude, consider well, all of you, the nature and value of the cause for which I have to solicit your regard and contributions. Our blessed Lord, in his emphatical delineation of Christian love, has stamped his peculiar approbation on institutions similar to that before us. This society involves the very essence of Christian neighbourhood. Who, think you, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves? Is it not him who, in afflictions, ministers not only to the body, but to the soul also? The humbling, softening touch of sickness will, under the divine guidance, open the heart to godly counsel: hearing the glad tidings of salvation, proclaimed by the voice of kindness, and endeared by the hand of relief, the hard and stubborn conscience of the sinner will be found to give way; the ruined cottage shall sometimes change its state and aspect, and become the abode of health and peace, comfort and holiness, instead of the centre and spring of disease and discord, the receptacle of woe and the resort of vice. Sisterly compassion and sympathy here finds its appropriate work; and as humble representatives of those who were last at the death, and first at the resurrection of our Lord, who ministered to his necessities, who were fellow-helpers in love, the female visitor actuated by a like motive may indulge in a like hope, and hear from her Saviour and Judge, "She has done what she could; inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my poor disciples, ye have done it unto me."

Let this principle, then, draw forth from you liberal contributions; recollect that though alms-giving is not charity, and does not constitute the essence of

Christian love, yet the possession of that love, without the dedication of a portion of your substance, estimated not according to worldly opinion and the standard of Christian self-denial—a profession without such a dedication, is lip service only, and utterly worthless. Charity, without such, is dead in the sight of God and man; it is a barren tree, without fruit, fit only for the burning.

Have we stated the feelings appropriate to your own peculiar condition? Is there one here who has known the comfort of ample aid and accommodation, in hours, in weeks, in months, and days of sickness; who has felt and acknowledged these to be superior advantages given him by God? And will he not impart a share of the benefits and blessings to his fellow sinners, and contribute of the abundance with which he has been favoured? Is there any one whose resources are curtailed by the necessities of the times, and who is tempted to apply retrenchment in this as well as other respects? Will he not recollect that the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal shall never fail, and be induced to spare a portion of his pittance to others more distressed still? For this you will be blessed from above; you will be recompensed in full measure; pressed down and running over; not of merit, but through the grace of Him who marked and honoured the mite of the widow, and who will keep in his everlasting remembrance the cup of cold water, or the healing medicine given to a poor brother in faith and in love.

Divided as the congregation must be in the evidences of their consciences, by this solemn question, “Have you the faith which worketh by love?” and elevated, the one perhaps by trembling hope, and the other depressed by fears, you shall surely join, with an interest, perhaps by some not felt before, in the true Scriptural and apostolical prayer of our Church: “O Lord who has taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worthy, send thy Holy Ghost, to pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, without which whosoever liveth, is accounted dead before thee.” Grant this, O blessed Lord we entreat thee, through thine only Son, Jesus Christ the source, the model, and the rewarder of all.

## CHRIST THE HUSBAND OF HIS CHURCH

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REV. J. SHERMAN.

SURREY CHAPEL, APRIL 27, 1834.

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“ For thy Maker is thine husband ; the LORD of Hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.”—ISAIAH, liv. 5.

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**BOTH** Testaments abound with striking metaphors, which exemplify and set forth the dear and intimate union which subsists between Christ and those who compose his Church. Sometimes he calls them *friends*—as individuals to whom he communicates his secrets. Sometimes he calls them *children*—as partakers of the same inheritance with himself. Sometimes he calls them *brethren*—as descendants of the same common father, and inheritors of the same birthright privileges. But no metaphor shows the tender and peculiar regard which Christ has to his Church, equal to the one in my text : “ Thy Maker is thine husband.” How gracious the condescension, how endearing the appellation ! That Christ, the glory of all worlds, should be united to a sinner, a worm, and declare in Inspired Writ that he is the Husband, the protector, the guide, the friend, the near-allied associate of that sinner and that worm !

But, methinks, when I announced this passage as the text of the following discourse this morning, some broken spirit in this assembly, oppressed with its own guilt, and alarmed lest at any time it should presume on any portion of Holy Writ, desiring this may be a day of espousals, when the heart may be lifted and united to the Lord Jesus—some spirit inquired to-day, as I announced these words, “ Ah ! but to whom are these words spoken ? To whom are they to be applied ? May I venture to lay hold on them ? Does the passage belong to *me*, and all the interesting details, are they mine ?” Bear with me while I answer that question.

Unquestionably the primary application of this passage, is to the Jewish Church, whom our Lord had betrothed to himself as his peculiar people, above all nations on the face of the earth. Now the Prophet, in the commencement of this chapter, promises this Church a great enlargement by the addition of the Gentiles, so that she should “ stretch forth the curtains of her habitations, lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes.” But she said within herself, “ I am so desolate ; I am like a captive removing to and fro : I am now in Babylon ; and I see myself so reduced from my former prosperity and honour—how can I hope these promises will be fulfilled in my experience ?” The Prophet immediately leads her to the grounds on which she might hope that the Gentiles would be united to her, and that her glory would be increased : for, says he, after he promises this, “ Thy Maker is thy husband : He that is united to thee, made thee, and therefore can make all things serve thee : He that is united to thee, is the Lord of Hosts, and therefore all things are subject to his mighty sway :

He that loves thee is thy Redeemer, who brought thee out of Egypt with a high hand and an out-stretched arm, and therefore can again restore thy glory, and bring thee honour : He that is united to thee is the Holy One of Israel, and therefore faithful to all his engagements : and He that is united to thee is the God of the whole earth, and therefore every one must submit to his authority and his control."

But that which was applied to the Church collectively, under the Old Testament dispensation, may be applied to individual believers, under the New : the very same passage of Scripture, which relates to the Church as a collective body, may be applied to individual believers. Therefore, if there be any broken hearts which are ready to renounce all allegiance with former lords, and shake off all the connexions which they had previously had with sin, with the world, with the law and covenant of works, or with any other thing contrary to their happiness and peace—if they are willing to break off their allegiance this day, and aspire after union and communion with Jesus—oh, my brother, oh, my sister, to you is the word of this salvation sent : " Thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; The God of the whole earth shall he be called."

And while I am endeavouring to set forth the glories of the Bridegroom, and charm your hearts with his excellences, oh, may the Spirit of God work faith in your hearts, that you may believe him, embrace him as your Saviour and your Friend, and evermore say to all around you, " This is my beloved, and this is my friend ; I love not any other." And, brethren, pray with me—O God of Abraham, I stand at this well of salvation, and the virgin daughters of the people come hither to draw water : oh, this day, while I am endeavouring to represent my Master's Son, win some virgin hearts to him, and give me good speed this day in my work. Amen.

First, then, in calling your attention to this passage, let me show you the glorious dignity of the Bridegroom ; in the second place, the nature of the union which is here spoken of ; and in the third place, the terms of the espousals.

First, let me show you THE GLORIOUS DIGNITY OF THE BRIDEGROOM. If " glorious things" are spoken of Zion—that is, the spouse—how many more " glorious things" may be spoken of Zion's King, and Zion's Lord, the Bridegroom ! Heaven, with all its hosts, is ransacked, and earth, with all its varieties, is culled, to set forth his glory and his honour. One might travel from Genesis to the Revelations in order to search them out ; but there are so many in this verse, such clusters of them, that it is unnecessary to go elsewhere.

Observe then, first, thy Husband is *thy Maker*. " All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Every blade of grass, every leaf of every tree, every flower, all the beasts that roam in the forest, all the fishes that swim in the sea, all the birds that fly in the air, were made by him. If you fix your eye on any object on earth or in heaven, the beauties of which attract you by its own loveliness and peculiarity, and when you fix on that, as something desirable to be allied to—what then ? Why, all these beauties are but the tints of his pencil ; are but the invention of his wisdom, are but the gifts of his bounty. Look over the vast continent of mind, and see the grasping power of mighty intellect, over the vast world in which you live : all these powers were given by him ; the most splendid intellect originated nowhere but in himself. Is there any good thing in thy heart—any desire towards heaven or heavenly things ? He made it, he newly created it there : it did not originate



of thine own power, or thine own love to divine things: He made it, and therefore thine Husband is thy Maker. Now, if it be considered an honour to be allied to an individual whose wisdom or ingenuity are apparent, thine Husband is the wisdom of God, "the all-wise God our Saviour."

Again, thy Husband is represented in the text as *the Lord of Hosts*. And who are these "hosts?" In Psalm cxlviii. we read, "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him all his *hosts*:" all the myriads of elect angels, great in power and in might. The principalities and the powers of the heavenly world go at his bidding, and are ruled by his word. Him they admire, him they praise, him they serve, in him they glory. Their seven-fold chorus of harping symphonies and thundering hallelujahs is this morning sent up to magnify the riches of His grace and glory, and to praise Him who sitteth upon the throne. All the myriads of fallen angels are under his government and control: without our spiritual Joseph, not one of them will dare to lift his hand or his foot. He expels them from the human heart, or confines them to their prison. He limits their operations, he controls their designs, he watches all their machinations against the Church: he does what he pleases in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay his hand, or say, what doest thou? All within our houses, all from whom we may be suffering persecution, all our neighbours, all men, of every clime, every colour, every country, every state, are under the control of our King and of our Head: all power is given to him in heaven and in earth. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Now if it be an honour to be united to one who is a great general and a mighty conquerer, then such is thine Husband; he is "the Lord of Hosts."

Again. Our text tells us that thy Husband is *thy Redeemer*. Oh sweet name! Oh endearing appellation! "Thy Redeemer." Dr. Doddridge tells us that a poor Irishman was once condemned to death. Believing, from the evidence brought forward by him, that the man was innocent, he made great exertions to get him relieved from his sentence, but all his efforts proved unavailing. Yet such was the gratitude of the poor condemned man, that he said, "You are my redeemer." "A poor impotent redeemer indeed," the Doctor remarks; but such was the gratitude of this poor man that he said, "I only want to ask you one thing—that, as I am going to the place of execution, I may kneel down at your door, and kiss your feet, and thank you for your exertions on my behalf." What will you do, then, this morning to your Lord and Master? He who is your Redeemer, He to whom you are united by faith, not only attempted it, but accomplished it. Thou wast in prison, tied and bound with the chain of thy sins: thou wast a captive, serving divers lusts and pleasures: thou wast a bankrupt, owing ten thousand talents, and having not one farthing to pay. But oh, unutterable, inexpressible, inconceivable love! Thy Jesus became thy Husband; and in order to become thy Husband, he became thy Redeemer: that is, he first assumed your flesh, in order that he might be your Boaz, your near kinsman, that in that nature he might have a right to redeem you. But how did he redeem?

Here I might pause to find words to express the manner in which this redemption was accomplished, if this were not expressed in one short sentence: "He loved me, and gave himself for me." More he could not do. The curse that was due to my head he took upon his own: the burden of guilt I had to bear, he took from my shoulder and placed on his own: he broke my chain, he

ransomed the captive: he introduced me into liberty, life, and joy: he paid the inestimable price of his own most precious blood, that he might unite me for ever to himself. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it. What was the hard service of Jacob for Rachel? What was the love he bare to her? Seven years of hard servitude to an unkind uncle were nothing to the love which Christ bare when for man's redemption he gave all he could give.

“ Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break;  
And all harmonious human tongues,  
Their Saviour's praises speak.”

Brethren, if it be, then, a joy to many of you to be united to an affectionate husband on earth, oh what can equal that spiritual Husband? Thy Husband is thy “ Redeemer.”

Again. The text tells us thine Husband is *the Holy One of Israel*: not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent. Beloved, once united to Christ, for ever united. There is nothing that breaks this bond: his promises in this union bind him never to leave you, in weal or in woe, in affliction or in prosperity, in health or in sickness, in adversity or in joy, in life or in death, in time or in eternity. The Lord God of Israel saith (O my soul, wonder at the language)—the Lord God of Israel saith that he hateth putting away. It was at his option at first to unite you to himself; but after he has by his own love united you to himself, he binds himself by his own covenant oath never to dissolve the union; and therefore hearken to his language: “ I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.”

I may remark once more—Thy Husband is *the God of the whole earth*. “ The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof:” the whole government of this fallen world is in his hands. But at present the government is disputed: Satan assumes the reins of government, calling himself the Prince of the power of the air, and endeavours to destroy the government of Him who is God of the whole earth. But mark the words: “ The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” Although some fallen spirits disobey and dishonour him, yet “ the God of the whole earth shall he be called:” the heathen shall be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Athens shall know the living and the true God; China, with her millions, shall hear of and welcome their Saviour; India, with her millions, shall see a great light; and the people that sit in darkness shall welcome the rising of the Sun of Righteousness; Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God. See how the isles are ready for his law: see how the north does not keep back, see how the south gives up: see how He rides forth conquering and to conquer. He has victories here, and victories there, bringing men every where to submit to his sway: and very speedily, when a few more years have rolled over our fallen world, shall an angel set one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and say, with a shout that shall make the arches of heaven ring, and the pillars of the earth tremble—“ The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever.”

Frequently an individual possessed of vast dominions has, by the property which he possessed, engaged the hearts of many on earth. My Saviour pre-

poses himself to this congregation to-day, and states his vast dominions, that the earth is his, that his name shall be called Wonderful, that this name shall endure as long as the sun, that men shall be blessed in him, and that all men shall call him blessed. Why, then, beloved, if any one has reason to rejoice in a husband that has wealth, in a husband that has estates, in a husband that has honours heaped upon him—"thy Maker is *thine* Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name." And although there may be much scandal and scorn put upon thee by the men of the world, see thy dignity; that thou art united to Him whom angels admire and whom saints adore.

I pass on to the second branch of my subject, which is to show THE NATURE OF THIS UNION. There are a few qualifications connected with this which I beg you will observe.

In the first place, it is *an union which springs entirely from free grace*. What else can it be on His part? Be astonished, oh heavens, at this. One infinitely rich has united himself to a beggar! The heir of heaven uniting himself to the heir of hell! The beauty of Paradise associating itself with the deformed Negro! The Holy One of Israel uniting himself to the loathsome leper! How ravishing his beauty, how charming his voice, how fragrant his garments, how stately his goings, how wondrous his glory! And what can charm him, then, to unite himself to thee? Was it thy parentage? Canst thou boast of that? No; thy father was a Hittite, and thy mother an Amorite, doomed to the curse and to everlasting degradation. Well, if it was not thy parentage, perhaps there was something else; it might be there were some virtues existing in thee. No: "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" its language is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Perhaps, if it were not thy parentage, nor thy virtues, it might be thy riches. No: thou wast a bankrupt, deep in debt, without one farthing in the pound to pay of all thou hadst contracted, the inheritance entirely and for ever lost. If it were not thy parentage, nor thy virtues, nor thy riches, perhaps it might be some amiable qualities. No: cast out like a base-born child into the open field "to the loathing of thy person," is the description given of thee in the Word of everlasting life. Well, but if it be not thy parentage, or thy virtues, or thy riches, or some amiable qualities, it might be that thou wast free, dissociated from all other lovers, and disengaged from all other charms. No: thou saidst, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." But where can words be found to extol the riches of free grace? What are its heights, what are its depths, what are its lengths, what are its breadths? Oh, its extents are beyond all language. A stately emperor uniting himself with a loathsome beggar, or a glorious angel uniting himself to a worm of the earth, would not be such a degradation as for the Prince of Life to unite himself to a wretched and polluted sinner. Here I see the Maker joining himself with the work of his own hands, the Creator with the creature, the Infinite with the finite: and heaven wonders, and earth wonders at the union. The foundation of its spring, then, is in free grace alone. There had not been such a marvel shown to the heavens, nor such a marvel to the earth, if he had united himself to angels, who are great in power and might—or if he had associated himself with human nature in its virgin and pristine beauty. But here we see him associating himself with sinners: and why is this? That "where sin hath abounded, grace might much more abound."

Secondly, it is not only an union which springs from free grace, but it is *an union accomplished by Almighty power*. One would suppose that it were quite enough for the Lord of all to present himself to any heart, for that heart immediately to open, and to say, "O Lord, dost thou condescend to ask my affection? Dost thou, the Lord of glory, condescend to become my bridegroom?" Yet, strange to tell, the moment these propositions are made, the human heart is barred against all enjoyments of the kind; it will not receive this heavenly lover. Who could, methinks, resist such a suitor? Who could, methinks, turn away from such a friend? And yet, what is the fact? What is the fact with this large audience this morning? How oft has he knocked without obtaining admission! How oft has he stood by the door of the heart, till, as he says, "his head was filled with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night!" and yet he has not gained admittance. But in some favoured happy day he passes by, and the time is a time of love: he speaks, and the heart opens; he thunders, and they see the dreadful consequences of being united to Mount Sinai, where they have long endeavoured to gain peace. He draws, and they run; he exhibits his glory, and, lo, they see him to be what they never saw him before. *Once*, "a root out of a dry ground," they saw "neither form nor comeliness in him that they should desire him;" *now*, "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely:" and the individual, under such circumstances, says, "Other lords beside thee have had dominion over me; but by thee only will I make mention of thy name. I feel it is better to be united to thee than to others." What, my brethren, can break the hard heart, and melt it, but divine love itself? O you who are united to him by precious faith, humble yourselves this morning under the recollection of infinite love. What have you that you have not received? Even the reception of the Son of God himself did not spring from any love in your heart to him, but from his love to you.

Then I may also add, that this union so represented is *a spiritual union*. "This is a great mystery," the Apostle says, "but I speak concerning Christ and his Church." "He that is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit:" one spirit lives, and moves, and breathes in the Head, and the same spirit lives, and moves, and breathes in the members. Christ loves them, and they love Christ. Christ serves them, and they serve Christ: Christ honours them, and they honour Christ: they are identified from that moment with the Son of God; his interests are their interests, his service is their service, his honour is their honour, and all that relates to his honour and glory may be identified with it: united to him by faith, Christ formed in them the hope of glory, and they dwelling in him. It is a spiritual union, then; it is that union which commences the moment the soul embraces the Saviour as a refuge, and rejoices in him as her husband.

Shall I also add that it is *a very blessed union*? The day of many unions on earth is hailed as a very delightful and blessed day, and many have cause all their days to rejoice in the first earthly union they formed. But, brethren, human language quite fails here; I find it utterly impossible to express all the blessings which result from this union with Christ. If I speak of the *dignity* of those who are thus united to him, what are they? "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." If I speak of their *name*, what is their name? "This is his name whereby he shall be called, 'The Lord our Righteousness;" and, if that dignity were not too much to put upon a mere worm, the same prophet,

in another chapter, says, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." So that the honours of the Bridegroom are put upon the bride. Is he Christ? Then they are Christians. If I speak of the *inheritance* of the people, they have mansions "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." If I speak of their *prospects*, what are they, but to be united with Christ for ever, in holiness, purity, light, life, and love, world without end, when the angel shall come from heaven, and announce to all the inhabitants of the earth, saying, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

If I confine myself to their *present* privileges, what shall I say of them? What sweet communion exists between the Church and Christ! What secrets can a broken heart deposit in his breast that can never be told to any creature! What choice communion is formed between Christ and that soul! "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." What a heart has Christ for brotherhood; what sympathy is there in his hand for the necessities of his saints! Many a spirit which entrusts its secrets to others, though it be to the husband of their joys, has sometimes found that they have betrayed them: but here is a heart which never betrayed the trust reposed in it, and which finds consolation for all.

Another privilege connected with it, is *support*. All fulness dwells in him: grace for grace is communicated—not like the husband on earth, who from poverty sometimes, or from covetousness, disdains the application of the wife for more, and more, and more: his riches will not hold out, and therefore economy, if not covetousness, necessitates him to restrain the applicant. But here, the more they ask, the more they have. It is traced over the portals of his door, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." And the only reproach that ever he cast on his bride, is because she does not believe the largeness of his heart, to give infinitely more than she can ask or think. He says to her, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

Another end is *protection*. That is a very beautiful phrase which was used by Boaz to Ruth, but still more emphatically applied to those who come to unite themselves to Christ: "A full reward," said Boaz, "be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." So here it is said, "He shall cover thee with his feathers." How tender and beautiful! "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

Another privilege is *instruction*. "If any wish to be instructed," the Apostle says, "let them ask their husbands at home, and they shall teach them." But here is a husband, who, the more petitions are presented to him for instruction, the more instruction he gives, and willingly, to the most ignorant and the most foolish amongst those that are willing. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, favoured of the Lord."

I will not extend these remarks further, though they might easily be extended, but press on to consider **THE TERMS OF THE UNION**. I mention two, in order that they may be more readily fixed on your memories.

The first of the terms of union with Christ, is a *total divorce from all other lords*. You know, brethren, "that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth; for the woman who hath a husband, is bound by the law to her

husband so long as he liveth." So that if you are wedded to sin, or wedded to the world, or wedded to the law, until that husband be dead, until you are divorced from him, there is no union to Christ. Therefore lay this down as the first of these terms. If the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law to her husband. Now observe, that since our fall in Adam, we are all naturally wedded to the law as the covenant of works. Every man is striving, by union with that law, to obtain salvation without submission to the righteousness of Christ, without embracing Christ as a Saviour. He is willing to be saved, but he does not like the pleasing terms of free grace; he scorns the idea of the merit of another being put on him; he will have some make-weight in the scale; he must have his works there; he must have something to do to get into heaven. But are you, O virgins, still ready to renounce your allegiance to the law? Are you ready to break the bonds with your former husband? Are you, O young man, in this assembly, ready to break your allegiance to the world, and its fascinating charms, and to give up your former allegiance with sin, and to break the bonds which bind you to it? If so, then, on these terms you may come to Christ. Christ is willing to receive you. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

This, then, is one term; but there is another term, and that is, *the mutual consent of both parties*. There must be, before this union, the mutual consent of both parties. Persons are not usually married against their will. There is a pre-engagement, a mutual consent on both sides. Now, my beloved, I ask you, in the presence of the Lord Christ, who is in this house this morning, Are you willing? I again ask solemnly the question, Are you ready to be united to Christ? "Ah," says one, "willing, sir? O yes; but is he willing to receive me?" That matter is for ever settled; that question is for ever decided. The question is not with you, nor ever shall be with you, "Is he willing?" That is decided. Go see him in these elements which are spread before you this morning, and ask again, "Is he willing?" Why, did he give himself to die for your emancipation from other lords, and do you ask, "Is he willing?" What are all these invitations in his word? What are all those strong appeals that are presented by him, but to engage the sinner to himself? Are not those proofs of his willingness? That matter is decided; all that is required is this, that *you* should be willing. Now are you willing to strike hands, as it were, with the Son of God, and to pledge him your troth? Are you this day willing to become so united to him, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord? Then I hail the day; then I give my Master praise that he has won your heart to-day; then I rejoice with gladsome joy, that another pilgrim is brought in, and another associated with the friends and lovers of the Son of God. Oh, may he make you all willing, and this be the day of his power!

Brethren, in concluding my subject this morning, will you allow me to congratulate such as are already united to him. Oh, what a blessed people are you! You sorrowing! that should never be. You dejected! that should never be. You murmuring! that should never be. You fearing lest the enemy should devour, the lion fall upon you, and carry you away! What when thy husband

is thy Maker, when thy husband is thy Redeemer, when thou art under the protection of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the whole earth? If tears of blood could be wept, we ought this morning to weep tears of blood at this table, that you dare so dishonour him, that you so distress him, that you do not give yourselves from this very moment to the Saviour, and say, "O Lord, I am thine, what shall I fear? I am thine; bought with thy blood, united by the bonds which are indissoluble, and thy grace shall watch over me." Brethren, I congratulate you if this be so.

There are two things which sometimes we are called in the prophets to look at: the first is to see Israel sitting in the dust; the second is to see Babylon sitting as a queen. And it may be so with you: you are perhaps in the dust; you are now perhaps in dejection: you are now perhaps in temptation and great distress, sitting in the dust. But bye and bye a voice shall come to these personages to exchange places; and we shall hear a voice thundering from heaven, "Come down and sit in the dust, O Babylon;" and then we shall see Israel rise. So shall it be probably, nay certainly, with you. The time of your residence on earth may be a time in which little of the glories of the bride shall be set forth; but there is a day coming, when all the temptation and the scorn shall fly away. Can any thing be like that day which is so beautifully and majestically described by the prophet? They shall "come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing," like two black birds of prey—"shall flee away," and never more be seen: chased by the glory of the light which pours itself on them, they shall fly away to their own region of darkness, and never more be seen. And Christ is coming to crown thee, and to take thee to heaven, to lodge thee with himself for ever. Wherefore be glad, and sing for joy, that, though now at present there may be troubles and difficulties, yet there is a happy heaven into which we are about to enter. The realization of these facts, my brethren, will bring great joy and peace to the soul.

I was going to say, let me press on you *the duties of your allegiance*, but I shall reserve this to the time when I shall hope, for a few moments, to address you at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; when the element of his blood shall speak louder than my voice; when what is then presented shall have greater weight than any thing I can say, to press on you your duties to your husband and your Lord.

But I will add, finally, to all who are here present (for let me endeavour to unite all who are here in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ)—I would say, as the Word of God represents, that if such are the vast benefits and blessings connected with union with Christ, it would be wrong if I were to depart from this house this morning, without endeavouring to press on all the blessedness of this union. How then should I weep over those who are not united to Christ! Brethren, if not united to Christ, you are united to the law; and do you hear what your husband says? "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:" "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Are you willing to risk union with such a husband? If you are not united to Christ you are united to the world: did that ever prove satisfactory, in its very best estate? Do not your consciences, beloved, unite with the Prophet in saying, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity, saith the preacher?" Is it not a lying, deceitful, and an evil world? If not united to Christ you are united to sin, and you obey sin. Why, the

poor slaves that are working in the galleys, might just as well rejoice that they were united to their chains, as you rejoice in being united to your beloved lusts. Oh, what masters, what husbands, what awful associates, are these! Yet how often are some ready to welcome them in the most awful manner.

But what is to be done? Who am I this morning to undertake to talk of pleading the necessity of being united to Christ? Who and what am I that I speak of my Master, or utter his praise? When Abraham's servant went to find a wife for Isaac, he first began to speak of his master's riches; he opened the jewels which his master had given him; he took a bracelet, and he put it upon the wrist of the damsel; and then he began to tell her, that his master sent him to gain her heart; and he proposed the question, and asked her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, when she had heard of his riches, and of his dominions, and of his excellence, "I will go." That is all I want you to do now. I have been setting forth my Master's dignity, and speaking of my Master's dominions, and speaking of my Master's glory, and now in his presence I say, Wilt thou go with this man? Wilt thou from this day be united to this man? Wilt thou associate with the Son of God from this time? What is the purpose of thine heart? Oh, as to purposes, many a time, young man, many a time, young woman, you know that you have solemnly purposed to unite yourselves to Christ, and you have taken a pen in hand, and were just about to subscribe with your hand unto the Lord, and say, "I am the Lord's;" and lo, there was some temptation just come in the way; you dropped the pen, kept up your former union with your former lies, and to this day Christ has been entirely forgotten by you. Shall it be so for ever? You know what will be the consequence; I need not tell you, but still it is my duty to tell you, that if you die as you are, wedded to sin and to Satan, the union shall last for ever. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels." Yet let the words of my Redeemer be the last, and the words of encouragement, too, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Amen; be it so, O Lord; and let all the people say, Amen



## THE EXPECTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN.

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REV. R. C. DILLON, A.M.\*

BENTINCK CHAPEL, ST. MARYLEBONE, APRIL 27, 1834.

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“Thine expectation shall not be cut off.”—PROVERBS, xxiii. 18.

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It is more than probable, that there may be some penitent and contrite spirit in this house of prayer this afternoon, for whom the text is intended, who may have come out to the sanctuary, Sunday after Sunday, month after month, and, it may be, year after year, hoping that there is some blessing in reserve for them, on the look-out for something to satisfy, wondering what the text would be, and what the sermon would be about, and yet to this hour, perhaps, unable to grasp any solid comfort. There may be also here the real believer in Christ—one who has been taught of God, one who has been led to see that his whole dependance must be in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and who is yet in bondage, and, though entitled to all the privileges of the son's dispensation, is yet living and feeling as if he were under the servant's dispensation, tied and bound to the law, rather than walking in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. “Ye are no longer servants but sons;” but ye are not living up to your privileges; you have no assurance perhaps, nothing of the joy in believing which you see others possess.

Now to each of these individuals, or class of individuals, if there should be more than one—to each the text gives you a promise, of which you cannot doubt the faithfulness: “Thine expectation shall not be cut off.” You may perhaps be ready to put the question to the minister, When will this expectation be realized? But it is a question which he cannot answer; he cannot give you any information of the time; all he can certify you of is the fact, that it “shall not be cut off.” It may not perhaps be realized this afternoon: many of the children of God have to wait long on the Lord. The text is intended to give courage; and all the frequent exhortations you find as to the duty of waiting, seem to intimate that this waiting is a familiar part of that process, by which the sinner finds his way out of darkness into marvellous light, and out of doubt and dismay into the full assurance of faith. Therefore you are not to expect from me to tell you the time when this shall be realized; all you have to expect from me is an assurance, founded on the Word of God, that “your expectation shall not be cut off.”

Let me point out three things that appear to be suggested to our consideration by the few words that I have read to you. First, let me shew you what is the expectation of the real Christian: then let me shew you, in the next place, the assurance which is given to him: and, in the third place, the triumphant issue of this expectation; “Thine expectation shall not be cut off.”

\* For the Bentinck Chapel Day Schools.

Now let us, in the first place, inquire, **WHAT IS THE EXPECTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN.** The Psalmist will tell us what it is in Psalm lxii. : "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation." If then, my dear brethren, your expectation ever has been from the preacher, or the place, or the sermon, or the book, apart from God, it shall be cut off: if our expectations in religion are to be realized, they must every one of them centre in God.

Let me remark to you, then, that the real Christian is in expectation of three things. He is in expectation, first, of the enjoyment which true believers have: he is in expectation, secondly, of the rich treasures which true believers possess: and he is in expectation, thirdly, of the free, the full, and the eternal salvation to which true believers are entitled. These are the three sources of his expectation; let us just glance at these.

He is, in the first place, in expectation of *the enjoyment which true believers possess.* And these arise out of a sense of *forgiveness*, a humble assurance that God has blotted out their sins, and sees them righteous in the merits of his Son; aye, and sees them *as* righteous as he sees his Son. In the hearing of some of you, that may seem to be a strange and strong remark; but I beseech you to consider it, and examine whether it be a true or a false one. If I stand in the presence of God in my own righteousness, I am not as innocent and righteous as his Son; but if I stand (and every believer must stand) in the righteousness of his Son, I see not how God can look on me otherwise than as righteous as his Son, because there is nothing in me but in his Son. If he looks at me in myself, he sees nothing but pollution, and guilt, and misery; but when he looks at me, I cast aside all my self-righteousness, and by faith I put on the garment of salvation, that rich mantle of righteousness which my Lord wrought out for me; and I sit down fearlessly in that marriage supper of the Lamb: God never can say to me, "Friend, how camest thou in hither?" He sees me in his only beloved Son, and he accepts me in the Beloved, not in myself. This then is the nature of the blessing and privileges which believers enjoy.

Then they have also not only this freedom of pardon and this justifying righteousness, but they have *adoption privileges.* I need not tell you what they are. We are not naturally children of God, we are children of wrath: but we become his children by a second birth: a spiritual birth, passing upon our characters, makes us children of God. This second birth admits us into his family; not merely into his house, and not merely as servants and domestics, but as sons. We have liberty of access to the table of the Master; we are fed with the finest of the wheat flour; we sit down with him, we are fed from his hands; we have liberty of access at all times to the presence chamber of our Father who is in heaven. These are the enjoyments that the believing, penitent, humble soul is in expectation of.

In addition to this they enjoy also *strength for holy obedience.* Then they also have *comfort in death*; I do not say *joy* in death; although some believers have joy in death; but I do say that all believers have comfort in death, though they may not have joy: for this may be, as you know, you that have followed to the grave many a beloved friend or relation, you know that there may be in the very nature of their disorder, much to prevent that buoyancy of mind which is the necessary attendant on joy. But peace shall be their portion. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is *peace*"—calm repose on the bosom of his Redeemer.

Then he has also *glory in eternity*. They who are made "free from sin have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Now, dear brethren, is any part of this your expectation? Have you been led at any time in the course of your personal history, to feel that you are yourselves nothing, but Christ must be all? And are you expecting full justification, adoption, and all the spiritual blessings entirely from God on account of your spiritual relationship to Christ? Then "your expectation shall not be cut off."

We remark again, that there is included also in this expectation, *the treasures of which believers are in possession*. They are "rich in faith, and are heirs of the kingdom." Every child is an heir. Here is the advantage of spiritual things over things that are temporal. In temporal matters it is only the eldest born of a family that takes the inheritance; but in the family of the Lord God Almighty every child is an heir. It is not the child of such an age, or the child of such an attainment; but "if children," is the beautiful declaration of the Apostle, "if children, then heirs," (aye, the poorest child in the house, the youngest child, is an heir); "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Well, then, if Christ is entitled (and he is entitled) to all that his Father can bestow, if I am a joint-heir I am entitled to it also: "For if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Among the riches which believers possess, are the riches of humility. They are rich in holiness; they are rich in love; they are rich in grace, and they will, in due time, be rich in glory. Nothing, in short, will satisfy the expectation of the believer, but all the riches in glory by Christ Jesus; and if he be an heir of God, he shall be entitled, and shall inherit, all the riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Then the third thing included in the believer's expectation, is *a full, free, eternal salvation*, devised by God the Father, accomplished by God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Spirit. Now, brethren, is this your expectation? Are you humbly and earnestly expecting the privileges which believers possess? Are you looking for the treasures to which they are entitled? And are you, above all, fixing your hopes and wishes on that full and eternal salvation which is in Christ?

In order to that, I must beg you to ask yourselves a previous question—Have you felt your need of such a salvation? For if I am addressing any individual who has not felt himself poor, it is quite in vain for me to direct him to treasures, where there are riches in glory by Christ Jesus. If I am addressing any individual who is blind, and who is not conscious of his blindness, it is in vain for me to direct him to Him who only can restore the blind eyes. And it is in vain for any individual to say, that he is depending on the salvation that is in Christ, if he has not first seen and felt his own danger, ruin, and weakness. What would you think of me, in looking over any given landscape, if, at the time that I was looking at that landscape, it was overspread by a thick haziness, through which I could not at all see any objects—what would you think of me, if, when it was physically impossible to see the objects that were near, I should yet point out to you, and tell you, I could very distinctly see the cottages and the spires in the distance? Why you would say, "It is impossible for you to see things at a distance, for you cannot see those that are near." Well, now, my dear brethren, so it is precisely in the divine truths that are spread before us in the Bible: in that wide and beauteous moral panorama of glorious discoveries spread before us in the Bible, there are two grand leading objects

upon which to point our attention; and these are, man's nothingness, and the Saviour's fulness. Now, if a man tells me he sees that which is distant, and does not see that which is near, what should I think of him? What should you think of me if I were to tell you so? I need not use much argument to shew you, that that which is in my character, that that which is in me, is nearer to me than that which is in God. Then, if I do not see that vile, wretched object that is in myself, if there is such a mist over my eyes, such a bandage fastened thereon, that I cannot see myself, it is in vain to say I see my Redeemer. I must see the object that is near, before I can see object at a distance. I must first, in plain terms, have a full and overwhelming sense of my own indigence and nothingness in salvation, before I can ever see the Redeemer's fulness, and apply to him to give me grace out of that fulness which is treasured up in him for all his ransomed children.

Then, in order to satisfy yourself whether you have the salvation that is in Christ, whether you see the object that is in the distance, you must first ask, do you see the objects that are near? Have you seen your own poverty? If not, you will never see the riches that are in Christ. Have you seen your own ignorance? Have you seen your own pollution? If not, you will never see the righteousness and sanctification that are in Christ. You must first go down (I know it is an unpleasant task) and you must probe into the wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores of your own heart, before you will ever value that great Physician, who knows only the mode and the remedy suited to your peculiar moral disease.

Let me shew, in the second place, THE ASSURANCE: "Thine expectation shall not be cut off." "Oh," say you, "I should like to know the reason of that assurance. I have been looking for pardon and forgiveness, for acceptance, and for all the blessings in Christ; and I am now very anxious to know how the minister will establish his second point."

I will give you three reasons for your assurance: the first is, that an earnest is given to you: the second is, that all the persons of the Deity are not only pledged to you, but to one another, that your expectation shall not be cut off: and you have, in the third place, the positive promise of God, that your expectation shall not be cut off.

First, let me shew you, that your expectation shall not be cut off, *because the earnest is given into your heart.* "How do I know that?" say you. I know indeed, there are many of the Lord's family, in whom a good work is really begun, who hardly know that it is begun; they are ignorant, and they are weak; in fact, they are what the Apostle beautifully styles them—"babes in Christ." They know nothing yet as they ought to know. Nevertheless, my brother, though thy spiritual vision may at the present hour be so indistinct, that you can only "see men as trees walking," in religion, nevertheless, if thine expectation of pardon, adoption, and justification, be in Christ alone—if you have, in no point, any dependance on yourself—then you have the earnest, the first-fruits of the Spirit, and your expectation shall not be cut off. For these feelings are not the produce of your own mind; you have not given birth to these feelings; they grew not in nature's garden: these feelings of self-abhorrence, and desire of the Saviour, are the work of the Spirit. And let me say to any here this afternoon, who may be sometimes in doubt as to whether their names are written in the Book of Life, that we are always in the

wrong when we begin with the Father's decree; we should begin with the Spirit, and argue up from the fruit to the tree, and thus reason—"If I have within my heart any one good desire, it is the work of the Spirit:" because your minister read in the second collect this afternoon, "Almighty God, the author of all holy desires:" but I have no holy desires that God is not the author of; if I had, I should be my own Saviour; but I am vile, utterly helpless, in the sight of God. I have not a holy desire, nor have you a holy desire, my dear brethren. Salvation (I must hold it in this pulpit, and in other pulpits,) from first to last, is of God, and God only. If, in any one case, salvation were of the creature, the creature would have whereof to glory: but no flesh shall glory in his presence. It takes its rise in the love of God, its accomplishment in the blood of the Son of God, and its application by the influence of God's Holy Spirit. And then, the mode by which I come to a satisfactory conclusion, as to your state in the sight of God, is simply this: If the Holy Spirit has produced in your heart these feelings of self-abhorrence and love to the Saviour, then the Redeemer died for you; and if the Redeemer died for you, then you were given by the Father to the Redeemer from all eternity. The whole Trinity, then, is engaged and pledged to the assurance that your expectation shall not be cut off. The argument appears to me to be most comforting to the Christian mind; if I have any good thought, I know that I am not the author of that thought; it is the work of the Spirit of God. If it is the work of the Spirit, the Spirit has taken of Christ, and given to me; and Christ has redeemed me from all eternity, because God gave me to him from all eternity. This, then, is the first grand assurance which you may have, you doubting, contrite, desponding soul, that the work of your religion shall not be cut off, nor shall your expectation be frustrated; because you have the earnest in your heart, that the work which the Holy Spirit has begun shall be carried on. Then what is the impression which this love should have on your hearts? Obviously this—"What shall I render unto the Lord, for creating this expectation in me? It is not the growth of my own mind. Oh, I will surrender body, soul, all that I have, and all that I am; nothing is too much to offer for such loving-kindness and tender mercy."

But, then, this assurance is strengthened, not only by the fact of your having the earnest of the Spirit in your heart, but you must feel that your assurance is strengthened, that your expectation shall not be cut off, when you know that *all the persons of the Deity are pledged to each other, as well as to you, that it shall not be cut off*. I think it is a higher view of salvation, and it certainly is a very comforting one, that it is not so much a negotiation between God and your souls, as between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They have not only pledged themselves to you, that your expectation shall not be cut off, but they have pledged themselves one to the other, that your expectation shall not be cut off. What should I show you was the compact, the solemn agreement, if I could draw you back through the ages of eternity past? "I will give them into thy hands," says the Father: "I will redeem those whom thou hast given me," says the Son: "I will make them my temple," says the Spirit. Here is the compact mutually entered into between them; not between you and God only, but between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit: and each glorious person has his own glorious work, his own glorious office, in the economy of redemption. Perfect Deity must fail, the arm of Omnipotence must grow powerless, before the expectation of one believer shall

be cut off. If one sheep were to be missing from the fold, if one child were to be missing from the Father's table, if one gem were to drop from the Redeemer's crown, then the Father must have repented that he had ever loved mankind; or the Son must have written a bill of divorcement, which separates the believer from himself; (and "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement? I hate putting away," saith the Lord :) or the Spirit, after having agreed to make that one believer his temple, shall alter, or that "stronger than he" shall come upon him and overcome him.

Now, brethren, look to your ground of assurance, and say whether it is stronger or weaker in the Lord. The whole Trinity is engaged—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—that your expectation shall not be cut off. Shall it in one case happen, that God the Father shall repent, or that God the Son shall write a bill of divorcement, or that God the Holy Spirit, having given into your hearts a copy of the title deeds, should take it away, and say, "I was wrong; I made a mistake?" Oh, brethren, think you that the matters of heaven are so wretchedly managed as this? Does the Holy Spirit ever give a title deed, that is not enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life from eternity? This may be the manner of man; but it is not the way of God. Religion in my heart is created in my own power, or created by the Spirit of God. If it be by my own power, it may be one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow; I may be a Christian to-day, and I may be a Mohammedan to-morrow: but if religion be "the life of God in the soul of man," then it becomes incumbent upon those who deny the final perseverance of the saints, to declare how an infinite being can ever desert the work to which he has once put his hand. You have, then, all the assurance which the persons and work of the glorious Trinity can give you, that your expectation shall not be cut off.

"Ah, but," you will say, "the minister has mentioned nothing of trials, nothing of bereavements, nothing of indwelling-sin, nothing of the last conflict, nothing about that fearful moment, when I am to dip my feet into the cold and black waters of death." I have said nothing about them; for I think the assurances I have given, are proof against all fears that may arise from any considerations of indwelling-sin, or sickness, or trial. Let these tribulations overwhelm you as they may, they never can reach the inner man, the seat of the soul; and amidst them all, you may assure yourselves, that your expectation shall not be cut off.

But although these are very strong grounds, yet there is, if possible, a stronger remaining, and that is, *the positive declarations of God's Word*. Now look at it as regards indwelling-sin, what is the promise of God respecting that? "Sin shall not have dominion over you:" "I will subdue your iniquity." Then your expectation shall not be cut off. What is it with regard to Satan? "God shall bruise Satan:" not God *may* do it, if you are peculiarly solicitous to ask him—but, "God *shall* bruise Satan" under your feet shortly. Then how is it with regard to the world, which reviles and persecutes you, and says all manner of evil against you, falsely? The world shall be overcome, and "no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue" (surely that will include all evil speaking against you) "every tongue that is raised against you in judgment thou shalt condemn." Then, I say to you, coupling these various considerations, have you not the very strongest assurance which earth and heaven can give, that your expectation shall not be cut off?

Glance with me now, in the third place, at THE TRIUMPHANT ISSUE OF THINE EXPECTATION. "For surely there is *an end*; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." Oh, look to the end, the end of conflict, the end of doubt, the end of dismay, the end of danger, the end of ordinances, the end of sermons, the end of preachers, the end of all the means by which we can see only through a glass darkly, and the end of prayer: but with the end of prayer shall be the beginning of praises that shall never have an end. Oh, sure am I in speaking for myself, and for you, if one may speak for all, that we do not live enough in expectation of our end. I would humbly desire to preach every sermon, to read every chapter, to offer up every prayer, and to live every hour in expectation of my end. For what will the end be? What is the consummation of our expectation? What will it be to the believer, when his end arrives and his expectation is not only not cut off, but is answered to the very full? I cannot tell you what it will be; eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, neither hath the heart of man conceived it: but this we can say, that our expectation shall be realized, that the Spirit's work of sanctification shall be done, that our sanctification shall be completed, that our sin shall be done away, that our graces shall be perfected, that all tears shall be wiped from all eyes, that you shall see God as he is (and therefore shall be like him); and shall expatiate without a frailty and without a flaw, for ever, in the service of your God. 'This is *the end* of your expectation.

Now, brethren, let us take this standing in some degree; let us put the earth under our feet; that is, let us trample the earth under our feet; let our hands put away and keep down all things that offend; let us have our eyes fixed on the mansion, and the robe, and the palm, and the crown; let us have our hearts panting for the pure and holy atmosphere of the heavenly world; and our whole soul going forth in ardent longings after God, who only is the strength of our heart and our portion for ever: then, when our expectation is realized—

"Then shall we see, and taste, and know,  
 All we desire or wish below;  
 And every power find sweet employ,  
 In that eternal world of joy."

And now I own, I do not like to look at the shadow of this beautiful picture. It was once said by a minister to one, somewhat younger in the vineyard of the Lord than himself; "Let all your sermons terminate either in heaven or in hell." I am not quite sure that I like the recommendation. Certain it is, that I would infinitely rather let my sermons always end in heaven: I would delight to lead the believing family of the Lord from earth to heaven, from sorrow to joy, from the place of trial to the place of comfort. Nevertheless, we must tell, not only the truth, but the whole truth; and if we dwell at all upon the promises, we must now and then (we are bound by our fidelity) touch upon the threatenings of the Gospel.

Then I would say, and say with all affection, and with all earnestness, that if there be in this sanctuary this afternoon, but one individual who is in expectation of getting to heaven by his own doings, apart from the doings and the deservings of the Redeemer, his expectation *must* be cut off; it never can be realized. You never can build with safety for eternity upon any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ the Lord; no man can come to the Father but by him. But then, here is a delightful assurance that we are

to hold out to you, that "him that cometh unto him he will in nowise cast out." Why then may not you hope, that your expectation shall not be cut off?

Now it is time that I shew you that I have not forgotten (for I have not yet mentioned) the case of those dear children in whose behalf I more especially appear before you this afternoon, who are in the daily schools in immediate connexion with your own chapel. I will at once own to you, brethren, that I have unfeigned pleasure in preaching for those schools, for two reasons. The first arises out of *the paternal care which the present minister exercises towards the lambs of his flock*. I rejoice to hear, that the order and discipline of these schools have never been surpassed since they were schools, and every means appear to be used in bringing up these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Now this is a most prominent point in our recommendation of the schools to your support; for especially are we anxious that religious instruction, and acquaintance with the fundamental truths of the Bible shall be mingled with every system of education, in every individual instance, whether for the poor or for the rich. We have been for a thousand years a Christian nation; a people who in God's cause have mustered strong in the field of battle when religion was at stake. We some years ago wrested the sceptre out of the hands of those who would compel us to take the precious truths of God's Holy Word just as the lips of the priesthood chose to propound them, and would hold us in despotism and superstition; and therefore as we have now a Christian framework of society, and a Christian statute book, we must have Christian education also; or our children will fight against their fathers' works, and will root out the vine and the fig-tree under which they sat. And there is another reason why we can never become the advocates of any system of instruction which leaves out religious information and truth: because every system (such is our firm belief) which leaves out religion, however it may provide for the life that now is, will only leave your children unprovided for the life that is to come. In the schools I am now recommending, I have reason to believe that such especial care is taken, that the fundamental principles of our holy religion, the chief truths, shall not only be taught to their memories, but impressed upon their hearts by God the Holy Spirit. Man can do one; he can write the truth on the memory: but it is the Spirit alone that can write the truth on the heart. And I have reason to know, that there are truths and principles inculcated in these schools which will guide the child with safety along the dangerous paths of life, and that impressions are made, which shall not, by God's blessing be worn out, but shall grow up into the conviction, that to fear God, and keep his commandments, is the first duty of man.

To those then, if such be present in this congregation, who would check the religious instruction of the children of the poor, and who think, that if a poor child be taught any thing it is all over with him for being a useful member of society, I would say, let him be denied instruction in every branch of useful knowledge; let him be kept from coming in contact with any book or tract that may improve his mind, let the door of knowledge be firmly barred against him: and what will be the consequence? Why, then he will only have more time to waste on sleep and indolence; more time to let his mind grow cankered and corrupted with the rust of ignorance; more time to spend in the public-house; more time to break his wife's heart, and let his children grow up in ruin and immorality; more time to hasten on his own ruin, and the ruin of all who are related to him, or connected with him. But if, on the other hand, you consent



to teach him the arts of reading and writing, and the first simple rules of arithmetic, and then supply him with some useful tracts, some manuals of piety, some books of sound information, you will enable him to relieve his leisure hours in an innocent manner at least, if not a profitable one. You will see he can find enough entertainment at home, with his wife and children, without being obliged to seek it abroad; and the calm delight and satisfaction which books afford, will put him in a frame of mind to enjoy the exquisite happiness which is inseparable from the cultivation of parental tenderness. And as he will be more respected in the eyes of his family, than that poor dull, and stunted creature who can teach them nothing, he will be induced to attend to every thing which can preserve, and avoid every thing which can impair, that respect. Then I say, you have no need to be afraid; let instruction have full scope among your people: it will have full scope whether you like it or not; when the vessel's sails are set, some wind will carry it forward. All I would venture to suggest is this: let those whose rank, and influence, and experience, entitle them to be at the helm of the vessel, take it, and all will be well.

I have not undertaken to trace out all the good which these schools have been the means of producing to the children who have been successively educated in them, but I am strongly inclined to believe, from all I have heard respecting them, that if you, the subscribers, were able to follow the many hundred children who have been instructed here, into maturer life, you would find them, in a great majority of cases, permanently retaining that love of improvement, and too much in the habit of usefully improving their minds to sink into that wretched inanity which yet pervades the untaught multitudes around us.

In urging you, then, to continue the support granted to these schools, I would not undertake to promise you that every child herein instructed is thus benefitted by your instruction; that is not a question for me. Do not understand us to say, that in no instance your expectation shall not be cut off. I do not say so; I do not venture to predict (I have not the power) that you shall see in every individual child, the fruit of your labour. Some of the good seed will fall on the way side, some on the stony ground, and some on the thorny soil; but some shall unquestionably fall on the good ground, and bring forth fruit, in some thirty fold, in some sixty fold, and in some an hundred fold. Then I would say to those who have the active management of these schools, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that child, or whether they both shall be alike good."

But this is but one reason; bear with me while I mention to you the other which gives me infinite pleasure in preaching for these schools. I have adverted to the character of the minister who is over these schools now: but, brethren, *when were these schools begun?* Are they the growth of yesterday? No; so far otherwise, that there are few now present, except it may be the more aged, in this house of prayer, who can remember the year when these schools were first established, thirty-six years ago, when the late beloved minister of this chapel, Basil Woodd, opened and established these schools. And are there none now who can remember that most excellent, and humble, and amiable man? Are there not many who sat for years—I know there are some who grew up under his shadow, and who sat for years under his faithful and affectionate ministration. I need not remind you how dear to his heart was the Scriptural instruction of the children of his flock. Oh! let not then (I ask it of you as a favour

to his memory)—let not his expectation be cut off. Let his blessed spirit, if indeed it is conversant with things terrene, see that the people amongst whom he ministered, are still cherishing the schools which he established, and are continuing that education which he commenced.

If, then, thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do all thy diligence, and give gladly. Ah, then, but you will say, there is no end to these appeals; and no sooner is one charity sermon over, than there is another announced. Well, now, do you wish it to be otherwise? Do you wish your honoured minister to roll back the religion of your country? Oh, no, you will say, Whilst we have time, let us do good to all men; God only knows how long we shall have time: this may be the last society we shall have to give to. Let us not forget to do good to all men, and especially to them of the household of faith. I pray that God will dispose you to give, and crown you in your families with his blessing: yea, I commend you to God, and the word of his grace. I pray that his fatherly care may ever be over you, and his fatherly presence ever be with you, and your minister—this alone shall bless and sweeten all your comforts—and his grace sanctify all your trials; that the joy of the Lord may be continually your strength, and that God, even your God, may graciously give you his blessing. Yea, I pray that goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life, and number each one of you with his saints, in glory everlasting

## CHRIST THE BUILDER OF THE CHURCH.

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REV. J. SCHOLEFIELD, A. M.

ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET, MAY 5th, 1834\*.

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“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”—ZECHARIAH, vi. 12, 13.

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THERE are few portions of the sacred volume more interesting, in a merely historical view, than that which embraces the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. The simple record which exhibits to us that illustrious nation in their day of small things, struggling amidst reproach and contempt, to erect an edifice in which the God of Heaven should take pleasure and be glorified, attracts towards them our liveliest sympathy, and impresses us with the feeling, that all the other glories of the founder of the Persian monarchy, are mean and insipid, in comparison of his being called the “shepherd” of Jehovah, to say unto Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.”

The temple thus erected was to stand in the place of Solomon's; and to those who had seen that house in her first glory, it was in their eyes in comparison of it as nothing. It had, however, a glory peculiar to itself, and a peculiar interest attaching to it: for as in a short time prophecy was to cease, and the canon of the Old Testament was to close, and no fresh links were to be added to the golden chain, which had held together the hope of successive generations, fixed with intense desire on their coming Messiah; so the very temple then building by Zerubbabel and Joshua, was to be the standing memorial to connect together all generations with the age in which the desire of all nations should come. And as it had been treasured up among the prophetic records of their nation, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh came, so it was a glory reserved for the second temple, by which it would surpass the glory of Solomon's, that in this place God would give peace; preaching peace there by Jesus Christ.

The writings of the prophets who were raised up to help forward this building, are replete with an interest, corresponding in its character to that which rests on the temple itself: they are full of Christ. In the distinct recognition of his divine character, in the full exhibition of his gracious office, in the promise of the Holy Ghost given by him, in notices of his sufferings, and intimations of the glory that should follow, the pages of Zechariah, estimated in proportion to their extent, scarcely yield to any other portion of the Old Testament. And if some of the visions which occupy the former part of this

\* Anniversary Sermon for the Church Missionary Society.

work, as well as the more dark predictions of his latter chapters, are shrouded in much doubt and obscurity, yet here, as in the prophetic book which concludes the Old Testament, we meet with many pages standing forth in so prominent and unequivocal a character, that they serve as land-marks to guide us in our inquiries into the more mysterious passages, in which Christ is revealed with such a splendour and radiance, that not only the subject matter, but the time and circumstances also are depicted with an accuracy not to be mistaken. So that in this, as in his future manifestation, it may be said, "Every eye shall see him."

In the passage connected with the text, the prophet having finished the details of those remarkable visions which were given him for his nation's encouragement, records the transactions which took place in Jerusalem soon after the foundation of the temple had been laid. The Jews, who were still lingering in Babylon, though the decree of Cyrus that gave them their liberty, and enjoined them to return and build the temple of the Lord, had been issued about seventeen years before, having heard of the commencement and progress of the work, and desirous of shewing that they remembered the Lord afar off, sent certain of their number with a contribution of gold and silver, intended, no doubt, to be employed either in adorning the temple, or in furnishing the materials for the building. The prophet is directed by a divine command to take it, and apply it to a different purpose; one which might lead some grudgingly to ask, as was afterwards in the case of her who poured the precious ointment on the head of the Saviour, "To what purpose is this waste?" yet one ordained by the wisdom of God, and most calculated to lead the minds of the desponding Jews to the only sure source of consolation, by setting before them their expected Messiah, as the High Priest of things to come, with the crown of glory upon his head: for thus saith the word of the Lord to his servant, "Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Johijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and speak unto him, saying, thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord: and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Assuredly, brethren, a greater than Joshua is here: even upon the very surface of these words we discern clear and distinct marks of the glory of Him who is the true Joshua, of whom the sons of Nun and Josedech were types, and whose name was called Jesus, or Joshua, because he should save his people from their sins. May we be enabled by his blessed Spirit so to understand this testimony of Jesus, that we may gather from it motives of encouragement to the prosecution of the great work in which it is our privilege to be engaged: and may our present meditations be so sanctified, and all our proceedings so regulated, that the pervading spirit of our society may increasingly be, that which is embodied in the words—"He shall bear the glory." Even so, Amen. Our subject is calculated to lead to this result by directing our attention to three points:—the person spoken of; the work assigned him; and the reward promised him.

Let us first endeavour to ascertain **THE PERSON SPOKEN OF**: not merely shadowed forth, but directly and primarily spoken of; so that much that is here said does not relate jointly to Joshua and Jesus, but absolutely and exclusively to the latter. Joshua, the son of Josedech, is placed immediately before us, and we behold the crown set upon his head. But when we want to hear the explanation of a circumstance so remarkable, the spirit of prophecy begins to unfold the message it conveys, our eyes are turned away from the common type, and fixed upon One in whom, as in their common centre, all the types and prophecies meet, from the very beginning of the world. "Behold the man whose name is the Branch:" "Behold," as it is paraphrased by the pious Bishop Hall, "the man who is the true type of the Messiah, that flourishing branch of the stock of Jesse." This is a method of speech not infrequent in this prophecy: as in the third chapter; "Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua;" where he speaks of the foundation stone of Jerusalem's temple: but the qualities which he goes on to speak of, as belonging to it, are those of ante-type, and not of type. Again, in the fourth chapter, "These are the two anointed ones, which stand by the Lord of the whole earth." So in the present case; the whole tenor of the prophecy shews, that while to the eye of the sight nothing is presented but Joshua, the son of Josedech, the eye of faith shall discern, under that representation, one of the same name, but of far higher dignity; especially when it is said in the thirteenth verse, "He shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Observe, then, the circumstances of the prophecy, and see how undeniably they all point to Christ, the High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle. Mark the form of expression with which it is introduced. If we adhere more closely to the literal exactness of the passage, it is, "Behold the man, *his name is the Branch.*" "Behold the man." What memorable and emphatic words; more than five hundred years afterwards they were uttered by the lips of the Roman governor, when he brought Jesus forth from the judgment hall, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe; then set him before the assembled nation, and bade them gaze on him, and take knowledge of him, as one in whom he found no fault at all; and they turned upon him the eye of scorn and hatred, and cried out, one and all, "Crucify him; crucify him."

The text directs our attention in the same words to the same glorious person, wearing, not a crown of thorns, but a crown of gold; but still the same, whether in his humiliation or in his glory, whether lifted up on the cross or on the throne; exalted as an object of universal regard, that every eye may see him, that every sinner may look to him and be saved, that he may be the hope of all the ends of the earth, and the glad tidings of his salvation may be to all people. His atoning sufferings purchased our redemption; his exaltation and glory completed it. Behold, then, the man, in his glory and in his grace: the Son of God taking our nature upon him, and so presented to us in the typical person of the son of Josedech; and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, exalted there to be a prince and a Saviour, in the fulness of his glory, carrying on the work of his grace, by making intercession for the transgressors.

Again: "His name is the Branch." This name undeniably belongs to the Son of David; he is called by it in the third chapter of this prophecy: "Behold,

I will bring forth my servant the Branch." Isaiah foretells him as the branch growing out of the roots of Jesse: Jeremiah as "the righteous branch, raised unto David, who is also a king that shall remain and prosper, and whose name shall be the Lord our Righteousness." The expression, indeed, being a figurative one, may undoubtedly have such an application to Joshua as to convey an intimation of the prosperous issue of the work in which he was engaged; just as the crown, placed on his head, shadowed forth the glory and happiness to which God would raise up their then prostrate church and nation. Both were announced in this emphatic form, as designating by a name, and not by a circumstance, the person intended: Not "he shall flourish as the Branch;" but "his name is the Branch." No enlightened Israelite of that day would fail to recognize in it, him to whom his hope so fondly turned, amidst all the desolations of Sinai, as the man of God's right hand, the branch that he had made so strong for himself.

Let us glance at the remaining point. He "shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne." Here we lose sight altogether of the son of Josedech, and gaze at once exclusively on the great High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; for at what period of the Jewish history was there ever a priest of Aaron's line sitting and ruling upon a throne? The sceptre belongs to Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. Once only, but that at a period long before the appointment of the Levitical priesthood, we read of a glorious and mysterious person who was at the same time king of Salem and priest of the Most High God: but this very combination of dignity marked him out as belonging to an order totally distinct from that of Aaron's priesthood, and as a typical representative of one who was to rise after Aaron; for he is foretold by David while Aaron's priesthood was established; and yet not only was called after the order of Aaron, but was afterwards to supersede that order. The prophecy of the text coincides thus with that of Psalm cx., where it is said of Joshua, that he shall be a priest upon his throne. It clearly teaches, that no other Joshua is really intended, than he to whom "the Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek;" and this by the confession of all, both Jews and Christians, is the Messiah.

The person spoken of being thus ascertained, beyond all contradiction, to be our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are prepared to enter with a livelier interest, in the second place, into the consideration of **THE WORK ASSIGNED HIM**. "He shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord." When the Son of God became incarnate, he grew up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. In all the circumstances of his birth, his infancy, his childhood, and his early manhood, we discover but scanty intimations of the great work which he came into the world to accomplish. Witness the infirmity, poverty, and contempt, the contradiction of sinners, the scoffs of his brethren, the blasphemous revilings of those who were the wisest and most exalted in the world's esteem: we can discover in all this, consummated as it was by that awful and bitter death of the cross, the most suitable preparation, and the surest forebodings of that work of mighty and mysterious grace, by which salvation was to be brought to our world, man to be redeemed from the power of darkness, and God glorified in reconciling the world to himself. We can discern through the cloud of thick darkness that broods over Gethsemane

and Calvary, the future glories of the Conqueror coming from Edom, "glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength." But thus was the incarnate Saviour growing up out of his place, and laying broad and deep the foundation of a work of love, the praises of which are to resound through everlasting ages. "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." He thus learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and was made perfect through suffering; and was thus furnished with every qualification for a perfect Saviour, with which in no other way he could have been furnished. And while hell was raging against the Son of God's love, and earth was lending her feeble aid to help forward the malignant purposes of that unnatural and sinful confederacy, He that sitteth in the heavens laughed at their accursed devices, which were most effectually bringing about what his hand and his counsel had determined before the world begun: his blessed Son was only drinking of the brook in the way, that he might the more gloriously and triumphantly lift up his head. He was growing up amidst opposition and difficulty, and conflict, and in the face of them all, and by means of them all, was carrying forward the counsels of his will, and advancing the great end for which he had come into the world.

And what was the work which the Father had given him to do? It was to build the temple of the Lord. The typical image of this was represented in the work in which Joshua was at this time engaged; and the subordinate design of the whole transaction to which the text refers, was, to encourage Joshua in his important work. But the temple he built, being but a shadow of good things to come, was again to be removed, as Solomon's had been before, and its glory to be done away. It would make way, in the fulness of time, for that other tabernacle, which the Lord built, and not man; and this is the true and spiritual Church of God, which is spread over all ages and all nations, which consists of all believers, all faithful men, and sanctified persons, throughout the world, gathered out of the vast multitudes of mankind, and brought into one mystical body, the members of which, for the most part, are unknown to each other by face during their earthly pilgrimage, but will all be united in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary through all eternity.

It is the glory of the Son of God to be the builder of this temple: "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord." The materials of which it is composed are sinners, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and in that state are far off from God, alienated from the life of God, having the understanding darkened, the mind blinded, and the heart hardened and corrupt. Whether the Gospel finds men in the polished society of a Christian land, or debased in the revolting mystery of the New Zealand savage, or led captive by Satan in the thousand chains of Hindoo superstition, whatever difference there be in the outward form and circumstances of the case, there is none whatever in those essential elements of character with which the Gospel has to deal. It finds him lost, guilty, and spiritually dead; it addresses its gracious invitations, its life-giving message, to his soul. But he is dead, and cannot hear; he hears indeed, but understands not. And can these dry bones live? And is God able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham? Yes; when the great Master Builder sends forth the mighty energy of his Spirit, the dead in sins are

quicken'd into life, the stony heart is taken away, the scales fall from the eyes, and the veil from the heart, and the Gospel is made the power of God unto salvation. Sinners thus converted are made living stones, and, coming in faith to Christ, the living foundation stone, they are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And such sacrifices of holy and spiritual worship have been offered up, and are offered up to God continually, in every place where the Gospel has been preached in faithfulness and in simplicity, and combined, as in all such cases it will be, with the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. And herein is exercised the power of our Redeemer's grace—that he can soften and subdue the most stony hearts, and build the most unpromising materials, and make them subserve his purpose in building the temple of the Lord. The triumphs of his Almighty power are displayed, not only in the Church, which for ages has been planted in our Christian land, but in the work which is going on before our eyes, in our own Missions, and those of other societies, in much people added to the Lord from among idolaters of every class and caste, from every kind and degree of spiritual degradation. For the demonstration of this missionary service is abundant with many thanksgivings unto God; and the same hallelujahs are continually ascending from the remotest regions of the earth, in harmony with those of heaven.

For in the continual progress of this work of our Redeemer, all the scattered Churches throughout the world, and all the individuals who are made the subjects of his quickening grace, are brought together, and united in one spiritual building; all are by faith united to Christ, and, therefore, united to each other in him. However separated by seas and continents, however diverse from each other in language and manners, in habits of living, and modes of thinking, and possessing, in their outward relations, no common bond of sympathy or union, they are all one in Christ Jesus. They are one body, of which Christ is the head; they are builded together in him, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; they are all sanctified together by that one Spirit; they have communion together, in the unconscious mingling of their prayers at the same mercy-seat; they have one Lord, one faith, one baptism; they are heirs of the same eternal inheritance beyond the grave; and in their passage through the wilderness, they have their souls refreshed with living waters from the same spiritual rock, which, as it flowed to ancient Israel in all their wanderings, so now, and in every age, is present in every part of the great wilderness, wherever there is a Church united in the communion of the body of Christ, or an individual to call on the name of the Lord Jesus, in faith and love.

And it is most delightful to look abroad upon our world, groaning as it is under the desolating ravages of sin, and travailing in pain together, with the fierce contests of the selfish passions of man, and to contemplate it in a holier character, as the field in which the seed of life is sown, and the great harvest of God's glory is ultimately to be reaped; to see the word of Almighty grace extending its triumphs to the utmost ends of the earth, to gather in the heirs of salvation, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; so that even now, there is scarcely a known language on the face of the earth, in which the praises of Jesus have not been sung, and the wonders of redeeming love proclaimed. The flow of the nations to the mountain of the Lord's house, has already commenced; the North has given up her sons to God, and the South has not held back; the East has beheld the rising beams of the Sun of



Righteousness ; and the fettered slave of the West, has exulted in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. Thousands, and tens of thousands, under the whole heavens, have been quickened from the death of sin, by the power of the Spirit, and have turned from idols, to serve the living and the true God. They are the drops before the shower, the first fruits of the full and universal harvest which the Lord of the harvest has promised to his beloved Son ; and in his hands the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper, until every stone of the glorious building shall be gathered unto its place ; and the temple of the Lord shall rise, in its ample and beautiful proportions, over the face of the whole earth, and he shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shouting, " Grace, grace unto it."

For the foundation on which this temple rests, is one against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. The provision which God has made by his Gospel, for accomplishing this work of grace towards the lost world, and concentrating all the glory of it in his Son, is fully adequate to answer the end designed. The text gives an assurance of this, in the intimation, that " the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Peace is the end proposed, even peace between God and man ; and, resulting from this, peace to the guilty conscience of the sinner. We have peace with God ; and God, as revealed to believers in the Gospel, is the God of peace. But who is the wonderful counsellor that can devise such a scheme of grace ? And what are those councils of deep and mysterious wisdom, by which a guilty and revolted world can be brought into peace and reconciliation with Him whose name is holy ? We find an answer, brethren, in the typical circumstances here put upon record ; of which, being a typical circumstance, we must search for such an interpretation as is pointed out, at the same time, by the general bearing of the passage, and by its adaptation both to the type and the antitype : and this at once excludes all reference to God and man, as the parties concerned, or to the Father and Son, or to Jews and Gentiles ; and absolutely confines us down to one application, namely, to Joshua and Zerubbabel, who, in other pages also of this Prophet, are, by implication, intended, even when one of them only is expressly mentioned ; as in the fourth chapter, the vision recorded is declared to be " the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel ;" and yet it represents two olive trees, which are " the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

We are thus, then, directed to Him, of whom both Joshua and Zerubbabel were types, but types in a different relation ; Christ, the King of his Church, as represented by the one, and Christ, the Priest of his Church, as represented by the other : and between them both the office and work of Christ our King—and Christ our Priest—the counsel of peace is established. For in no other way than by that wonderful combination in the person of Immanuel, could man be brought into peace with God—in no other way, than by the Son of God undertaking a union of office and character, so apparently incongruous, but yet so beautifully harmonizing. But when he presented himself to the Father, as willing to undertake the one, saying, " Lo, I come," it was promised that he should see of the travail of his soul, by being exalted to the glory of the other. As the High Priest, therefore, of his people, he descends from his heavenly glory, becomes a man of sorrows, is despised and rejected of men, and pours out his soul unto death, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree ; and having thus made a full atonement, he arose from the dead, and

ascended on high to make intercession for us. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.

But though he was thus delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, the counsel of peace is not yet complete: God has opened a door of reconciliation, but man is unable to enter in; being restrained by the stubborn rebellion of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. But yet fear not, O daughter of Zion: behold thy king cometh unto thee: and having been lifted up on high, he declares, "I will draw all men unto me." For, being now at the right hand exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he pours down his righteous influence into the hearts of his people, and sheds abroad his love in them, and makes them willing in the day of his power; and so subdues them to himself, as his subjects and disciples, that he may reign over them by his grace, and be glorified in their obedience and faith. When thus drawn to Christ, they are brought within the bonds of the covenant of peace; they have communion with God as their Father, in the rich manifestations of his pardoning love, and rejoice in hope of his glory.

In this way does our Redeemer build the temple of the Lord, by the virtue going forth continually from his kingly and priestly offices. Its foundation is laid in the work of his priesthood, in the infinitely precious sacrifice which takes away the sin of the world: his kingly power and glory crowns the work, and erects a superstructure, corresponding to so excellent a foundation. The preachers of his word are sent forth with their high commission, to gather in the outcasts of a guilty world; and by the mighty operation of his Holy Spirit, their word, which is sown in weakness, is raised in power. "Beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace;" "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." In the midst of this great wilderness of temptation and sin, the spiritual temple of the Lord of Hosts is rising before our eyes continually, and the songs of salvation are heard to resound within its sacred precincts, as the prelude to that universal chorus of praise, with which the whole earth shall break forth into singing, when Christ shall sit on the throne of his glory, and the heathen shall be given to him for his inheritance. For the Divine Builder shall not fail, nor be discouraged, until he hath set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his glory.

Thus will he finish the work which the Father hath given him to do: and to this work there is promised, in the last place, AN APPROPRIATE REWARD. "He shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne." Two particulars are here mentioned, possessing each a deep interest in connexion with the missionary work; the one holding forth our encouragement, the other our duty: He whom we serve in this work is invested with the government, and shall bear the glory.

Christ is *invested with the government*. He "shall sit and rule upon his throne;" "the government shall be upon his shoulders," and "he must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet." When he had laid the foundation of his Church, by the shedding of his blood, the basis on which he rested the commission which he gave to his Apostles, for carrying on the building, was—universal dominion: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." He was himself crucified for witnessing the good confession, that he was a king; and then he sent forth the heralds of

his salvation, to proclaim him as the Great King over all the earth, and to call upon all people, and nations, and languages, to bow down before him, to receive his yoke, and accept his salvation.

This dominion of Christ has a two-fold bearing—in reference to the Church, and the world. He rules his people as willing subjects; his service to them is perfect freedom: their highest happiness consists in not being their own, but bought with an infinite price, that they may glorify him in their bodies and in their spirits, which are his; and their most fervent ambition is to have every thought of their hearts brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The frame of mind which they most earnestly cultivate, is that expressed in the inquiry of the trembling Apostle, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” And more extensively throughout the world, the submission to his will, though less conscious and less willing, is not the less absolute. In all the complicated machinery of conflicting events, which are moving forward in their several directions, with resistless rapidity, there is not one, either the smallest or the greatest of them all, which is not subject to his righteous sovereign control. Even the winds and the seas obeyed him, when he was on earth; and that troubled and tempestuous sea of the world’s distempered passions, and busy schemings, and eventful changes, subsides at once into a great calm, if he but utter the word, “Peace, be still;” or is permitted to lash itself into fury again, if so it may better help forward the accomplishment of his purposes. He ruleth in the kingdoms of men: he stilleth the raging of the sea; and the noise of its waves, and the madness of the people: the counsels of the wise, and the efforts of the mighty, are not only powerless against him, but are bending to him in implicit subjection, to work his will in the convulsions of nations; and the rise and fall of empires are ordained and overruled, for the setting up of his kingdom.

In the possession of all this sovereignty, he is Head over all, though especially and emphatically to the Church. And in the exercise of this universal dominion, he addresses that Church with an inexpressible combination of tenderness and majesty: “I have put my word in thy mouth, I have covered thee with the shadow of my hand; that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” This is the never-failing resource, upon which his Church must cast herself in all her difficulties. And no one difficulty is more imminent, than those which rise before her in her prosecution of her missionary work; for as this, above all others, is a work of faith, so above all others, it shuts us up to a simple and immediate dependence on the arm of the Lord. When, then, obstacles present themselves before us, which baffle human wisdom; when faith is tried, and hope tempted, by the want of visible success; when disappointment withers our undertakings, or worldly policy thwarts them; when our missionaries are weakened by sickness, or cut off by death; when they turn aside from the simplicity of their walk with God, or their converts turn back to idolatry and sin; yet still it is our privilege and comfort to know, that Christ sits and rules upon his throne, and that at his bidding, the great mountains of difficulty shall become a plain before Zerubbabel. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” And so, whether in prosperous, or in troublous times, he shall build the temple of the Lord.

Moreover, “*He shall bear the glory.*” The glory of Joshua’s temple

belonged not to himself. Like Moses, he was faithful in all his house, as a servant; but Christ as a son over his own house. And the glory of the spiritual temple which he builds is all his own. Even in this present world, the Church which is planted in the midst of it, marred as it is with infirmity and corruption, and burdened like its Saviour with contempt, is a glorious monument of praise to our Saviour's name. Every stone that is laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, becomes a living witness to the truth, and grace, and power of a crucified Redeemer. The universal Church is the light of the world, shining before men in the beauty of holiness, and shewing forth the praises of Him who hath redeemed it with his blood. And just as when he was upon earth, and went about doing good, those who were made the happy subjects of his beneficent miracles delighted to employ their newly recovered faculties in tributes of affectionate homage to their deliverer, and followed Jesus, glorifying God, even so it is now in the spiritual working of his power; all who experience his grace are unto him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: the temple that he is thus building in the world, resounds with his praises; for in every part of it, under all varieties of climate, in all the different grades of society, the heart is still the same, has the same bitterness of sin to be delivered from, and finds the same relief at the cross of Jesus. From the ends of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the Righteous One, and the hallelujahs of the Christian Church, ascribing salvation unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, have been echoed back from the banks of the Ganges, and the coasts of Africa, from lips heretofore polluted with the frantic cries of idol worship, and hearts bound in the iron chains of brutalizing superstition.

And when this glorious temple shall be completed, and the head stone is brought forth with shouting, and a great multitude which no man can number is gathered before the throne, what an exceeding weight of glory will then rest on the universal Redeemer? All the crowns in the heavens will be cast down before him; every eye shall see him, and gaze upon him, with wonder and ineffable delight; every redeemed sinner, in the enjoyment of a full salvation, will give all the glory of it to his Saviour, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, will join their songs with ours, saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Thus will the once suffering, but now glorified Redeemer, see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. All his enemies made his footstool, and all his people brought to glory, to be with him where he is—to dwell in his presence, and sing his praises, for ever. This is the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame. "And he shall reign for ever and ever."

And now, beloved brethren, we have only to gather up in a few concluding sentences, some of the fragments of the subject before us, for the purpose of direct practical application to ourselves as concerned in the work of missions. In the first place, *Let us beware of building without Christ.* For "he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord." It is his prerogative to build, as he is to bear the glory; and as he himself has solemnly warned us, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth;" so the greatest and wisest of earth's master builders hath set us an example of disclaiming all participation in the power, as well as the glory,—"**Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**" Cordially do I rejoice, my brethren, to know and believe,

that the proceedings of this society, alloyed as they still doubtless are with a mixture of human infirmity, are yet, in the main, conducted in a simple dependence on the promises of Christ, for our encouragement, and on the Spirit of Christ for our guidance. Our gracious Master has sometimes seen fit to wither the arm in which we were tempted to trust, and to disappoint the hope which gathered perhaps some of its confidence from the imagined efficiency or adaptation of human instruments. Let it all combine to lead us to a greater simplicity of faith: let us be jealous over ourselves, with Godly jealousy: let our dependence be more child-like, and our obedience more unequivocal and self-denying: let all be begun, continued, and ended, in Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last: let us seek to be, even more than we yet have been, a society whose very element is prayer: and so let all the results of our undertakings, whether prosperous or adverse, lead us to the Saviour in prayer for blessings received, or confiding acquiescence under afflictive dispensations.

In the next place, *Give all the glory to Christ.* "He shall bear the glory;" and while all the events of the restless and agitated world, moving forward, as they too generally do, in utter forgetfulness of him, must yet work together in entire subordination to his glory, even the wrath of man must praise him; the work of missions has this high and holy character stamped upon it, that it aims at this hallowed end in the most direct way, and on the largest scale. And this consideration it is, which, above all others, endears the missionary work to our hearts, that it is so identified with the work of our Saviour, and so bound up with his glory. It is a direct assault made upon the kingdom of Satan, by the act of proclaiming another king, even Jesus, for whom it claims the universal empire. The temple you are now building in New Zealand, or in any other of the darkest spots of Satan's dominions, is consecrated to his glory, and becoming vocal with his praise. O, let us put the crown on His head who alone is worthy to wear it. The silver and the gold, which from the Church's liberality is poured into this treasury of the Lord, would be desecrated and perverted from its legitimate purpose, if employed to make crowns for any other head than that of Jesus. The most honoured of those who have laboured in the work of this building, and in whom pre-eminently we glorify God for the grace bestowed upon them, from the venerable Scott to those whose names are more recently embalmed in our affectionate remembrance, James and Wilberforce, would all unite with one mind and one might, to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, putting away the honour from the earthen vessel, and referring to the grace of their beloved Master all they have been enabled to do for him.

Still let us go forward, dear and honoured brethren, in the same spirit; and let it be the joy and rejoicing of our heart, that we are counted worthy, in a very feeble measure, to work the work of the Lord Jesus, and that his grace has taught us to set our affection to the house of the Lord. May He, for whom it is built, take pleasure in it and be glorified.

Lastly, upon this principle, drawing all our strength from Christ, and giving all the glory to Christ, *Let us contribute with a self-denying liberality of our labour and our substance for the work of building the temple of the Lord.* This is the concluding point, but I forbear to urge it by any formal arguments or exhortations. The cause itself is too elevated and holy to need a recommendation to our hearts by any enticing words of man's wisdom. Our labours in this cause, our prayers, and our gifts, are all for the glory of Christ.

“And he shall live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba;” prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. To him be all the glory of what he has already done in us and by us. May our hearts be filled with his love, and constrained by that love to bring forth more abundant fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God. “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.”—Amen and amen.

## NATURE AND ORIGIN OF REVIVALS.

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REV. E. BICKERSTETH, A. M.

SIR G. WHELER'S CHAPEL, SPITAL SQUARE, BISHOPSGATE, MAY 4, 1834.

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“O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.”—HABAKKUK, iii. 2.

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THIS, my brethren, is our hearts' desire and prayer for you. What greater wish can your present minister, or your former minister, have for the good of his congregation, than that there should be a blessed revival of the work of grace among you? And as it is the prayer of your minister, so, I doubt not, it is the prayer, the heart's desire, of very many before me. Long has the truth as it is in Jesus been preached in this congregation; times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord we have again and again had: what we want to see is, fresh supplies of grace imparted from season to season, and the work of the Lord continually growing and reviving among you. May these wishes, these prayers, be abundantly answered at this time.

I purpose this evening to direct your attention to these four points:—first, the state calling for a revival: secondly, the nature of a revival of God's work: thirdly, the only source from which it can flow: and, fourthly, the time in which it should be sought. And O that while I am preaching upon the subject, the Spirit of our God itself may realize the truth in many a heart before me; that it may indeed be a blessed beginning of a revival of the work of grace in our souls.

First, I have to consider, **THE STATE CALLING FOR A REVIVAL.** A revival is a return to life and vigour, from a state of languor and decay. A revival supposes a previous profession of the Gospel, and in its strictest sense, a previous partaking of its life and power. But I will consider the state calling for a revival in a larger sense, as applying to the Church in general, and to us as individuals.

I will look at it, first, as it regards *the Church in general.* The Church of Christ needs revival. Though better than it once was, it is not, I apprehend, taking a large view of the whole Church of Christ, in a lively state as to deep and practical godliness. There are comparatively few flourishing Churches, where the congregations are manifestly prosperous to a large extent in their souls. There is a vast increase of profession in our day, and with that, I doubt not, an increase of real piety. But in the midst of that, there is much disunion among different bodies of Christians; and there is among Christians themselves but a low standard of devotedness to Christ; a low standard of doctrine, and of devotedness to him. We ought as Christians, to have a lively and deep interest in the Church of Christ: a lively and deep interest in the conversion of all

around us; our family, our relatives, our friends, our neighbours, and our country: we ought to have a deep and lively interest in the spread of the Gospel, both among Jews and among Gentiles, throughout the world. I bless God that there are good reasons to hope, the anniversaries of the different societies will shew, that there has been a real and considerable increase in zeal and liberality for the diffusion of the Gospel. That society in which all along you have taken so lively an interest—the Church Missionary Society, will considerably enlarge its funds; and the interest of the Jewish Society, and other religious societies, are prosperous: and I trust, as many of you as are able will attend the anniversaries and sermons that are to be preached for the various societies.

But in looking more particularly at that Church to which we belong, with which we are more immediately connected, never was it more the object of attack and of enmity than it has been in the present day. This will only endear it to those who, on conscientious principles, adhere to our established Church, and feel that it has been greatly honoured of God in promoting his spiritual kingdom throughout our land. This attack not only comes from the open infidel, but from those from whom we least expected it—brethren in Christ of other denominations. The Lord give us grace to receive every such attack, not in the spirit of anger, but in the spirit of meekness and gentleness; not returning railing for railing, but praying for them who oppose us, and return love and kindness, and good will for every such attack upon us. But all these things, I hope, will have an important effect in reviving the Church of England and the Church of Christ at large.

Times of conflict and trial are doubtless before us; but they are not times of evil to the Spiritual Church; they are not times of evil to the Church of Christ. Blessed be God, whatever takes place all around us, the Church of Christ, built on a rock, can never be shaken, never be moved.

This is the state of things calling for a revival in the Church generally. Now, with regard to us, *as individuals*, look what God's word calls us to. "I beseech you that ye present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "A living sacrifice!" "Take up your cross daily; deny yourself, and follow me." Daily self denial. "Live not to yourselves, but to him who died for you." Devotedness to Christ. Is this our character, or anything like it? Is there not in us—what Christian will not confess it—a state of worldliness, a state of lukewarmness, a state of formality? Thus in a state of *worldliness*, we much need revival. When the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, enter in, they choke the word; when the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are in any way indulged or yielded to, what a tendency all this has to deaden all spiritual life. So in a state of *lukewarmness*: the state of Laodicea; "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot;" thou art lukewarm. "I would thou wert cold or hot. No zeal for God and his glory; no ardour for the kingdom of Christ; an indifference to the means of grace. This is a state manifestly calling for a revival. So those in a state of *formality* need revival. The Apostle speaks in the latter day, of many having "the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." You observe it is not the form of religion, it is not the form of profession, but it is the form of godliness. There may be all the appearance of godliness, that which the world denounces; that which the world scoffs at—godliness; there may be a reception of doctrine; there may be a profession of these before men, there may be a liberal hand



there may be an attendance upon the means of grace, and yet no work of God going on in the heart, and it may be all the work of the natural mind; the form without the power; the form of godliness, but denying in the life the power of it. Now, my beloved brethren, in proportion as we have a clear discernment of our hearts and our lives, we shall see how much there is of all this in our hearts and in our lives. Who does not feel it that knows what his heart is by nature? And who does not daily, if a Christian, groan under it, and cry out, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" Here is a state calling for a revival.

Now let us look at **THE NATURE OF THE REVIVAL OF GOD'S WORK.** I would show what is God's work in the soul, and what is the revival of that work.

What is *God's work in the heart of man*? It is very different from man's work: it is very different from the work of an individual, or a friend upon that individual; of his own mind and thought; of his parents, or of his minister. Man may do much that has a show of religion: there may be repentance like Ahab's; like Judas's repentance; there may be knowledge, "so as to apprehend all mysteries;" there may be faith, "so as to remove mountains;" there may be alms-giving—"all our goods to feed the poor;" there may be martyrdom—"our body to be burned;" and yet it only be man's work. All the outward works man may do; all the intellectual understanding man may attain; nay, all the graces have their counterfeits and their resemblances, without the reality. God's work is beyond all this; it is something superior to what man the creature can possibly effect. It is marked by a new birth; "born of the Spirit;" having "a new heart, and a new spirit;" "to as many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name." Why? "Who were born, not of blood"—not by natural descent from pious parents, "not by the will of man"—not by persuasion of those around them, whether of ministers or of Christian friends; "but who were born of God." This is God's peculiar work in the new birth of the soul. It is marked by Christian graces: "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, long-suffering, faith, temperance." There is manifestly the work of grace, where these Christian graces are produced on the barren and fruitless soil, by nature, of man's heart. So it is marked by walking in all good works. St. Paul speaks of this in Ephes. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. It is declared here. So in the same way Isaiah, xlv. 11, speaks: "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask of me things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." So again in the sixtieth chapter and twenty-first verse: "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." All good works are not at the beginning of the sinner, man, they are the peculiar workmanship of God our Father. Here then is that which is God's work, his peculiar work—the work of grace in the heart of man.

Now let us consider *what is the revival of this work.* I will notice two things. *An increase of zeal on the part of God's people.* When they rise up to a sense of neglected duties; when they increase in earnestness at the throne of grace; when prayer is more earnest, more enlarged, more constant; when they feel more deeply than ever their own sinfulness; that all they do is utterly

vile and worthless. Religion was reviving in Job's heart when he said, "Behold I am vile; I abhor myself in dust and ashes." So in Ezekiel, xvi. 63, it was a time of revival in religion when he could say, "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame."

say again, that an increase of zeal on the part of God's people is marked by more fervent prayer for the Holy Spirit, the source of spiritual blessings. Their conversation in their families and among their friends becomes more spiritual and edifying; they endeavour to stir up each other—husband and wife, friend and friend—they endeavour to stir up each other for Christ. They are bold in discountenancing sin in all around; they are more active, diligent, and self-denying in their duties; and yet Christ is more precious, more sought after, and self is more renounced. Here, my brethren, you see some of the marks of an increase of zeal on the part of God's people. O that my dear brother may more and more see that growing and increasing in all your hearts.

But it is not confined to that; the revival of the work of God is connected also with another thing—an *awakening among careless sinners*. When we see those who have long gone on in sin, whether it be old or young, or middle aged, whether it be self-righteous or profligate—when we see them becoming thoughtful, anxious about their souls, inquiring about the things of Christ, no longer ashamed of religion, no longer hiding it from others, no longer unconcerned about it, their great desire to find an interest in Christ and have salvation; their great fear how they shall escape damnation—their inquiry, their earnest inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"—all these are sympathized with, and delightful to a Christian heart, delightful to the angels above; that there is an awakening among careless sinners, and that they will go on to renounce every hope but that which is placed on the only foundation, the Lord Jesus. The effect here will be an enlargement of the number of those who have a good hope through grace, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, who are passed from death unto life. O that there may be such a revival in this congregation. O that it would please God, that many who have hitherto been—though they have attended the faithful ministry of the word—unconcerned about their souls, might be awakened at length to a lively sense of their everlasting interests.

Having thus noticed the state calling for a revival, and the nature of a revival of God's work, I proceed next to point out **THE ONLY SOURCE FROM WHICH IT CAN FLOW**. "O Lord, revive thy work." The well-spring of the revival is here; and it is of special importance that we should distinctly discern this—the Holy Spirit is the great source of the revival of the work of grace in the heart of man. This is clearly foretold in Isaiah, xlv. 3—7—How plain is God's word!—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground"—there is the figure; "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring"—there is the explanation of the figure. "And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses;"—here is the corresponding answer to the figure. Then here is the explanation—"One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." May that Spirit produce these blessed effects among us. In that most remarkable day, when three thousand were converted at once, the day of Pentecost, you will observe in

Acts, ii. Saint Peter ascribes it all simply to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works indeed through the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore if we wish for a revival, we must attend diligently the preaching of the Gospel, but without his energy, the most faithful preaching is all utterly vain. You see this remarkably exemplified in our Lord Christ. For the comfort of his faithful ministers, and for the illustration of a most important doctrine, it pleased him that his own preaching should be attended with comparatively very few conversions: but when the Holy Ghost descended, a preaching far inferior—the preaching of the Apostles—is made effectual to the conversion of thousands, and tens of thousands. We might see the Holy Ghost as the great source and spring of every revival. We should see then, the Holy Spirit as the cause of the revival. Salvation belongeth to the Lord, in all its parts; in its origin—in his own covenant, formed before the world began; in those varied plans of forgiveness from grace alone, justification wholly for and through Jesus, and adoption through his Spirit; and so in the whole application of salvation, the quickening of the soul of man; Where does it come from? “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together in Christ.” And so, the revival of the soul, as we have in Psalm lxxxv. 6, 7, “Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.” So in Hosea, xiv. “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his fruits as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.” Be deeply, my brethren, convinced of this point. See thus distinctly and clearly the Holy Ghost the great spring of revivals, and wait upon the Lord. If you desire revivals, the means must be diligently used—reading God’s word, prayer in secret, social prayer, public worship, self-examination, and attendance on the Lord’s Supper; but if you stop in the means, you deceive yourselves; the posture of the Christian’s mind is this, as you have it in Psalm lxii. 5—7, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation, and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.” So again in Psalm cxliii. 10, 11, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name’s sake.” There is much for you to do; but there is something, my brethren, beyond all that you can do, for the effective revival of the work of God in your souls. But this your God will give you, if you wait upon him for it; if you look to him for it, in his own appointed means of grace. He will never fail those that trust in him. Here then have I shewn you the only source from which it can flow.

Now I proceed, lastly, to consider, **THE TIME IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE SOUGHT.** “O Lord, revive thy work *in the midst of the years.*” There is reference here to the captivity which was rapidly approaching, when Habakkuk prophesied. I would apply it to the present time, which I consider the season of grace for the world. If the present times have one peculiar character spread over them, I consider it to be this—the day of salvation, the accepted time, the

favourable season of grace "To-day;" "while it is called day," hear his voice. In this view, our text is like the language of the Psalmist, "O spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence." But that you may have a more distinct view of this, I will bring the time before you in these two respects:—before what time these revivals shall be sought, and during what time.

I will consider *before what time*. *Before the day of sickness comes*. Of all times to seek God, a sick bed is the worst. I have seen many sick beds, where there seemed every thing hopeful at the time; the person has recovered, and all has gone back again. I have, in my mind's eye, many a case of this description; but there are few satisfactory, in comparison with the number. If you neglect God in health and strength, what reason have you to hope, that in the time of sickness, he will give you his support? that he will do that work, which as I have shewn you, he only can do? Before the day of sickness comes, seek a revival.

*Before the day of old age comes*. Very few old men are converted. I have known one or two cases, to shew the triumphs of divine grace; but very few indeed, comparatively. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth;" before the evil day shall come. Seek the revival before the day of old age comes on.

Seek the revival *before the judgments of God come on the world*. Those judgments, when we look at the awful wickedness of the Christian world at large, the professedly Christian world, may indeed come sooner than many have supposed. We have reason, from the whole aspect of the prophetic word, and from the whole aspect of the Christian world, to think that God may pour out his judgments. What if he sends his sword of judgment? Happy they, and only they, who have a sure refuge, who have fled to Christ.

Seek the revival *before the Saviour appears*. He is on his way: he says, "Behold I come quickly." It is too late when the bridegroom is come, to go out and buy oil for your vessels and your lamps; you must now gather the oil in your vessels, that you may be like the wise virgins, ready when he appears. It was too late when Noah was in the Ark, and the Lord had shut him in, and the floods descended, to think of escape. My brethren, the lesson to all of us is, "watch and pray, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

*Before the final sentence is pronounced*. The day will come when it shall be said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: he that is filthy, let him be filthy still:" but, blessed be God, it is said also, "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still." While, then, you may thus obtain righteousness, while you may thus obtain holiness, before these days come, now in the midst of the years, seek a revival from the God of all grace and mercy.

But this leads me to point out *during what time we should seek the revival*. We should seek a revival *while the day of grace continues*. Soon the day of grace will end in the dark night; it will close for ever; I hardly know a more awful and affecting consideration, than that there is a day of grace: that the present is the day, and the only day. Now God is ready to receive you; now the Holy Spirit is ready to be imparted unto you; now Christ will welcome you; now the Sabbaths are provided; now the promises are opened; now there is nothing needful for your soul's good, but there is the throne of grace to which you may go, and where you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

During what time shall we seek revival? *While God's ministers, in the name of their great Master, invite you.* Soon the voice of the minister will cease to sound in your ears: soon you will hear no longer—"O every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." This evening again, in the name of our great Master, "we pray you, in Christ's stead;" we beseech you, "be ye reconciled to God:" his arms are open to receive you; he is waiting to welcome you, stand not back; now, while the voice of the minister is sounding in your ears, entreating you, come to Jesus.

*While opportunity is afforded, come.* What is there, that is not continued to you for this very end? It is for this the sun rises in the morning, shines through the day, and sets at night: it is for this your food is provided; your life is continued; your pulse beats; your lungs heave. Every thing you have, is continued by the great Jehovah to you, simply for this end—that you may avail yourselves of the day of grace; that you may seek the Lord while he may be found; that you may win Christ, and be found in him; that your souls may be revived; that you may attain endless life and glory—all is given you that you may turn to God, and be everlastingly saved. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." The time present is the only time. Never, never, then, neglect the present season, for seeking the revival of God's work in your souls.

I would now, from the whole subject, draw two or three practical lessons. First, my brethren, *search into the state of your own hearts.* I ask this question—Has God ever wrought effectually his work of grace in your souls? Have you been brought out of the bondage of Satan, into the service of Christ? Are you advancing in the divine life? Does your profiting appear to all around you? If the work be not begun, O apply at once. It is not now too late: time is now given you; the precious moments of salvation are yet afforded you. Search, then, into the state of your own heart.

The second practical lesson I draw from this subject, is, for us all *earnestly to seek revival from God, in prayer in private.* Were we but earnest and persevering in prayer, all would revive. I am quite satisfied of that, that if we gave lengthened time to private devotion, all would be well. Remember well from whom alone revival comes. Strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die in earnestly seeking grace from God in private prayer, for the revival of his work.

One lesson more I would draw from this subject. Devote yourselves—God grant that your preacher may do the same—*devote yourselves afresh from this hour unto God.* What is our Christian life, but again and again beginning anew and afresh, and in his strength devoting ourselves again and again to him. O that we may present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him. And if devoted, we shall freely and gladly, according to our means, aid every work, and every society, for enlarging the kingdom of our divine Saviour. What an interesting season is this, when the servants of Christ, day after day, assemble together for the purpose of advancing his kingdom. I hope you will, in your private devotion, and in your family prayers, remember the various societies that are meeting, and commend them to God from day to day, that every meeting may be holy, spiritual, edifying, with much of our Master's divine presence in the midst of them; that every preacher, and every speaker,

may be greatly assisted, with an unction from the divine Spirit, so that what he speaks may be to the edifying of all who hear. May there be a blessed revival in the midst of all the societies.

I feel I need say very little about the peculiar object, for which I plead this evening. I have good hope, that if you make a vigorous effort, the sum required will be completely met. You know what a station of usefulness is this; I trust, on this occasion, our friends will liberally and cheerfully give, to aid so important an object, in connexion with the usefulness of this neighbourhood. What a station of usefulness and blessing has God now, for upwards of twenty-five years, made this chapel, and this congregation. I trust that, by your liberality this evening, the deficiency may be completely met.

## THE INFLUENCE OF MEMORY INCREASING THE MISERY OF THE LOST.

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REV. J. A. JAMES,  
SURREY CHAPEL, MAY 11, 1834.

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“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”—LUKE, xvi. 25.

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OUR Lord Jesus Christ was not only the greatest of all preachers, but unquestionably the most awful. His discourses abound with more frequent allusions to the punishment of the guilty, and with more fearful descriptions of it, than can be found in almost any other portion of holy Scripture. How tremendously fearful is the parable of which the text is a part; in which He that hath the keys of the unseen world, seems to throw the door of it ajar for a few moments, and to give us a glimpse of that world where hope never enters, and from which misery never can pass. Much of the parable, I admit, is what might be called drapery; but it is not the drapery of error, but of truth. The sentiments conveyed to us are these: that there is a state of punishment prepared for the wicked in another world, and a state of blessedness for the righteous: that every man when he dies enters upon one or other of these states; that the circumstances of the present life (I mean those of riches or of poverty) have no influence of themselves upon man's eternal destiny. Poverty, if united with piety, will exclude no man from heaven; riches if connected with impenitence and irreligion, will keep no man from hell.

But there is another sentiment conveyed in the language which I have selected as the subject of discourse this evening, and that is, *that memory will have an important influence in aggravating the misery of the damned*. “Son, remember,” was the expression which our Lord put into the lips of the father of the faithful, when addressing himself to the rich man that lifted up his eyes in torment. There is a dreadful taunt in the admonition, a sting not to be described. This, then, my hearers, is the subject of discourse on the present occasion—the influence of memory increasing the misery of the lost.

That there is a state of inconceivable and interminable punishment for the wicked in another world, is one of the first principles of revealed truth, which cannot be discredited without withholding assent from the Bible. In that inspired book a state of rewards and punishments is placed in the very front of its announcements, and it is interwoven with the whole texture of revealed truth. To doubt this, is not so far to mistake as to contradict the testimony of God. Yes, my hearers, hell is a dreadful reality. The poet may make it the source of gloomy and awful images with which to adorn the creations of his genius, the dramatist may work it up into a form for public amusement, the

swearer may employ it to add venom and fury to his oath, the scoffer may use it to point his epigram, or sharpen his wit; but notwithstanding this shocking levity, this vulgar obscenity, this awful impiety, it is a fact, whatever men do with it, that there is a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, and that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

It is not improbable, that the greater part of the punishment of the wicked will be mental anguish: the curse of Jehovah will fall upon a spirit made bare to receive it. The sufferings of the lost will arise probably more from their own reflections and dispositions, than any positive inflictions of the Almighty; a circumstance which ought to increase rather than diminish the apprehension of man concerning this punishment: for what are the tortures of the body in the case of a rational being to those of the mind? What is mere pain, received through the nerves, compared with heart-remorse and self-reproach? By universal consent, there is no hell like that of a guilty conscience; other punishments are without us, but the source of this is within us. It is admitted on all hands, that the faculties of the soul will be inconceivably strengthened in another world; the immortal part of man will then arrive at the maturity of its powers, both for good and for evil; the good will be strengthened, the evil will be made more resolute and determined, and all the passions more lively and vigorous. Among these faculties, the memory will bear its part in the way of influence. This astonishing power of the human mind is susceptible of almost illimitable degrees of strength now; some possess it to an extent that is most incredible; certainly astonishing. By its mysterious constitution we very frequently find, that thoughts rise up that had been lost not only for hours, days, weeks, months, but for years; a circumstance which renders it not impossible nor improbable, that the memory will be so strengthened when the soul shall arrive at its eternal state, that the whole series of its actions, of its words, of its motives, will again be revived; the history of the man's whole self be again brought before him, so that he will seem to be living through all that he did and all that he was, in that other state of existence. We are always, therefore, my brethren, sowing seed which is to spring up to be gathered in eternity: "Be not deceived; what a man soweth that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;" while "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We are thus to live for ever, as it were, with ourselves; and not only with ourselves as we are to be, but with ourselves as we now are.

I know not whether this thought has ever struck you, but it is a terrific one—we are mysteriously and wonderfully formed, and not less mysteriously and wonderfully placed. What, speaking of a lost soul, will he remember in another world? First, **THE POSSESSIONS HE HAD IN THIS:** Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted; and thou art tormented." Yes, all shall be recollected: the gains in business that this lost soul in perdition secured when he was an inhabitant of our world; his patrimonial possessions, his accumulations of wealth, his splendid mansions, his gay equipage, his sumptuous living, his retinue of servants, every thing that constituted his gaiety and his grandeur, and all his pomp and circumstance. But what advantage will it be to have a voice perpetually saying to him throughout eternity, "Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things?" Oh, the sting of that past tense—



“*thou hadst.*” Worldly possessions in hand, or in expectation, are generally a source of high gratification; but when alienated, when lost, when gone for ever, what consolation do they generally yield to him that possessed them? And this lost sinner will in many cases recollect by what dishonourable and dishonest means these possessions were gained. Successful fraud and villainy, while the fruits of them last, evil as they are, yield a gratification to evil-disposed men: but when the fruits are all withered, and there is the bare, blighted, leafless, and fruitless tree of guilt that bore them, then what pleasure will it be to remember possessions? And even where there may be no guilt, where no guilt may have been contracted in acquiring possessions, yet to recollect possessions for which the man sacrificed his soul—oh, then for a man to recollect that his Bible, and his minister, were perpetually sounding in his ears the expression, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!” He is then to recollect this very expression, and by his own experience, to stand convicted of the veriest folly that an immortal creature can commit—of sacrificing the immortal for the mortal, heaven for earth, things unseen and eternal for things seen and temporal! Oh, to have a voice, whispering to the soul through eternity, as there was in the case of Esau, when he arose from the consumption of his transient meal, “This is the price of thy birthright;” to have a voice whispering in the soul for ever, “Thou hast sold the high possessions of eternal life and glory for gratifications and possessions that are now for ever gone!”

But there will be another kind of remembrance of those possessions; or, in other words, a remembrance of them connected with another idea; and that is, that they have all been spent upon a man’s self. That property, granted to him to employ for the glory of God, and for the good of mankind, for the relief of misery, the instruction of ignorance, and the salvation of lost souls, had all been spent on himself, for his own gratification, and the aggrandizement of his family. Men will learn at the day of judgment, if they never learn before, that wealth is a talent to be employed for the good of man and for the glory of God; and then think what will be the feelings of the lost spirit, to look back on hundreds and thousands spent on his own gratification, and that of his family, and nothing, or next to nothing, spent for God, and for the good of society. And connected with this, it is to be recollected, that, in the present world, rich men are sometimes estimated in society rather by their wealth than by their virtue;—a very false standard of respect, but so it is—and that tribute is paid to a man’s purse which cannot be demanded for his character. But think of that man having passed into the unseen world, to take his place among the meaner lost, and to be for ever hearing the taunt from pauper tongues, “Art thou also become even as we? For remember that thou in thy life time hadst thy good things, we our evil ones; we are both tormented together now.” Oh ye rich men, ye prosperous tradesmen, ye hoarding men, ye covetous men, if such there be here to-night, do consider how soon you may be stripped of all that wealth, and go, a naked, pennyless spirit, into eternity; and if you have not employed your wealth (as, if answering to the character I have just named, you have not) for the glory of God, eternally to hear this voice, “Thou hast had thy consolation, now nothing remains for thee.”

**Secondly, LOST SOULS WILL REMEMBER THEIR WORLDLY PLEASURES; their routs and parties, their public and private entertainments, their lawful**

and unlawful gratifications, their scenes of revelry, and seasons of mirth, their home-bred delights, and their fashionable amusements. And will these things throw one ray upon the gloom of everlasting night? Will it blunt the thought of the worm that never dies, or mitigate the fearfulness of the fire that is never quenched? The poet has said, and every man's experience sustains the propriety and truth of the expression, "Of joys departed never to return, oh how painful the remembrance." Conceive of a man of title, and of wealth, and of family, and of enjoyment, suddenly arrested in the midst of his prosperity, by a power that he cannot resist, and hurried away to a dark damp cell, loaded with irons, and left with no other employment than the dreadful one of contrasting the scene that he has left with that to which he has been brought; but terrible, brethren, as the transition seems, that man's case is susceptible of hope; he may yet expect to be redeemed and restored to all that he has lost; if he be a Christian, if this is not within the range of his expectations, he may look to brighter scenes above, that will infinitely more than compensate for all this; or if he be not a Christian, he will look with something like consolation to the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. But think of the votary of this world's pleasure, think of the man of fashion, think of the woman given up to little else than earthly delights, suddenly arrested in their career, and carried into eternity, away from all their pleasures, to a land where no sounds of mirth, no voice of song, no note of music ever breaks upon the ear, where no pleasures of the turf, or of the field, are to be followed, where the card table and the theatre exist no longer, where the merry dance, and the concert of sweet sounds no more are to be enjoyed:

" But darkness, death, and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there."

Oh, to look back on such a scene of delights for ever gone, of pleasures which had no connexion with the moral nature, and therefore no connexion with man's eternal destiny, except it be that dark destiny of lost and miserable spirits. My hearers, accuse me not to-night of the foul purpose of putting out the light of human joy in the abodes of men; tell me not that I came hither to dash the cup of consolation from the lips of mortals, or to infuse the venom of melancholy into it. No; I only speak of those pleasures which the Word of God forbids, and which are put in place of those which the Word of God exhibits. I tell you, that if you neglect and despise religion—I tell you, that if you are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God—I tell you, that if you are not renewed by the Holy Spirit, to taste that the Lord is gracious, and to have joy and peace in believing through Jesus Christ—I tell you, that if you are given up to the enjoyment of a worldly mind and worldly courses, this scene that I am alluding to, awaits you. I am only stepping between you and pleasures that would weigh you down in that world where the sounds of pleasure are never heard. Oh, brethren, there are pleasures presented to you, placed within your reach, which will fit you for pleasures which are for ever, for joys that exist through endless ages, at the right hand of God.

Thirdly, **THE LOST SOUL WILL REMEMBER IN ETERNITY HIS SINS.** The great multitude forget their's now as soon as they are committed; and any man that sets himself down to the task of counting the number of his transgressions, will find he is engaged in as hopeless a work as numbering the stars that burst

on his view on a clear winter's night. There are some sins, in the case of most men, which stand out with peculiar prominence from the rest. Perhaps, in the case of most of us, there are some that we cannot soon forget: God has forgiven them, but we can scarcely forgive ourselves. Is it possible to forget them? We ought not to forget them; the remembrance ought to go through life, for the sake of caution, for the sake of humility. David went back as far as his youth, and said, "Remember not against me the sins of my youth." It is thus the case sometimes with Christians: it is also the case with those who are not Christians; they pass over a multitude of minor transgressions, but perhaps there are some sins they have committed, the recollection of which is painful to them, the recollection is ever rising up in their minds; it occurs in the hours of silence, in the hour of midnight: sometimes in company, remarks are made by individuals who are altogether strangers, but whom they suppose are acquainted with their history, and they imagine what is said is in accusation of them; and in reading, they meet with facts that throw their memories back on these transgressions. It is possible I am addressing some to-night of this character; it is probable I am speaking to some to-night, who, in the hour of temptation, have fallen, and they have fallen grossly and grievously. Now all their peace is blasted, and all their self-respect is gone. Oh that they would forget that one sin; oh that they could hide themselves from the recollection of that one: oh for some Lethean billow to put away a remembrance so painful: they would be willing that the past should be one universal blank, if it could take away the remembrance of that sin. The sting remains; and there is a wound in the conscience, festering and burning, which nothing can heal. Yes; there is balm for that. Before I go on to the application of the idea, let me pause in the train of my thought and representation, to speak to the wounded conscience, of a physician even for that; a balm, even, as I have said, for that deep wound; the blood of Christ can cleanse even from that sin. God saith, "I am willing to blot it out." Give not thyself up to reckless and hopeless despair; look to Him that was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities: Jesus Christ will receive thee, and forgive thee. But think, my hearers, if now it be so painful sometimes to look back on the past, what will it be in eternity, when all the man's sins will rise up in his view, and he must see them; when the voice that he hates, but cannot silence, will go over the catalogue, and be for ever sounding in his ears the sins that he hath committed, the sins of his youth. Oh, think, for ever to hold fellowship with dark thoughts and guilty recollections; to find himself for ever and for ever in the company of his sins. And then you know all the sophistry by which the deceitful heart practises upon the mind of man will be detected; it will no longer be a doubt what sin is; it will no longer be a question whether it be a great and enormous evil, or a trifle. The lurid flashes of perdition will throw light on this subject, and for ever settle the question, that sin is an infinite evil; and then all excuses will be silenced, all pleas will be cut off, and the poor creature will come back to this tremendous reflection, "Sin is as great an evil as it was represented, and I stand without excuse in the commission of it." It is a fearful thing when it is said, God "setteth our sins in the light of his countenance:" it is not less fearful when we are told that he will set them in the light of our own countenance, and we shall see them.

Fourthly, **THE LOST SOUL WILL RECOLLECT IN ETERNITY ITS MEANS OF GRACE, ITS OPPORTUNITIES OF SALVATION, ITS ADVANTAGES FOR OBTAINING ETERNAL LIFE.** Children of the righteous, I speak now to you. Let recollection now begin: call to your remembrance as you sit here, the advantages of a religious nature that you have enjoyed as far back as memory can carry you. You cannot remember the time when a mother began, even upon her knees, to teach your infant mind the principles of the Christian religion. You cannot remember the time when a father's hallowed voice in tones of prayer floated to your early ear. You cannot remember the time when you began to hear of salvation through Jesus Christ, of heaven and hell. If there are children whose parents are such monsters as to forget the eternal welfare of their offspring, you had no such parents. You remember the books that were placed in your hands while yet at home, and the letters that were addressed to you when removed from the vigilance of a father's and a mother's eye. Oh the advantages you have enjoyed! Kept from the society of the wicked, and introduced to that of the righteous; by all that the most judicious, tender, and affectionate treatment could do, trained up for God. Now think of all this being in vain; and, if in vain, all this remembered in eternity, where the recollection can do you no good, but will aggravate your misery. And then think of the religious advantages of a public nature that you have enjoyed. Think of the ministers that you have heard. I speak now to the stated worshippers in this place. Whose bust is that\*? Whose monument is that? Who, by that silent stone, still speaketh, though he is dead to you? The man who, for half a century, here preached the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, and who hath now ascended to his God to give in an account of his stewardship. Oh what addresses, public and private, you have heard from him! And think of the men he called around him to assist him. To say nothing of those who still live, think of those who are now with him for eternity in heaven. Think of the plain, and faithful, and thundering discourses of Theophilus Jones, who so soon followed his venerable co-pastor to his rest and reward, that, as it were by a double voice from the tomb, this congregation and another might be impressed. Think of the good, the wise, the peaceful, the judicious, Mr. Griffin, who has within these last two months passed away to that blessed world to which he had been the instrument of elevating so many immortal souls. These men, and others that have preceded them into the world of spirits, you have heard, and heard them, some of you, in vain. You will never hear them more. Yes, you will: they will preach to you still by the means of your own conscience; that memory, that mysterious faculty of your's, contains all their sermons; though now for a season the remembrance may be lost, the conscience will take them up again in another world—aye, in the world of misery, if you continue in unbelief, and preach them to you again. What subjects you have heard discussed by these men, and others, of the law and the grace of the Gospel! They have knocked by their varied themes at every door of the heart; they have appealed to your hopes and fears: and yet in the case of many it has been in vain. Now then (I want still to give my subject a close bearing on the conscience)—now, I say, think what it will be, for a man who has lived and died and perished in unbelief, under the sound of the Gospel, to spend eternity in counting sabbaths that were lost, and in hearing again sermons that were

\* Pointing to a monument with a bust of the Rev. R. Hill, recently erected behind the pulpit of Surrey Chapel.

once heard, but heard in vain, and hearing them then when they are accompanied with no offer of mercy, no invitation to Christ—when they will only be heard as the knell of past opportunities of salvation, and the sinner will feel, that to have heard them, and to have heard them in unbelief, has increased his condemnation, and sunk him deeper in the bottomless pit.

Fifthly. **THE LOST SOUL IN ETERNITY, WILL REMEMBER ITS IMPRESSIONS, CONVICTIONS, PURPOSES, AND RESOLUTIONS, ON EARTH.** And have not most that hear me, at some period or other, had these impressions, had these convictions? Have there not been moments when, by sermons you have heard, or afflictions by which you have been visited, or events that you have witnessed, or books that you have read, or hair-breadth escapes that have been granted to you, or the counsels of friendship—impressions of a superior nature have been made upon your mind? Were you not, for a season, made conscious of sin, made serious and thoughtful, led to take up the neglected Bible, to pray, to hear sermons? You seemed setting out for the kingdom of heaven; the Spirit strove with you, and you seemed yielding to his influence; the cords of love seemed to encircle your hearts; you appeared to be about to be drawn by them: but as you approached the gate of life, you saw it was narrow, and you observed that the road looked difficult: there was some besetting sin that you had, and you could not give it up; there was some evil companion that solicited you, and you could not abandon him; you were ridiculed, and you had not courage to bear with opposition, and you had not firmness to encounter it; and, oh melancholy spectacle, you were seen turning back, and walking the ways of God no more. Sometimes it is painful to you now to think of this, and you are ready to say, “Oh, that I had never heard that sermon; oh, that I had never had those impressions; oh, that those convictions had never taken hold of my heart! I cannot enjoy my sins as I once did; I am half spoiled for the world, though I am not a member of the Church.” Yes, and you know, that often the scene of festivity, in which others experience no interruption, is marred for you. Then think, young man, think what will be the case in eternity, when a voice shall say, “Son, remember thy impressions; remember thy convictions.” Oh, what a victim of folly will you appear to yourself there; oh, how will you curse that folly, that, when you seemed almost a Christian, when you seemed about to decide for heavenly glory, you suffered yourself to be drawn back. You will appear to yourself, or your conduct will appear, the climax of all folly and madness; to have begun to feel something of the importance of religion and of eternity, and then to have given it up, and through that eternity to have the mind thrown back upon these seeming beginnings of good things, with the recollection that they are lost now for ever!

Thus, my hearers, you see, that memory will then have a very important influence on the punishment of the wicked. Yes; if memory could be lost, half of hell could be lost with it: it is memory that will give the sting to the second death. Let me, for a few moments, present the contrast to this. Memory will go with the righteous to their eternal abode, and it will open to them a source of pleasure not to be conceived. Standing on the summit of Mount Zion, they shall look down the winding path which led to the ascent, and observe every step that they have taken. True it is, that they will recollect that they also sinned: but it will be no tormenting recollection; it will bend them the lower before the throne of the Eternal, and as they sink, their

joys will rise immeasurably high. Humility in a creature is bliss; and the more humility we have, the happier we are: and thus the very recollection of our sins in heaven, will, by producing deeper and deeper humility, be no source of tormenting recollection. We shall be lost in adoring gratitude, and wonder, and joy, at the grace that pardoned and sanctified them. We shall remember all the history of Providence, and all the methods of grace, and the connexion of both: we shall recollect how God seemed following us through all the scenes of our existence, and so uniting them as that all things should work together for our good; we shall remember those sermons that produced the saving impression on our heart, and the names of the preachers that were the honoured instruments of thus doing good to our souls: all the hallowed scenes of piety, through which memory now so delights to travel, will be travelled over again in the celestial world; we shall again enjoy afresh those seasons, and those scenes of communion with God, which have now sanctified many a spot, and made it dearer to us than any other that can be found on the face of the whole world; we shall remember all those victories over sin, and self, and Satan, and the world, through which we were conducted by the omnipotent grace of our God: we shall remember all those seasons of conference and co-operation, which we spent in this world of ours, and then and there see the results of all that we now do for Christ, results which we cannot at present, in our partial ignorance, anticipate; we shall remember all that others have done for us, in the way of good, and all the good that we have done to others, and shall ascribe all the glory to God; we shall see how all things work together for good; the connexion of events; the connexion of our history with the history of the world at large; and memory will be for ever connecting the past with the present—the eternal present—of another world. And thus to the righteous, “Son, remember,” will be a note of joy, which will for ever exhilarate and delight his heart.

Now, my dear hearers, let the preacher place before you, with all affectionate seriousness, for your decision, the question—Will you have your memory your friend in heaven, or your tormentor in hell? Do consider; consider this; it is no imaginary thing; it is what concerns you all; and therefore, do, to-night, decide. Remember now, *remember now*, your sins, and fly for pardon to the blood of Christ. Now the recollection will be beneficial; now the recollection will be the means of salvation. Go home to-night, remembering your sins, and fly for pardon to Christ. Remember the God against whom your sins have been committed; remember Jesus Christ, who waits to save you: remember your possessions, and consecrate them all to God, first giving yourselves to the Lord. Remember your pleasures, and sacrifice all that are sinful, all that are injurious to your soul's best welfare; and come to the possession of that pleasure which now is satisfying without being polluting; and it will be the commencement of endless felicity. Remember your opportunities; oh, they are all presented to you to-night: we speak not of them in the past tense, God *is here*, waiting to be gracious; Christ is here, in the fulness of his mediatorial grace, as the way to the Father; the Spirit is here, waiting to renew and sanctify your hearts: the Bible is here, to direct you in all those high, sacred, and mysterious concerns; the ministers of religion are here, to help you in your flight from the city of destruction, to the city and habitation of God; your parents, young people, are here, seated by your side, **perhaps**, to-night, sending up many an earnest prayer on your behalf; and **perhaps**,

almost turning upon you as the preacher goes on, not with the taunt of Abraham to the rich man, but with all the affection of a father's or a mother's heart, saying, "Son, remember." Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, ere the evil days come in which no place shall be found. Remember now your impressions, your convictions, your resolutions; call them to recollection. Perhaps there are some who have begun to lose them; oh, take them up again to-night; would God the preacher may have come up for this blessed purpose, of retouching and retracing some impressions that have almost vanished from the heart. Oh, begin again to-night; take up again the resolution—"I will serve the Lord;" take up again the purpose of surrendering yourself to him, and becoming his for ever and ever. God grant that this may be the case.

In conclusion, remember—for it is the substance of the sermon—short and uncertain as is your existence in this world, your character is perpetually receiving here the stamp of eternity: and you are all, and always, and every where, and in all things, gathering those materials which must inevitably be the source of the most tormenting, or the most felicitous recollections throughout eternity.

## THE SUFFERINGS, SUCCESS, AND JOY OF MESSIAH.

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REV. W. MARSH, A.M.\*

ST. JAMES' CHAPEL, CLAPHAM, MAY 11, 1834.

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“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”—ISAIAH, liii. 11.

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BLEST as we are with the New Testament Scriptures, we need not ask the question, Of whom speaketh the prophet thus? To our present peace, and to our everlasting happiness, we may know that this chapter testifies of Jesus our Redeemer. It plainly refers to his incarnation, preaching, and ministry; to his rejection, sufferings, and death; to his atonement, mediation, and resurrection; and it predicts the effects of his Gospel, and the extension of his kingdom throughout the world.

We must not wonder that this chapter has been peculiarly honoured in the conversion of the heathen to the faith of Jesus, in the conversion of Jews to the faith of Jesus, in the conversion of infidels to the faith of Jesus: nor must we wonder that this chapter has been the delight of the Church of God in every age, to the believing Church of God under the Old Testament dispensation, and to the believing Church of God under the New. I might also venture to say, with reference to the private meditation of our adorable Lord, with reference to the view that he would take of his own sufferings, and of the glory which should follow—one would almost venture to say, that this chapter would delight Messiah himself; he would thus be encouraged by the views the spirit of prophecy had given respecting his work, and the final success thereof: whence he could say, though his ministry among the Jews would not be very efficacious, and though Israel be not gathered to him, “Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.” Indeed, in the verse preceding my text, it is asserted, “He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.” Thus, while his sufferings were not concealed from his view, neither were his triumphs; and, “for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame,” till he “sat down at the right hand of the throne of God:” and he will finally triumph over our miserable world: “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”

Now, my brethren, I shall call your attention from these words to three simple, yet grand points. We have only to consider his Sufferings, his Success, and his Joy: and if the Holy Spirit of God leads our minds into scriptural views of the sufferings, the success, and the joy of our Redeemer, we shall not only have peace in our minds, but we shall have a powerful motive to lead us to use all the means we can to make known his sufferings, his success, and his joy, to the rest of mankind.

\* Of Birmingham. On behalf of the Church Missionary Society.



Let me then call your attention to **HIS SUFFERINGS.**

“He shall see of the travail of his soul.” No language could be adopted, no figure employed, which could more strikingly set forth the sufferings of Messiah, intimating that they would be fearful, and that the bitterest part of his agonies would be those that he should finally endure in his soul. Had not our Lord some reference to this when he said, “Now is my soul troubled?” The sufferings inflicted on the body of Christ when he died, were so great that they could scarcely be exceeded. He was mocked, scourged, wounded, and subjected to death, even the death of the cross. Thus, if we look only at what was visible, he was indeed, a man of sorrows. But what should we think when we recollect that all his bodily sufferings were as nothing, when compared with the travail of his soul. It is of the travail of his soul that believers are said to be the fruit, because in them consisted the very essence of his sufferings.

These sufferings it is impossible for us accurately to describe: these sufferings could only be known to Him who endured them: yet some notion may be formed from the intimations of Scripture. But the chief was *the loss of the divine countenance*. Hence, when our blessed Lord hung upon the accursed tree, he exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He did not refer to reproach and persecution, for this might have been the case without any desertion. An Apostle could say of himself and of his brethren, “We are persecuted, but *not forsaken*!” they still enjoyed the spiritual presence of God in the midst of all their afflictions. But Messiah was both persecuted and forsaken: and in this desertion consisted much of the travail of his soul. In the work he was to perform, he was to yield himself up body and soul; and he failed not in either part of the condition. As he willingly offered his body to the pains of laceration and crucifixion, so he willingly offered his soul to those of desertion: “He shall make his soul an offering for sin.”

This desertion seems to have consisted in the temporary deprivation of the rich consolations which the gracious presence of the Father had given him through the whole of his previous course. When he spake of the disciples as deserting him, he said, “Yet am I not alone, because the Father is with me.” But now this was no longer the case. The love of the Father could not be withdrawn from him; yea, he loved him as he never loved since he made man; yea, he loved him because he saw man as he had never seen him since the fall of Adam; he saw a man in whom there was no sin; who was holy in his very nature, as well as harmless in his blessed life. I speak with reverence, but I speak with truth, when I say, that God delighted in the man, Christ Jesus. The eye of God had never seen such a man from the time of Adam. But we are told that God loved him especially on this account, that he laid down his life: God loved him because he laid down his life. Oh what a proof is that of God’s love to us, that he is represented as loving Christ because Christ laid down his life for us! Our blessed Lord was actually to bear our iniquity, he was to feel the desert of sin. This indeed, may well be termed the soul of his sufferings. We know that the greater the enjoyment of a blessing, the more acutely is the loss of it felt. Now the children of God who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, groan under the loss of it, when, from any cause—omission of duty, or leaning to unbelief—from whatever cause, when they groan under it, how deeply do they feel this above all afflictions! What then must have been the feelings of that human nature which had enjoyed the divine presence without measure, and knew infinitely better than we how to value and esteem it

The children of God may also be assured, when they lost the light of the divine countenance—as it is said, for trial and correction—so it is in love. Christ endured God's deserved wrath against sin; the sword of Jehovah was sheathed in his bosom; the foretaste of which occasioned him in amazement to exclaim, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death:" therefore "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." This was the fire of heaven in which our great Sacrifice was consumed. It was not the fire of temporal death and bodily suffering, which caused the agonies of our blessed Lord; he could have smiled in the midst of all; yea, he could turn in infinite compassion (and a beautiful instance it was of the compassion of Jesus)—he could turn and say to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." But when he was to be made a curse, when he was to endure the agony of separation from all sense of the divine love, then he was filled with terror and amazement.

Let me remark, before I proceed, that the natural man may taste the bitterness of sin, and may taste in some degree its desert: but if he could not take a proper view of this part of our subject, Christ's thoughts respecting sin and the desert of sin, and that most tremendous part of the punishment of sin, the loss of the enjoyment of the divine countenance—he will be but little affected by it: yet he might learn from what took place on Calvary to flee from sin; and God grant that any who have hitherto thought lightly of it, and have never considered the sufferings of Christ, may be led there to see the desert of it laid upon the Saviour. Of what value, then, is the soul of man, if Jesus thus suffered! What must be the value of the soul if it required such suffering to make atonement! How tremendous must be the pain of eternal separation from the presence of God!

Such were the sufferings of the blessed Lord. Our Church particularly calls our attention to it at one particular season of the year, and from time to time to the celebration of the event of his sufferings. Let us pray that the Spirit of God may take of these things of Christ and show them unto us, that our minds may more and more delight to dwell on the sufferings of Jesus. What peace have we but what we derive from those sufferings? This is the Gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Let our hearts be revived again this morning, after confession of our sins, after petitions for mercy, by the recollection of the sufferings of Jesus, and that those sufferings were to take away our sins.

But my text, like all Scripture, speaks of something more than this; as St. Peter expresses it, "The Spirit of Christ testified before-hand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Let us, then, enter upon that part of our subject, and consider **HIS SUCCESS**.

This is positively promised in the words of my text: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." The fruits of his travail were to be an innumerable progeny of believers, a seed that should serve God. Christ was not to labour in vain, he was not to lay down his life at a venture. The success of his death is secured to him in the "everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure." All that therefore is necessary to the success of our Lord's cause, is put into his own hands—into his own hands as man; into his own hands as Mediator; and therefore he cannot fail of his purpose. I say into his own hands as Mediator, for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." Hence, in the figurative language of Holy Writ. we find

that the Lamb had seven eyes, and seven horns; seven eyes, betokening the plentitude of wisdom, and seven horns, the plentitude of power; and I may say, in his heart is the plentitude of love. Hence, we read, "He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." Hence, we have this last week been celebrating the delightful event, that he ascended on high; that he led captivity captive; that he received gifts for men, even the rebellions, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Hence, we every Sabbath hear it, believe, and live—hear it, believe, and love—hear it, believe, and serve, this blessed Lord. He has all power in heaven and earth: he is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and the travail of his soul must have its reward. Yes, it is an awful consideration for those who are found rejecting this Saviour, that, as far as they can, they do renounce him, and thus rob him of his honour, and make his labour in vain. "All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gain-saying people." Nevertheless, many have still joined him from among these by his personal ministry, for he was seen of five hundred brethren at once, and after the day of Pentecost, by thousands and by myriads; and from that time to this, some from among them, and a glorious harvest from among the Gentiles; and the period will arrive when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and he shall reign for ever and ever. In the mean time, as we have been reading this morning, "the fields are white already unto the harvest." "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

Let us look for a moment at *the past*, and see the partial fulfilment of my text. Our Lord, while preaching to the Jews, could say, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." And what multitudes of different nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, have heard the word of the Lord Jesus, have believed and been saved! Look at the impure Romans, the licentious Corinthians, the sensual Ephesians, the ignorant Philippians, the idolatrous Thessalonians, who were converted in the Apostolic age. If there are, who think it impossible to convert Mohammedans, or Hindoos, let them see the effect of the Gospel of Christ in the former ages. Look at the spirits of the just made perfect; look at the souls under the altar; look at the mansions of Paradise, peopled from our world—poor sinners deserving to be separated for ever from the love and the favour of God, brought to believe in this wonderful Redeemer, brought to conquer every enemy through him; brought to triumph even over the last enemy; knowing that Christ "hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." I say, look at the present people of God in Paradise, as a proof of the success of our Lord's ministry: look at the great preparatory work of our own age in particular. I say *in particular*, for certainly, from the Apostolic age, there has been nothing like it. Our Reformation was a wonderful event, and was preparatory to this, but only preparatory; for that was limited, but the present exertions are unlimited: they are unlimited, I trust, in your prayers, and unlimited in your expectations, and shall be unlimited (in a certain sense) in the final success. Look at the actual success of the various missionary institutions, the revolution in the opinions of men, the expectation of a great change pervading the nations of the earth, whole villages crying for the Gospel even before the Gospel is come among them, and whole islands turning to the Lord. Look at the institution for which I have this morning to plead, and in it you will find converts, not by hundreds, but even by thousands: con-

verts from among the degraded Africans; converts from among the no less degraded, but more reasonable, **Hindoos**; and converts from other tribes and different parts of the earth. It is a society which began with small means (I stand on interesting ground in this part of our country, because, if I mistake not, some of the first consultations took place not far from this spot with reference to the Church Missionary Society) a society which began with small means, and which waited patiently for success; but has been crowned with singular honour, in the spirit and conduct of her missionaries, in the zeal she has excited in the nation, in the many thousands of children she is educating in the Christian faith, and in the whole labour of love in which she is engaged; in which, I pray God, you have taken a part.

Anticipate *future* success. Look at the prospect of the return of Israel. Oh, what a gem will they be in our Redeemer's crown! In the figurative language of the prophet, it is said, "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Look also at the nations of the earth, bowing the knee to Jesus; not only the bowing visibly the knee, but bowing inwardly with the heart, and in enlightened submission.

See, then, what success has taken place, and what success prophecy declares will take place, in the cause of our blessed Lord. Yes, Rome may gnaw her tongue for pain, because she can no longer keep the Scripture to herself; and Mahommed may writhe from agony, because his moon must wane more and more, till it be gone; and infidelity may turn pale as ashes at the prospect of its coming dissolution and certain punishment: for though all these enemies of the Gospel may unite to deceive the nations, yet let the disciples of Jesus triumph, for he must be crowned with success: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

I proceed to call your attention to that which is still more delightful—**III** **Joy**: "He shall be satisfied."

The recovery of lost sinners is a work in which our adorable Lord delights. This was the work the Father sent him to do; and he more than once on earth expressed his satisfaction in accomplishing it. On one occasion, when his disciples pressed him to take food which they had been to procure, he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." During their absence he had been calling a poor Samaritan woman to partake of his salvation. "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish the work." And is it not he himself who, in the parable of the Lost Sheep, is represented as finding one which had strayed, as laying it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and calling his neighbours and friends together to rejoice with him? We are assured that there is joy in the presence of God, when sinners are brought to Jesus: and there should be joy in the hearts of men when they see sinners brought to repentance. The Son of God delighted in the anticipation of this work of love, and on that account, we consider that the written wisdom referred to in Proverbs, viii., may fairly be applied to the Eternal Wisdom. It is Jesus the Wisdom of God, without a doubt, who is represented as "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth," and whose "delights were with the sons of men." Salvation was the great end he had in view. How often have you heard those words from this pulpit (and you never hear them too often)—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Brethren, if it be a pleasant thing to set about a grand object which we propose

to ourselves, it is a satisfaction if we know that that object shall be finally completed. No doubt there is in all cases a delight and satisfaction in proportion to the hopes we have cherished and the labour we have undergone. The difficulties which our Lord had to overcome are represented in very strong language; "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." And when "the travail of his soul" was just at hand, he said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:" and when Peter would have dissuaded him from suffering, our Lord rebuked him, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Let me again observe, that we delight in the accomplishment of a work in proportion to the danger with which it is effected: And assuredly the joy of Christ must be great on this account. I love to think of the joy of his human nature as well as the joy of his divine nature, especially when I think of what he suffered for men, of what he suffered for me, of what he suffered for Jew and Gentile. I delight to think of the joy of that human nature, on his own account, as well as that it is the medium of joy to all that believe in him. The joy of Christ was exceedingly great: never was such sorrow undergone before; and surely his joy must have been in proportion. Yes, it is his chief delight to "see of the travail of his soul."

Let me add that our Lord rejoices when he sees his people sending forth his Gospel, and that Gospel prevailing among the heathen, sinners converted by that Gospel—washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God: I say he is satisfied. And when he shall come again with all the ensigns of glory, with what delight will he contemplate the bliss of his redeemed! "Behold me, and the children whom thou hast given me." "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: enter into the joy of your Lord." The zeal of Christ for the glory of God, and the love of Christ for the souls of men, would cause him to delight in such fruits of his labour. When he was born, angels sung, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men." When he was about to die he could say, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." And when his purchased possession shall be redeemed from the grave, his triumph will be complete: he will joy over them with joy and singing, and for ever rest in his love. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

Let us now turn to the subject by way of application.

First, *our obligations to Christ*. He has taken pleasure in our welfare and happiness: he willingly endured the bitterest sufferings for our sakes: and what is there that we should be unwilling to do, or that we should be unwilling to suffer, for his sake! Will not the love of Christ constrain us? Will it not constrain us to be his disciples, whatever difficulties or dangers may attend us? Will it not constrain us to take up the cross, to deny self, and to follow him? But you are not exposed, as the primitive Christians were, to such difficulties and dangers. But will not pleasures, will not lusts, will not passions, be crucified with him? Will not labours, and duties, and exertions, be readily engaged in for him? Oh, let us consider our obligations to Christ! Oh, that we may all come to such a knowledge of him as to exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee:" "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:" "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge

of Christ Jesus my Lord." Oh, that we may so consider our obligation, that, believing we are thus redeemed by his sufferings, we may be ready to exclaim, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" All are not called to serve with reference to missions; but I pray that the Spirit of God may call many forth, who will be ready to say to their Redeemer who suffered, many who are led to delight in the thought of his success and of his joy, "Here am I; send me." The command has been repeated this day, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth more labourers into his harvest." If you thus pray, we hope that, from time to time, many will be raised up ready to say, "Here am I; send me."

But, with reference to *all*, are you not ready, while you believe in a Saviour's sufferings for your sins, while you delight in his success, while you would participate in his joy, are you not, as it were, saying, "Here is my property, take the due proportion of it for this good work. Here is my influence—be it rank, be it talent, be it wealth, be it what it may—whereby it can glorify thee, and make thee known upon the earth: employ it, O Lord, to promote thy glory, and to benefit my fellow men." God grant that we may more and more feel our obligations to our Saviour Christ!

Let us learn to *follow the example of our Saviour Christ*. In that way we shall best exhibit the sense we have of our obligation to him. Did his soul travail, and is he satisfied with the conversion and salvation of sinners? And shall we never travail in prayers, in labours, in exertions, for the same great object? Let evil spirits envy, let wicked men oppose, let luke-warm Christians sit at their ease; but do you, beloved brethren, imitate your Saviour, and beseech men to be reconciled to God. Yet a little while, and nothing else can give satisfaction but the salvation of Christ, and the great results of it. Oh, let it give satisfaction now. We are not in the habit of recommending from the pulpit other books than the Bible; yet I could wish that our Monthly Records, and our Missionary Register, were read by our people at large, that they might see what great things are going on in our world. Oh, be not luke-warm; be not like the silly virgins, without oil in their vessels with their lamps; be not like the antediluvian world, occupied by the things of time and sense; but consider what great encouragement you have, to go to the Saviour for *your own salvation*. You have been praying this morning, "By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us." Be it your prayer till you enjoy the fulness of Christ. Consider what encouragement you have to go to this wonderful Redeemer, the Lord of the Jew, the Lord of the Gentile, the Lord over all, rich unto all that call upon his name. And what an opening you have to ask for *the salvation of others*. And when you hear of success, say, "God be praised:" and when you hear of missionaries going forth, say, "The Lord be with them:" and when you hear the promise of victory, say, "Thy kingdom come:" and when you hear of the sufferings of Jesus for sinners, will you not say, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen."

Oh, dear brethren, if you are looking to our Lord Jesus for salvation, if you feel your obligation to that wonderful Saviour, if you feel constrained to follow his example and his life, if you can thus take a practical interest in his cause, I have only now to add, that you shall eternally rejoice where "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

## GRACE AND TRUTH.

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REV. W. JAY

SURREY CHAPEL, MAY 15, 1834\*.

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“ Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”—JOHN, i. 17.

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“ THERE was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” A portion of his testimony is here recorded. John cried, saying, “ This was he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which was preferred before me. for he was before me.” Now with regard to his birth, we know that John was before Jesus; he was also before him with regard to his preaching and shewing unto Israel. The allusion, therefore, is to a state of being before his appearance in the flesh; concerning which Micah had said, “ His goings forth were of old from everlasting;” concerning which he himself hath said, “ Before Abraham was I am.” Then the testimony adds, “ And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” This shews that John does not refer only, or principally, to a fulness of personal endowment and qualification, but to a fulness of communicated influence. I would say, that he was not only full, but rich; not only rich, but diffusive; that as it had pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, so his fulness was not a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, but an open spring, a flowing fountain, pouring forth streams to refresh millions, and to replenish the Church of God to the end of time.

The testimony goes on further, and says, “ For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” We shall here waive the comparison between Moses and Jesus Christ, personally considered, and also the contrast many have supposed was here instituted between the ministry of the one, and the ministry of the other, in order to dwell much (for we have much before us, and the place is crowded) in order to dwell much on two things, in which we are all very deeply concerned, and a professed regard to which has brought together this vast assembly—“ Grace and truth.” Let us first ask how these came, and then what we are to do with them now they are come?

In answer to the first of these enquiries, How THESE CAME? we are expressly assured, that they came by Jesus Christ: “ Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Let us begin with *truth*. What is truth? This is a question Pilate once asked, and it is a question which many still ask: but as he did not stay for an answer, so they betray equal carelessness with regard to the result. The shortest and easiest way of answering the question, according to some, would be, for each religious party to exhibit its own creed, and censure and exclude the

\* Anniversary Sermon for the London Missionary Society.

claimants of every other. But candour would lead a man to conclude, that all these parties have it, and that none of them have it; that all of them have is partially, and none of them have it wholly. Thus it is with philosophers with regard to nature, metaphysicians with regard to mind, and historians with regard to facts. I consider the Gospel as a system too vast for the finite mind to take in at once: and so people have used it as children use a large mirror; unable to carry it away whole, they break it into pieces: all of them going away with fractions, one calls out, "I have the glass;" a second says, "I have the glass;" and a third says, "No; but I have the glass;" the fact is, that the glass consisted of all these parts. But we shall now (though no one has a large portion) we shall now re-unite all these, and present the mirror undefiled and uninjured. But we feel no kind of embarrassment this morning with regard to truth; we refer to the creed of no party, no Church, no council; we allude to what all profess to receive; we allude to the Gospel itself. This is truth this morning with us. But how did this truth come? By Jesus Christ.

Let us glance at four articles. There is first *the truth of performance, in distinction from engagement*. You read of the promise made unto the fathers; you meet with it every where in the Old Testament. It was first announced in Paradise, in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; it was renewed and enlarged from time to time with regard to Abraham, Moses, and David, and the prophets; for those discoveries were like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Yet there is a difference between the existence of the promise and the fulfilment; and therefore you read, that even the elders who "obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, (that is, the accomplishment), God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Therefore our Saviour addressing his disciples, comparing their state, not with that of the heathen, but with the Jews, says, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears for they hear."

There is, secondly, *the truth of reality, in distinction from prefiguration*. This truth came by Jesus Christ. The Jews were children; God treated them as you deal with your infants, when you address their senses as well as their understanding, and place pictures over their lessons in order to allure, and impress, and explain. They had various types and ceremonies, leading their minds from things natural to things spiritual, from things earthly to things heavenly. The Apostle says, in reference to this, the law was "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things:" not the reality. A shadow depends upon the body, derives its very form from the body; but it has no power in itself, and it is an obscure and imperfect representation of the substance. This was precisely the case with the law; its carnal ordinances and observances, had no efficiency to save or to sanctify: the value of the services were derived entirely from their relation to the Messiah, but for whom they would never have been established, but for whom they could have had no use: they were not founded on any physical, or civil, or moral reason; and therefore in themselves would have been unprofitable, and vain, and absurd. And hence the Socinians, who deny their allusive design, always speak in the most contemptuous manner of them: but by means of these, doubtless, the spiritual among the Jews were enabled to hold communion with God; though in what degree it is impossible for us to decide. As to ourselves they are full of pleasing and interesting instruction; having the clue we can explain them,



having the reference we can perceive the resemblance. We are in possession of the truth of all these: the truth of the paschal lamb, in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; the truth of the manna, in the true bread that came down from heaven; the truth of the rock that foiled the Jews in the wilderness, for that rock was Christ; the truth of the altar and mercy-seat, of the tabernacle, of the temple, for Christ is all and in all.

Thirdly, *there is the truth of certainty, in distinction from error and falsehood.* This truth came by Jesus Christ. What was heathenism? An assemblage of falsehood—false gods, false temples, false sacrifices, false hopes, and false fears. A great deal of them was indeed originally derived from revelation; but it was so obscured, that the Apostle tells us, it was “turning the truth of God into a lie.” What was Mahometanism? Mahometanism was a vast improvement upon paganism, especially in the establishment of the divine unity; and unquestionably, there was really such a man as Mahomet; a man of great talent he must have been, or he could not have emerged from such obscurity and weakness, into such splendour and power; but that his communications were from God, that his puerile, depraved, polluted, sensual notions were divinely inspired, is all a lie. What is Popery? Take her traditions, which they place upon an equality with the Scriptures: their relics of the saints; in some of the churches they are little better than charnel houses: their purgatory, which, as Dr. South says, is the Pope’s kitchen: the holiness and infallibility of the pretended successor of St. Peter: their boasted miracles:—what are all these but, as the Apostle says, “lying wonders?”

There are other theories, equally false, if not equally foolish. What is the scheme of justification by works, but a lie—a proud lie? What is the system of those who, as Mrs. More says, by a patent of their own creation, call themselves the *rational dissenters*, but a lie—a murdering lie? What is antinomianism, which aims at the very destruction of Christianity, but a lie—a damnable lie? But the Gospel is truth—the truth: and if there are any here this morning, who are disposed to question this truth, we would just say to them, (for we cannot enlarge) you must allow that the Gospel is possibly true; you sometimes feel the evidence, more frequently than you are willing, that it is probably true; but we say it is *certainly* true. And where do we stand when we say this? Where we can point to the blood of the best of men, who have died in its defence, and to the talents of the greatest of men, who have employed their abilities in its support; where we can appeal to the prophecies, many of which have been accomplished, and some of which are now fulfilling; to miracles, numerous and publicly performed, in the presence of those who were interested in the detection of them; to the character, and grandeur, and divinity, the consistency and harmony of the parts; to the purity, and the benevolence, and the happiness of its precepts. What, then, can we think of those who would employ their unhallowed zeal to rob us of such a treasure, and when they know they have nothing to substitute in the room of it; who, by their criminal misrepresentations, would endeavour to make others believe, and especially the rising young, what they do not, and cannot believe themselves—that a system so wise in its contrivance, so holy in its nature, and so benevolent in its tendency, so conducive to promote the private and public, the personal and relative, happiness of man, is a cunningly-devised fable, the offspring of a **weak** and wicked man? Oh, let us pray that God would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may be saved, and that they may be delivered from the snares of the devil, who are taken captive by him

Lastly, *there is the truth of importance, in distinction from all other truth.* This truth came by Jesus Christ. Things may be equally true, and yet not equally valuable. That two and two make four, is as true as the being of God; but is it equally important? You are commanded to buy the truth; now you would give much more for some truths than others, as you could turn them into much more account in the spiritual merchandize. If many of our modern notions were as true, as I believe them perfectly false, I should always deem them unworthy of my principal earnestness; for what good have they done, are they doing, can they do, compared with repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ? A wise understanding should discriminate, should distinguish things that are diverse, and—oh, my brethren, how much this concerns us, when shall we learn this—to distinguish in preaching, not only between the true and the false, but between the true and the true. There is a great deal of truth in the world; a great deal of physical truth, of historical truth, of moral truth: I lay my hand upon the Bible, and say, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” This is the truth emphatically; the truth as it is in Jesus; truth the most honourable to God, for it brings glory to God in the Highest, when it proclaims peace on earth, and good-will towards men: truth the most suited to man, the most adapted to his state of existence; so that if he is enslaved, it brings him relief; if he is guilty, it brings him the righteousness of Christ; if he is perishing for want, it brings him the bread and water of life, if he is nothing, it brings him the unsearchable riches of Christ: truth the most influential, reaching the heart, as well as the ear; not only convincing and informing, but also sanctifying; dedicating the man entirely to the service of God by its influence. We know that philosophers, whatever celebrity they may possess, could not bring over the inhabitants of a single village to live according to their maxims and rules; but go to Corinth, go to Philippi, go to Thessalonica, and other places, after the fishermen of Galilee had been there preaching the kingdom of God, how many were there who were washed, who were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God? It is the same now; even now, where this same truth is received in the love of it, there we find the swearer learns to fear an oath, the sabbath-breaker calls the sabbath a delight, the careless becomes prayerful: not only is the profligate made moral, but the proud humble, the avaricious liberal; they who were walking by sight, walk by faith; they who minded earthly things, have their conversation in heaven. Blessed be God, “we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” Truth; the most beneficent truth. Solomon says, “In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;” but David says, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.” The man is happy; happy in the experience, as well as happy in the notion; happy in solitude; happy in trouble; happy even in death; death is turned into everlasting gain, and he rejoices in the prospect of eternal life. My brethren, here is truth that deserves the name, and we do not wonder that the Apostle, (and he was a good judge) should so prize it as to say, “Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;” we do not wonder that God should magnify his word above all his name, and that he is determined that all shall know it, from the least even to the greatest.

Let us pass from truth to *grace*. Grace means favour; and especially

undeserved favour; indeed, without this it cannot be grace. Grace is the darling word of inspiration, and is unspeakably dear to all those who feel their spiritual condition. But how did this grace come? By Jesus Christ. First, because *he revealed it*; he published it as a doctrine, and he gave clearer and fuller views of it than was ever heard before. Read, therefore, the verse instantly following our text: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." In the Old Testament, we find God commonly spoken of as "the Almighty;" "the everlasting God;" "the Lord of Hosts:" but in these last days, when he hath spoken to us by his Son, you find him represented as "the Father;" the lovely Father of the human race; dooming none of his offspring to endless misery, but those who insist upon going there. The Saviour, when he prayed, said, "Our Father;" he called him thus as the Father of all mercy, and God of all grace. What views does he give us of him, for instance, in the parable of the Prodigal Son; there we see that he is not an arbitrary and implacable tyrant, but an affectionate Father, offended and grieved, but willing to receive the returning prodigal, yea, seeing him afar off, running to meet him, and falling upon his neck, and kissing him; and not only clothing, but adorning him; not only ordering a feast, but killing the fatted calf; in an ecstasy of pleasure, saying, "Because this my son was dead and is alive, was lost and is found." What can be so delightful as to sit at the feet of a teacher sent from God, and hear him talk of the extent and vastness of the paternal care and kindness of God—that he clothes the grass, that he adorns the lily, that he hears the raven's cry, that the sparrow falls not to the ground without our heavenly Father's notice, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered? "Never man spake like this man;" grace was poured into his lips. Grace came by Jesus Christ, and it was this grace that gave such a charm to his teaching, especially among the lower and the afflicted ranks of mankind. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes:" his authority was not the authority of the hammer, breaking the rock in pieces, but the authority of the spring, melting the rigour of winter, bending the severity of the frost, and fetching out all into life and loveliness. Therefore we are told that the poor have now the Gospel preached unto them; that the common people heard him gladly: they were now delivered from the doctors; they were now saved from the curse of intellectual, fine, dazzling, high, hard preaching. They now found that grace had come down from heaven to earth, and after it they go: if he crosses the lake, they go round by the land to meet him; if he passes the road, they climb the tree; if they have knowledge that he is in the house, they enter in by the roof; if he preaches by the sea-side, he gets into a boat and they listen by the shore. Now the poor are told of riches within their reach; he informs the vulgar and mean of a kingdom that they might inherit; and to those who were weary, worn with the traditions of the elders, and with the oppressions of the worldly, and with the sorrows of life, he said, with a voice as soft as the ether in Paradise, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Grace came by Jesus Christ, secondly, because *he is the effect of it*. Hear his own testimony: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." Hear his own inspired servant Paul: "To shew in the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus." The earth on which we dwell is full of his goodness: his goodness appears in providing us not only with relief, but with indulgence: he might have rendered

our food as disagreeable as medicine; but he hath rendered it as pleasant as it is necessary: all our senses might have been the ministers of wretchedness; but, says he, "There, go, and scent these fragrances, taste those fruits, let the ear be filled with those delightful sounds, and the eye gaze upon those beauteous things;" and he giveth us richly all things to enjoy. But, my dear hearers, spiritual blessings are infinitely above these in their nature and in their value; and what is the chief of these, but the consolation of Israel, the desire of all nations, the hope of all the ends of the earth? Grace comes by the sun, and all the blessings God gives us; grace comes by friendship, and the charms of it: "but thanks be unto God for his *unspeakable gift*." Herein is love, herein hath God commended his love towards us: "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up freely for us all, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Grace came by Jesus Christ, thirdly, *because he was the medium of it*. He is the Mediator, you know, between God and man; the channel of all his communications to us. God was under no obligation to save us, and therefore it follows that he had a right to determine the way in which he would be gracious to the guilty; and as he had the right, so he had the power. Jesus Christ, and he alone, knew what became his perfections, and his relation; for his understanding is infinite, and his judgment is always according to truth. We, my brethren, are never so liable to err, as when we undertake to be the conservators of the divine character, and to decide what it becomes God to do in any particular instance, for he does not take council of us. But it is otherwise if he himself interpose; if he gives us his own judgment, then we are bound to acquiesce, if he says, "Such a course became me." And has he not told us in his word, that "it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering;" that "it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, in all things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people?" The question, therefore, is not (when will our enemies remember this?) whether our God is gracious, or whether his grace is to be preached, or whether his grace is the source of our salvation, (for who ever denies this?) but the question is, whether God has ordained and revealed the way in which alone he will wait to be gracious, and be exalted, in his mercy upon us; and if this be the case, whether anything but ignorance and pride can lead us to oppose it, or anything but wretchedness and ruin can result from our opposition to it. Here again we are informed in words too many, and in phrases too plain, to need the aid of philosophy to decipher, that Christ has once suffered for man, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" that "now in Christ Jesus, we, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;" that "we have boldness of access with confidence by the faith of him." Every thing that is worthy the name of grace, do you not in the Scriptures find it flowing from his mediation? Is it the purpose of our salvation? This was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Is it the exceeding great and precious promises? They are all "yea and amen" in Christ Jesus. Is it redemption? "In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Is it justification? "By him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Grace came by Jesus Christ, lastly, *because he is the exemplifier of it*. Now

I know not what kind of body Jesus Christ had, whether it was tall or short, whether it was full or slender, whether it was plain or beautiful: as far indeed, as beauty depends upon the expression of the inward sentiment, he must have been fairer than the children of men: but I know what kind of a mind he had, what soul he had; that

“His heart was made of tenderness,  
His bowels melt with love;”

I go back to the prophecies given before-time, and there I read, “He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth:” “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” I then go forward, and look into his history, and there I only see grace. What is the image of his person? A lamb. What is the emblem of his Spirit? A dove. What is the character of his kingdom? Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I turn to his miracles, and I find these were not displays of wrath, nor of the pride of mere power; they were desirable, they were useful, they were necessary, they were merciful, they were gracious. Who can read his history without feeling this? Here he has compassion upon the multitude, because they have nothing to eat, and have come from afar; and he made the hungry men, women, and children, in a fine secluded scenery, on a fine summer’s evening, sit down upon the grass, and fed them with food. Here a blind beggar sitting by the way side, finding that he was passing by, cries, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me;” and the multitude rebuked him, and told him to hold his peace; but Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be brought to him:—the sun in nature once stood still, to enable a great general to finish a great victory: here the Sun of Righteousness stands still while an act of kindness is performed, and he the performer too. “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” “Lord that I may receive my sight: and Jesus said unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” There is one thing that is surely worthy of notice with regard to the character of our Saviour’s miracles, it may be called the tenderness and the delicacy of their kindness. I wish I could explain this as it stands in my own mind. You all know how people feel when they have a dear relation, especially if it be an only one: well, Lazarus was an only brother; the ruler’s daughter was an only child: the young man of Nain was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: had our Saviour when he had compassion on her, ordered him to become his follower and attendant, and taken him away, she even then would be grateful; she might have said, “He would have been the greatest support on which I could have leant as I walk down into the valley of years, and travelled towards the tomb of my husband; but it is enough, he is alive.” But what did Jesus? He delivered him to his mother. When the demoniac was dispossessed, he came to our Saviour, and besought him, that he might be with him; and he would have been a monument of his power, a trophy of his mercy: but the poor wretch had been more than dead to all his friends and relations a long time, and they would be glad at heart to see him; and therefore, Jesus says, “No; go home to thy house, and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had mercy on thee.”

Surely grace came by Jesus Christ. You see it in his behaviour towards those who were his own: though they often tried him and offended him, yet he bore with their miscarriages; he loved his own who were with him in the world, even to the end. When he was in the garden of Gethsemane and found them

sleeping, he said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." When Peter denied him under circumstances of peculiar aggravation, in the very midst of his trial; he turned and looked upon him with a love that broke his poor heart; for the look said to him, "Peter, with all thy faults, I love thee still, and am going to die for thee:" "and Peter went out and wept bitterly." And so after his resurrection he is mentioned by name: "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee." Nor was his grace confined to his own; "he went about doing good." While he was the enemy of sin he was the friend of sinners. The woman that was a sinner, when he dined with the Pharisee, seemed afraid to look him in the face, stood behind him weeping, and washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head; and he said, "Thy sins which are many, are all forgiven thee: go in peace." When the Jews had now rejected his ministry, and were going to hang him upon a tree, when he drew near to Jerusalem he wept over it. When he was going to Calvary, he said to the women weeping, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." When they were driving the nails through his hands and feet, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." A poor wretch was crucified along with him; a malefactor, a thief, and probably a murderer; he is about to pass into another world; his soul is full of horror, and his body full of pain; he is about to enter the shadow of death, and the second death is rapidly following on the first; but there hung at his side grace; grace was suspended between him and hell; and no sooner did he pray "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," than he heard the word, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." How dissatisfied I am with this sketch of the scene. But you see that grace came by Jesus Christ. How wonderful was it that mankind did not perceive that he was the image of the Invisible God. How was it that they did not acknowledge that God was manifest in the flesh to dwell with man?

Grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ; **WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THEM NOW THEY ARE COME?** We must do something with them, or they will have something to do with us very soon. My brethren, you can never too frequently or seriously reflect, that the introduction of the Gospel has placed you in a condition the most serious: I often compare it with the possession of immortality; the immortality of the soul of man is the substratum of his happiness or misery. He may render it either his greatest curse or his greatest blessing, according to the use he makes of it; but he cannot divest himself of it. You may grow weary of life, and you may say, "Well, I will end my existence:" but you cannot end your existence; you have recourse to the rope, the river, the razor; and what have you done now? You take the pistol, and at the explosion of it, the body is destroyed; but this is only the outhouse. Where is the inhabitant? In existence still; grasped by the hand of the Almighty, and presented before the bar of God. So it is with the Gospel; having come into contact with it, you cannot shake it off. You say, you will hear it no longer; but you have read it, you have heard it; and what is to be done with this fact? Can you deny, can God himself deny, the truth of the occurrence? No; it will be a fact for ever, that you were born in a Christian country, that you have read and heard the word of eternal life. Can the thing be undone? You say, "Oh, if it could be undone!" I would say, Nay; but the fact must remain the most interesting of all facts in your eternal condition; remember this. You see, therefore, that the savour of life unto life, may become

the savour of death unto death; the Gospel of your salvation may be the means of enhancing your condemnation, and increasing your guilt. "He that despised Moses' Law," says the Apostle, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" "It will be more tolerable," says our Saviour, "for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for such."

Well, grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ; I ask again, what are we to do with them? First, to receive them; secondly, to exemplify them; and thirdly, to diffuse them.

First, we are to *receive* the dispensation. You ask how it is to be received? The very subject will explain itself. What is grace and truth? Not grace without truth, nor truth without grace, but truth *and* grace in connexion. The Apostle has remarked this in another place, where he says, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It is truth, and therefore you are to receive it with the firmness of conviction and assent: the greater the news, the more evident assurances are necessary to establish it, that it is true as to its object. It was thus originally regarded; the original receivers of it no longer floundered in the mud or mire, they felt their feet set upon a rock; their goings were established; a new song was put into their mouths; they received the truth, as it was in truth, the Word of God. Their confidence in it was equal to the reality; we are told that it was "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:" yea, their works prove, not only the reality, but the degree of their confidence in God to be such, that they ventured all upon it; all for time, and all for eternity. Do we thus receive it? Are we thus convinced? Can we say that we know that we are of the truth, and can assure our hearts before him? Then it is grace; and therefore it is to be received, not with the firmness of conviction and assent only—this would be sufficient if the Gospel were merely the decision of a problem, or the admission of a curious point in divinity, the knowledge of which is merely necessary to inform the judgment—the Gospel brings us glad tidings of great joy, and therefore it is impossible to receive it properly, unless we receive it with cordiality, with gratitude, and with joy. It was thus regarded originally; the original receivers of it, how did they embrace it? The Apostle not only taught the Galatians, but he made them blessed by his preaching: the jailer, who a few hours before found his soul filled with horror and hell, received the word in joy, believing with all his house: the Thessalonians received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. It was universally the case then: they believed, and believing they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory: they knew the truth, and the truth made them free; free from the burden of guilt; free from the torment of sin; free from worldly anxieties and future forebodings: they were careful for nothing; the peace of God which passeth all understanding kept their hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. They were happy without the vanities and dissipations of the world; they were borne up under their trials; they gloried in tribulation also; they triumphed in the valley of the shadow of death. Do we thus regard the Gospel? Do we thus receive it? Is it the same Gospel they had which we have? Do we receive it as they received it? Are there not thousands called, alas, by the Christian name, who, if you were to judge them by their actions, would consider the Gospel

to be neither truth nor grace? They neither seem to believe the one, nor feel the other.

Then, secondly, you are to *exemplify* them. The Apostle says to the Romans, "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Have your ministers never informed you, with Doddridge, Macknight, and other modern translators, that this passage may be rendered, "Ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrines into which ye have been delivered?" The allusion is to melted metal; when this is poured into the mould, it does not come out as it went in, but brings out the image of the model; and as it is employed by the Apostle it means, that under the agency of the Spirit, we are softened from our natural hardness to receive divine impression, and that we are fashioned and changed into the very character of the Gospel, so that we realize it, embody it, render it visible and palpable; so that we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, not by adding any thing to it, but by shewing what it is in itself. Yes; whatever the Gospel be, therefore, we are required to copy it; if the Gospel be light, we are to be illuminated; if it be salt, we are to be seasoned; if it be love, we are to be lovely; if it be holiness, how holy and happy ought we to be; if it be truth and grace, we are to be true and gracious; truth and grace are to be displayed by us, and our tempers, our speech, and our carriage are to be distinguished by it. There are some who have clear views, firm convictions, who are sincere and open in their profession, who are children of the light and of the day; that is they are all the truth; but then they are not kind, not tender, not forbearing not forgiving, do not restore a fallen brother in the spirit of meekness; they despise the day of small things; they are not all that grace requires. But surely the perfection of Christian character arises from the union, and the harmony, and the proportion of these excellences. Why, in your zeal for orthodoxy, should you renounce charity and candour? Dr. Watts has a beautiful little book, entitled, "Charity and Orthodoxy United." Is it not possible to combine these? Why cannot mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other in ourselves, as well as in our creed? Are we not commanded to seek truth and peace; and did not the first Christians speak the truth in love? And did they not exclaim "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" And cannot you build without pulling down? Is there no medium between the extremes of those people who have no essentials in their religion, and others who have no circumstantials in their religion? It would be more fit and proper, in the character of a Christian and a minister, to unite these excellences, and to display them in the world, in the Church, in the family, in all the habitual intercourse of life, and be thus manifestly the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men, full of grace and truth. There have been such characters; there has been a Leighton; there has been a Watts, a Doddridge, a Howe, a Hervey, a Newton, a Townsend, a Hill, a Winter, and many others who may be found, who, through faith and patience, mercy, grace, and truth, now inherit the promises.

Lastly, you are required also to *extend and diffuse* them. For, need I say, that though grace and truth have come into our world by Jesus Christ, and have entered our favoured country, and are now surrounding us, that this is not the case with all; that there are millions, and thousands of millions, who have never, to this hour, heard that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world? But are they to remain ignorant always? Are they not bone of



our bone, and flesh of our flesh? Did not He who made us in the womb, make them? Is not our Redeemer the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world? Have they not souls as well as we? Do they not need salvation as well as we? Are they not capable of it as well as we? Are they not exposed to an awful futurity hereafter? and are they not now involved in all the calamities of life, without having any of the comforts of the Holy Ghost? Infidels say, we never can have to deal with them; you well know, that formerly they always opposed Christianity, because it was a partial revelation; and now, since endeavours have been made to render it an universal one, they contend, that all this is entirely useless; that either the condition of the heathen does not require it, or that their religion is safe enough, and good enough for them: but is this your belief? While philosophy sneers at the seriousness of our apprehensions about the heathen, there are professors of religion who have made so many concessions that they have reduced the importance of evangelical exertion; and there are others that harbour a kind of doubt that paralyzes their zeal, and would lead them to effect their object, not by the truth, but by some other system than the Gospel. In answer to which, we would reply, that if there be another system, it must be either secret or revealed; if it be secret, we can know nothing about it, and therefore can say nothing about it; and if it be revealed, I would ask where it is revealed. Is it here? "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby they can be saved." Is it here? "No man cometh unto the Father but by me;" "No other foundation can any man lay than that is laid." Is it necessary to limit, however, the Holy One of Israel, and to deny that God is able to save the heathen? May we not add, that the influence of Christianity, as a fact, may be known more extensively in some cases, than its influence, as a revelation, in others? If those who die in a state of infancy are saved, they are saved *through* Christianity, but not *by* it. Yet let us take two facts, and put them together for a moment, and we shall see that there is enough in the state of the poor heathen, to wake up all our compassion. The one is (and this is a thing no one will deny) that there must be a preparation for future blessedness, in order to the enjoyment of it; in other words, that without holiness, no man can see the Lord: and the other is, the actual condition in which they are, according to all credible testimony. I remember Mr. Ward saying, "We scarcely have ever seen an act like what we call virtue and morality, since we have been in the East." This accords with the representation of Scripture; the Bible never speaks of idolatry as a foolish and absurd thing only, concerning which, perhaps, all would be agreed; but it speaks of it always in connexion with wickedness, with cruelties, and impurities, which decency and feeling will not allow us to expatiate upon. According to them, idolatry is iniquity personified; it is the devil deified, it is hell itself brought upon earth in a religious establishment. You, therefore, Christians, must believe, that these persons must be perishing for lack of knowledge, that they are in darkness, and the regions of the shadow of death, and that a great trumpet must be blown to those, that those may come who are ready to perish. And does not the command of God take hold upon us, the same as the disciples—"Go, teach all nations; go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?" You often wonder at the little extension of the Gospel upon earth; you often talk of the mysteriousness of the fact: it is indeed mysterious with regard to God; but let us leave him

to explain and justify himself; he will be able to do it: but there is no mysteriousness in it with regard to us; it is undeniable that we have shamefully neglected our duty. We are bold to say, that had the Christian Church followed up her original orders, the Gospel would long ago have reached all the ends of the earth. Are we not enjoined, as we have opportunity, to do good unto all men? and will you believe that the occasion is not good, or that you have not the opportunity of ministering a portion to it? There are many here this morning, I know there are, who are the real subjects of divine grace; to these I would say, my brethren, what is there to be overcome in the heart of another, that has not been overcome in your heart? Every unregenerate sinner is a pagan world in himself; and every converted one is a witness for God, that the wilderness and solitary place can be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. But we will not confine ourselves to personal experience; I would ask any candid inquirer, and I would ask you, cannot the means which have done a part of the work already, do the whole, if they are properly applied? Is there any thing to be overcome in other countries, that has not been overcome in our own country? And how was ours originally evangelized? Was it by miracles? No; but by the blessing of God upon means and resources far inferior to those we possess. We remember when it was said, that you may as well try to turn the sea, as think of breaking the castles of the East; and yet the castles have been broken, and a company of priests have been turned unto the Lord. We well remember when it was said, You may as well send missionaries among the brute creation, as think of civilizing and christianizing the character of the Hottentots and Caffres; but Hottentots and Caffres have been civilized and christianized. If you ask for a nation that has changed her gods, or what were no gods, we must look to the South Seas, and see how men there have cast their idols to the moles and to the bats. Oh, we remember the taunt this service was exposed to, when it was said, "What do these feeble Jews? for if but a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone walls:" we said, "Hear, O our God, for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head." What is the fact now? The hoofs of all the elephants in the East could not throw down our stone wall. Oh, "God hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Do you, my friends, need encouragement? Has not peace been making crooked things straight, and the rough places plain? Have not the discoveries of science, and the progress of commerce, prepared our way in every direction? Has not government been influenced to yield permission, and afford countenance and assistance? Do our missionaries now, when they go forth, feel themselves banished? Are they cut off for ever from their connexions? Do they plunge only into dangers and perils? Park, poor Park—Lander, poor Lander—these have fallen victims in pursuing their several enterprises; but it is a remarkable fact, for which we ought to be thankful, that to this very hour, no missionary has been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Do you need certainty? You *only* possess certainty, you *only* labour at a certainty; all others are uncertain, whether they are statesmen, or lawyers, or politicians; all these labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity; but here, anxiety is vain and improper; "He must reign until all his enemies are made his footstool."

Let us attend, for a moment, a little more to this. If our cause, my brethren, was not of God, then might we well be afraid; we ought to be afraid; and the sooner we were afraid, then, the better: but our cause is the cause of grace and

truth, and therefore, every unfallen being, every renewed being, is in our work, and the God of all truth and grace is on our side ; and he has given the heathen for his Son's inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession ; and he loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand, that he might be able to seize, and cultivate, and enjoy his possession : and though as yet we see not all things put under him, we see him, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, and in possession of resources more than sufficient to accomplish all the benevolence of his heart. Is it not written, that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the sea?" that "all nations shall fall down before him, and all people shall serve him?" Has any thing yet, in the course of divine Providence or grace, taken place, that is sufficient to justify these representations? any thing wide enough in extent? any thing durable enough in continuance? any thing magnificent enough in grandeur? No ; yet these are the gracious promises of God ; and therefore, with the leave of our modern croakers, better days must be before us than the world has ever yet witnessed. The seed we sow is God's own, and the precious grain can never be lost, for grace secures the crop : his eye sees every corn that is dropped, where it is dropped, when it is dropped ; he watches it ; and he is not only able, but he is engaged, to give the increase. We have seen great things, but we hope to see greater still ; and if we should not see greater ourselves, we shall die in the full assurance of this, persuaded that "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." Perhaps we may be allowed to look down from the realms of blessedness, and see the spread of the Gospel below ; but if not, we shall be in that heavenly world where the acclamation will originate, that will be re-echoed back from earth—"Hallelujah ! for the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

But neither can you object, from the certainty of the thing, which we have now endeavoured to establish, to use the means. If you are in a proper frame of mind, you will long to be his instrument, and you will deem it your highest honour, and you will feel it your greatest pleasure, to be employed by him ; you will be filled with a desire for your Saviour's glory. The sufficiency is from him ; this is undeniable : How are we to expect it to come? You look, you say, for the pouring down of the Spirit of God ; and you do well : now when this takes place, do you imagine that it will operate immediately upon man, or by rendering man's means effectual? Now means cannot be rendered effectual, where they are not found ; if the influence, therefore, is to be exerted largely by means, the more means the better, and the wiser part are they acting who are therefore endeavouring to provide them. But you ask, what does consistency require of us? I will tell you, my friends, I will tell you what your own prayers require. You have been accustomed to pray alone, and in your family, and in your solemn assemblies, and in your monthly convocations, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified ; this you have been accustomed to do. Now I ask you, did you imagine, when you thus prayed, that these prayers were to be accomplished by miracles, or by means? and if by means, as you most assuredly did, did you suppose that you are not to be called upon to use those means? Rather, did not your very prayers imply an engagement on your side? And can you evince either the earnestness, or the sincerity of your supplications, unless you are led to ask, in a state of practical

devotedness to the business, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "What can I do," you say, "in the extension of this grace and truth?" Why some of you may go abroad as missionaries; why not? What is it that detains you? Nothing but the love of ease, and fear of difficulty. But we know that this will not apply to all: there are some who are not called to this; their condition will not allow of it. But is there an individual but may do something in his own sphere, in his own circumstances, to make manifest the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge; and add some little to the cause? Grains of sand make the mountain.

But to come nearer, there is one way in which you may all extend and diffuse this grace and truth, and that is by aiding this institution. We have thus seen its object, and its only object. Where little is done by individuals, much may be done by associations; and the churches of Christ have lately learned the importance of acting in the missionary work, in concert, combination, and co-operation. Blessed be God, now many missionary societies are established, and we wish them all success; they are not too many; and we ought to be thankful that, though they differ in some articles from each other, they are all similarly engaged, and that they all acknowledge their dependance upon the grace of God for their success; and therefore how varied the companies in the field shall appear, they all hold the Head. The Antinomians have no missions, and the Socinians have no missions: the Papists formerly led the way, and figured much in the business; we have volumes of their labours and travels; but they have left the missionary field entirely, and they will never occupy it again you may be assured. The field, therefore, is entirely left to Protestants; and let them work it well, it has become entirely their own. You know I am to plead this morning for the London Missionary Society; and I should be very sorry if I should plead in vain; I mean comparatively in vain: it would not be for the honour of this long-lauded and far-famed congregation; for, however they regarded (and they could not but regard) their late honoured pastor, yet surely the extent of their contributions did not depend entirely upon his energy and his influence; were this the case, could he be informed of this, and grief could enter heaven, there is nothing that would grieve him more than the failure or falling off in the collections. His Lord and Saviour is still alive; and he is here this morning, he is here to see the continuance of your readiness, and the proof you are giving that he neither ran in vain, nor laboured in vain, while he was amongst you.

None, I presume, are ignorant of the claims of this noble institution, from the earliness of its establishment, the liberality of its principles, the number of its stations and missionaries, and the success with which God has been pleased to crown it. I shall not, and need not, anticipate the development of facts that will be laid before you at the public meeting: there, no doubt, all will be fully stated; indeed, with me the fear always is, not that too little will be said, but that too much will be detailed; but nothing can be done without money, and need I say, that the claims of these missionaries at the present are large and many, arising, it may be, from the growing prosperity of the society; and these must be met, and honestly met, and that cannot be done but from diligence in the means, from economy in the expenditure, and from self-denial in indulgences. if not in other things. How much of the difficulties may be overcome by this means. Oh, to see the way in which some of you live; oh, to dine with some of the directors, and some of the committee, of all our public institutions now; to

see their godly simplicity, and how they add temperance to faith! Why there are thousands to be found now, who have not exercised the least self-denial, we will not say in their comforts, but even in their luxuries, even in their extravagances; yet they profess to be the disciples of Him who said, as his first lesson, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself;" though they profess to be followers of Him who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

Brethren, the time is short; all our opportunities will soon be over; many of them are gone already, gone irrecoverably; now may we all do much more than we have done for the glory of our Saviour, and for the welfare of our fellow creatures. It is now forty years ago since this institution was established; what important and interesting years have these forty been! What changes have taken place in a neighbouring country—what changes have taken place in our own country! Many of you, since this time, have come into being; many have grown up into maturity; many have encountered old age; and how many have been removed from the places which once knew them, but shall know them no more for ever! Thirty-seven years ago, I had the honour and privilege of preaching for this institution before; this head was not so white then as it is now. Oh, how few remain now who were engaged in that anniversary! "The fathers, where are they; and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Greathead and Bogue, where are ye? Waugh, Wilkes, Townsend, Burder, and Hill, these may be called the fathers of the faithful. How many that were there have been removed in the midst of their years, and also of their usefulness; and are not we even mortal men? Saurin says, somewhere, "I wish I could always end my discourses with a reflection upon death;" we know the Lord of life and glory said, "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is called to-day, the night cometh when no man can labour."

Let me, my brethren, beseech you to suffer the word of exhortation. Now do not take amiss the plainness of my address. I have been for some years a minister of the Word, and have made my observations. You are endeavouring to obtain certain temporal objects; but I should hope you respect the liberty of others as well as your own. I am aware I may be misrepresented, in speaking thus, but however this may be, it is a light thing with me to be judged of man? When a preacher has reached the age of sixty-five, it is not to be supposed he will care for the opinion of man, or will be deterred from saying aught but what his conscience tells him he ought to say. Let me beseech you, my Christian brethren, that your zeal be not only waxing warmer, but growing nobler and purer as we advance; let us shew that we are men of God, rather than men of the world; let us shew that we are men of God, rather than party men. If there are yet some inferior rights and privileges belonging to us (and I do not question this,) let us be satisfied with a temperate expression of our wishes and our claims; in the meantime let us be thankful that we have liberty for all our grand and spiritual purposes: let us pursue these with the zeal they demand, and while pursuing them, let us remember the language of a certain king to his prime minister, "Mind my affairs, and I will mind yours." Our pre-eminence, my brethren, is the highest; the honours we have, if any, must be religious; let not your good be evil spoken of. Like our forefathers, of whom the world was not worthy, we should look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal. We have heard much of late of the voluntary principle—too much I fear; not too much with regard to the

excellency of the principle, but to its sufficiency only, not to its possible effect; if the principle does not perform greater wonders in a state of emulation or excitement, what would it do if there was nothing to quicken the fervour of zeal in the way of righteous opposition, or godly rivalry?

Why have not the Highlands and Islands of Scotland been evangelized? Why has not every corner of our own land been evangelized? What has hindered the operation of the voluntary principle; what sacrifices, what racks, what tortures, what imprisonments? I belong to a large association in the country; we have much to do in our own county; why has it not been done? We have not wanted agents; we have not wanted missionaries who have offered to be employed; why are there any of our villages that are untaught? Is it persecution that keeps us back? No; but the weakness of the voluntary principle. Cannot then this be depended upon to furnish a sufficiency of instruments? Unquestionably, when we have it, when it is produced: oh, yes, we may rely upon it when the Spirit is poured down from on high: then men will be decided for God rather than grandeur; then men will consecrate their substance to the Lord of the whole earth; then professors will be ashamed to die rich; and if they do die rich, their ministers will be ashamed to notice them; then, a man, if he has made his will, will fetch it down and destroy it, or add a further codicil to it, if he find he has forgotten to introduce his best Friend, and the interests of his best Friend. But in the moral and religious condition of our country at present, the principle can ill afford to dispense with any kind of assistance. A few weeks ago, a plain man called at my house, and said, rather abruptly, "Sir, I am come to pay you a little money." I said, "I think, my friend, you must be mistaken: I never saw you before;" "But yet, sir, I have seen you, and often heard you:" "But," I said, "surely you cannot owe me any money." "No, sir," said he, "but I owe your Master;" and taking out his purse he laid down twenty-five sovereigns, and said, "This is the effect of a resolution produced some years back. I was then attending a missionary meeting, and one of the speakers, who had been a missionary himself, said, that in some place abroad (I forget where it was) twenty-five pounds would be sufficient to build a house for the poor heathen to hear the Gospel of God. I shook my head, and said 'I wish I could give it.' And I said, 'If I could not now, I would try to save as much.' I was then comparatively poor; I am not rich now; but God has been pleased to bless the labour of my hands, and now I have the happiness to have saved the money; and therefore I have brought you this, in order that it may be applied to the London Missionary Society." "But give me," said I, "your name." "No, sir," he replied, "and I hope you will never find it out." I strove in many ways to betray him in conversation, but could not: but I had a little more conversation with him, in the course of which he remarked, "When I and my dear wife married, we knew that we could not look for happiness but in serving God; and our means being small, we agreed to give a penny a week to the London Missionary Society; and when we had a prospect of a family, we then agreed, that with every child God should graciously give us, we would add a penny a week more; and we have been enabled, sir, though we have a large family, always to do this; and we have such good children." It is such persons as this we want. Let us see what the voluntary principle will do this morning.

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

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REV. H. MELVILL, A.M.

CAMDEN CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1834.

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But some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?  
1 CORINTHIANS, xv. 35.

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IN the early days of Christianity, there seems to have been the same readiness to cavil and object as in our own day. Heresy is no modern thing, though it has grown into greater strength, as fostered by successive generations. The writings of St. Paul sufficiently indicate, that there was even then much dispute on points of first rate importance; while we gather, from those of St. James, that the very fundamentals of faith were already assaulted. With respect to that great article of Christianity—the resurrection of the dead, it is evident that men were formerly, as well as now, disposed to regard it with wonder and incredulity. We learn from the chapter which contains our text, that some, even of those who belonged professedly to the Church, went the length of maintaining, that there is no resurrection. You will remember, also, that St. Paul, when pleading at Agrippa's tribunal, asks the question, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"—a question sufficiently indicating, that the resurrection was accounted so marvellous a thing, as scarcely to lie within the range of possibility. It appears, yet further, that others endeavoured to explain away what was asserted of the resurrection, fastening, perhaps, a spiritual interpretation on that which in fairness could bear only a literal. This was probably the case with Hymenæus and Philetus, of whom we are told, that they "erred concerning the truth, saying, that the resurrection was passed already." They might have thought, that the only resurrection is that moral one which takes place when man emerges from the death of trespasses and sins; and thus have given up the body to the lasting dishonours of the grave. St. Paul marks strongly his abhorrence of this their endeavour to spiritualize the resurrection, by declaring of such teachers, that "their word would eat as doth a canker." But when there was no holding of false doctrine, there was great inquisitiveness as to the details of the resurrection, fastened on the fact that the dead will be raised. Curiosity prompted questions as to the bodies in which the buried would re-appear. Hence St. Paul, after combating in the first part of this chapter, the falsehood which held that there was no resurrection, turns himself in the second, not to the gratifying, nor yet altogether to the repressing, the curiosity which sought to pry into all the mysteries of the resurrection. He does not endeavour, and perhaps it would not have been possible, to explain with accuracy, the nature and powers of the body in which the sepulchred should arise, but he gives certain

broad and distinguishing features, which should suffice for every questioner who should have sought for information which might be of practical worth.

Now, it is not to be denied, that in the article of the resurrection, there is much which demands a strong faith, and much which suggests perplexing inquiries. The article comes not, indeed, upon us as upon the early converts, with all the force of a new and astounding communication; we are accustomed from our infancy, to receiving into our creed the resurrection of the body, and therefore can scarcely appreciate the strangeness of its announcement as made for the first time to men in their manhood. It must be remembered, that the resurrection was just that doctrine in religion, in respect to which there could not have been a surmise. The announcement, therefore, that the body should rise, was news in a sense which can scarcely be affirmed of the other articles of Christianity. Men had a traditional, though most confused and corrupted idea, that reconciliation to God was to be effected by sacrifice; and hence, when told of a propitiation for sin, they heard not a tenet in every sense new: but, whatever their dim guesses at the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body had never come within the conjectures of the boldest imagination; and hence the annunciation, that the dead shall live again, must have startled, by its novelty, and have demanded great exercise of faith. It will be admitted, therefore, that the likelihood of this objection against the doctrine of the resurrection, was greater in earlier days than in later. We have, comparatively, nothing of that prepossession to overcome, which must have resulted from a settled belief that the body was never, if once dissolved, to ascend up from corruption. There is not in our religion, at least not in the same degree, that antagonist theory, which had been formed and fostered by ancestral religion and a pompous philosophy: still it is not to be questioned, that there is much in the doctrine of the resurrection, viewed quite independent of early associations, which is calculated to excite, in some cases, the infidelity, in others, the inquisitiveness of our nature. Men are now, as well as in the first days of the Church, disposed either to cavil at the doctrine as well nigh incredible, or to propound curious questions, which, whatever our present amount of information, we have no data to answer.

It cannot, then, be unseasonable, that we take advantage of the opportunity presented by the recurrence of Easter, and gather into our discourse whatever may be fully ascertained with regard to the body's resurrection. There are certain difficulties which may be removed, though, at the same time, there are others whose solution we must be content to refer to the future. Thus much, at least, we may hope to effect, (and we cannot think such result inconsiderable,) that the truth of the resurrection may be shown on the warrant of revelation, and then be proved in thorough keeping with the conclusions of reason; and if this be once done, there will, at least, be no ground for objection against the doctrine, however there may be much of deep mystery and unsatisfied inquiry.

We shall examine, then, first into the fact, that there will be a resurrection; noticing the difficulties in which that fact seems involved. We shall endeavour, in the second place, to answer, so far as Scripture will allow, the questions of our text, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

Now it is worth your closest observation, that the resurrection is exhibited in the Bible, not as a speculative truth, which must be believed because taught, and with which, otherwise, we have no close concern, but it is rather set forth as so intimately wound up with our salvation, that to prove it false were to



prove the human race unredeemed: "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." It were useless, then, to adduce proofs from revelation, that the dead are to rise, seeing we have it explicitly declared, that, unless they rise, the whole system of Christianity would be reduced into fable. The simple question is, not whether the Bible teaches that there will be a resurrection, (for this is on all hands admitted,) but whether there lie such objections against the possibility of the resurrection as make it incredible, and thus justify us in rejecting the testimony of Scripture. And in dealing with this question, we have to guard, on the one hand, against not yielding a due reverence to revelation, and, on the other, against admitting a truth which is repugnant to reason. There is a sense in which it is correct, but there is also a sense in which it is incorrect, to assert, that because a thing is in the Bible, it is therefore to be believed. You are all aware, that the internal evidences of Christianity are of even greater weight than the external, and that miracles, if not borne out by doctrines, would be quite insufficient to fasten divinity on the system. You may tell me of super-human power displayed by the first preachers of the faith, and challenge, on this account, my reception of all which they uttered; but I am not prepared to yield my unqualified assent to a teacher, just because he wields powers which seem far higher than human; I shall not immediately pass, from admitting that he has wrought a wonder, to admitting that he speaks the truth: all that the wonder has a right to demand of me is, that I give close attention to what the speaker teaches, and neither reject nor receive till I have brought it to some touchstone by which its truth may be tested. Notwithstanding the miracle, I shall still sit in calm judgment on the doctrine, and if I can prove the doctrine to involve either absurdity or impossibility, if I can show it unworthy of God, or at variance with any revelation, I shall be bound to allow the internal evidence to carry it over the external, and to denounce as a deceiver the prophet who has performed a miracle, but taught an untruth. So that we cannot go along with the assertion, that a thing is to be believed because it is in the Bible: undoubtedly it is to be believed because declared by God; but my reasons for receiving the Bible as God's word are not so derived from outward demonstration of its origin as to preclude all consideration of the contents of the book: the outward demonstration alone is powerful, the very mightiest, indeed, of which the case is susceptible; but, nevertheless, the contents must be subjected to the most rigid examination; and if I can fairly and fully ascertain, that any part of these contents are opposed to the character of God, or the laws which he hath immediately established (and this can only be admitted on the supposition, that reason is to give no verdict, or that one portion of truth may contradict another), beyond all question I shall do right in rejecting the Bible, whatever be the signs and prodigies to which it may refer. Thus, we have sometimes heard it said, that the Bible affirms there will be a resurrection; however incredible, then, it may seem, we can have no difficulty in believing the resurrection. For our own part we think, that in such a saying, there is more of weak credulity than of that faith which is demanded of us as rational agents. Let a thing be all but impossible, and therefore incredible, and it is not its insertion in the Bible which shall win my assent to its truth; that insertion could never make me consider the impossible, possible; and its only effect would be, to bring into question the pretensions of the book which avouched itself divine.

We are, then, quite of one mind with any reasoners on the resurrection of the body, that if that resurrection can be demonstrated impossible, we are not to admit it because inserted in writings which pass as inspired. We will not attempt to establish the impossibility by the inspiration; we rather frankly allow that the claim to the inspiration would be invalidated by the insertion of the impossibility.

But we now go on to observe, that nothing short of distinct and direct impossibility can bear us out in rejecting the testimony of Scripture. It is not the marvellousness of the achievement, and it is not the stupendousness of it, and it is not the fact that it overmatches all finite ability, which will warrant our questioning whether there shall come a resurrection. The alone point is, can we demonstrate that the resurrection falls without the limit of possibility, or that the effecting of it would overpass the might of the Omnipotent? It is quite evident, that if we are not prepared with such a demonstration, it is childishness to argue against the resurrection from its difficulty; the difficulty, if not clearly great enough to baffle almightiness, being not too great to be overcome by the agency we suppose introduced, and therefore furnishing no argument against the truth of the doctrine. If the Bible had affirmed that there shall be a resurrection of all men, and then ascribed to a finite agent the effecting of this resurrection, we think that reason might fairly have argued, that the disproportion between the thing done and the doer furnishes ground enough for rejecting the whole statement as untrue. It will, indeed, be an amazing act, not to be overtaken by all the strides of thought, that which summons back into being the countless myriads of our lineage, and re-animates the dust which had ever been human—that there should be an observant eye on every particle which has appertained to man—that the individual particles should be kept distinct, in order that they may go hereafter to the constitution of that very person which they constituted here—and that, at last, each man shall stand forth on the earth with his own bone, and his own sinew, and his own flesh. We confess, that there is a wonderfulness in all this which is completely overwhelming, and that the required knowledge and the required power can be looked for in none other than the Omniscient and the Omnipotent. But will any one declare of the general resurrection, that it exceeds the capability of Him who is to achieve it? Take what view you will of the difficulties of the resurrection—and can you declare of them that they are palpably greater than God himself is able to overcome? The whole gist of the question lies in this: the difficulties are to be considered relatively to the agent; and it is only so far as the applied power can be proved inadequate to the work, that the magnitude can be admitted as an argument against the performance. Certainly, with every admission of the stupendousness of the resurrection, and allowing unreservedly, that if referred to any finite ability it might rightly be held impossible, we cannot see how a work should be accounted too great for God, unless we are prepared to say the same of other works confessedly his. We cannot understand why a man, who admits that God created every thing out of nothing, should hesitate as to admitting, that God can perform all that is included under the resurrection. There seems to us no nearer approach to the incredible in the supposition that the dead will be raised by God, than in the supposition that the worlds have been made by God. To form man at first, and endow him with life, or to bring him forth from the dust, re-moulded and re-animating, is there evidently so much more of difficulty in the one achievement, as compared

with the other, that the being, confessedly mighty enough to effect the former, is not necessarily mighty enough to effect also the latter? For our own part, without presuming to decide between the difficulties of either of the works, each of which immeasurably distances all finite power, we think, that when once creation has been referred to God as the author, there can be nothing to make us pause in allowing that God may be the author of the resurrection. A man has no choice in respect to creation; the work is before him, and the possibility stands proved by the existence: the case is quite different in regard to the resurrection, and the possibility must be proved by showing an agency commensurate with the work; but unless you can demonstrate of the resurrection, that it requires a power out-doing that required by the creation, beyond all doubt, the proving that there is an agency adequate to creation, is the proving that there is an agency which, if thus employed, would be adequate to the resurrection: and, thus, marvellously great as I hold the achievement of summoning forth the dead, and re-uniting each human soul to that identical frame-work of matter which incased it during the days of its probation, yet the moment I refer its achievement to the Creator, I lose all hesitation as to admitting its possibility: I look out upon the wonder-workings of creative wisdom and creative might, and I gather from the magnificent spectacle, witness in abundance that a resurrection is possible. It is possible: for that august Being who cannot be perplexed by the multiplicity of concerns, may, yea, if he be omniscient, must, take cognizance of each atom of dust, as well as of every planet and every star. And why should he be unable to distinguish what hath belonged to man, and to appropriate to each individual his own? It is possible. The fields of space, who peopled them? The lamps of the firmament, who kindled them? The tribes of living things, who animated them? Oh, let me take a survey, so far as it may be gathered within my narrow intelligence, of what the Almighty hath wrought; let me pour my contemplations on worlds rising up at his bidding, on creatures starting at his call into existence in the likeness of himself, and sharers of his immortality; let me call to mind, that there was a time when the Eternal One alone occupied immensity, and let me contrast the boundless solitude with the now teeming universe: and can I doubt that He, unto whom must be referred all this profusion of architecture and all this exuberance of animation, might again quicken dust from which he had withdrawn the principle of life? And shall I hesitate to tell the objector, who would dwell on the dissolution of humanity, and speak of the difficulties of re-collecting the elements which have been scattered by the winds or strewn on the waters, and thus would strive, by enlarging on the wonderfulness, to throw a doubt on the fact of the resurrection—shall I hesitate to tell him, that every star which walks the heavens is my witness, and that every insect which floats in the breeze is my witness, and that every breath that I draw is my witness—that the graves of this planet may yet pour out their population, and that reason concurs with revelation to decide it not incredible, that God should raise the dead?

Now, up to this point, we have simply laboured at proving that there is nothing in the resurrection which can be fairly considered as placing it beyond the power of the Omnipotent. Our only object has been to show, that, since it is GOD who shall raise the dead, an agency is assigned quite adequate to the work, and the work itself, therefore, comes within the range of possibility. We allow, however, that this general demonstration is scarcely sufficient for the

case; and we proceed, therefore, to consider certain difficulties which still suggest themselves to thoughtful inquirers. We begin by warning you against the idea, which some have entertained, namely, that provided the soul be hereafter united to a body, it will matter nothing whether it be the same body which it tenanted on earth. The grand use of the resurrection is, that the same beings may stand in judgment as have here been on probation; but they are not the same beings unless compounded of the same body and the same soul. My soul placed in another body will not make myself; so that, seeing it is essential to the whole business of judgment, that the individuals raised should be the same individuals that have moved on this earth, it is also essential that the matter of which the body is hereafter composed, should be that very matter of which its members have here been composed. Let this be borne in mind, for without this there might be a creation, but certainly not a resurrection, of bodies. I know not how there could be a resurrection, unless that which comes up be that which went down. Let it, then, be borne in mind, that when we rise in the last day, we shall rise in flesh, and with limbs, which, however purged from dishonour and made incorruptible, shall be the very same as have appertained to us in this our mortal state.

But our bodies, it may be said, are here perpetually changing; if I live a while longer, so rapid is the waste and supply in my animal frame, that it is possible there will scarcely be in my body any particle of the matter of which it is constituted now. What body is then to be raised? I am not the same for two years together; from what period, then, of my earthly existence shall matter be selected, in order that sameness may be preserved? We reply, it is undeniable that there is this great and rapid change in the body; but it is equally undeniable, that such change in no degree interferes with the thorough sameness of the person; the being is the same being, and no one questions that he is the same being, through all the gradation from infancy to old age, and in all that succession of bodies through which he must pass: hence if he be raised in the matter that has at any time belonged to him, he will be the same being, accurately the same. If his body be composed of the particles which at any one point of time have composed it, identity will be preserved, and judgment may go forward. We will illustrate this by a most familiar example. Suppose a man to have committed a murder, and that thirty years have elapsed without the discovery of his crime; the guilt is then brought to light, and the assassin put on trial: what would the judge say, what would the jury say, if the criminal should plead, that, because in thirty years his body had been often changed, he was not the same person as committed the murder? Would it be thought any argument against the justice of his condemnation, that, most probably, there was not at the time of his trial a single particle of that matter in his limbs, which composed them at the time of this crime? You all perceive the absurdity of the idea. And supposing, that in place of being discovered by his fellow-men, the murderer had remained undetected till arraigned at the judgment bar of Christ, in what body must he appear, in order that the identity of the man may be rigidly preserved? Certainly it will not be necessary that he appear in the very body which he had when he took away a fellow-creature's life; this is not necessary at a human tribunal, and cannot then be necessary at a divine: nothing is necessary but that his soul be clothed in matter which had once before clothed it; for since he is the same man through all the earthly changes of his body, let him be placed in that body, which at any one

time was his, and though this body may not be the very body in which he perpetrated the crime, he is, nevertheless, the very same individual who perpetrated the crime, and therefore sentence may be given against him on every principle of the most thorough righteousness.

Now we hold, that this fact should be kept carefully in mind in all debates on the points of the resurrection. The great principle to be maintained is, that there must be an identity or sameness, between the buried and the risen; but this raises various questions as to the preservation of this identity, seeing that throughout life the human body is perpetually changing. We have shown, however, that in all the changes the person remains the same, so as to be accountable at any one time for what he did at any former: and extending, as we fairly may, our calculations to another state of being, we conclude, that if the man rise, for example, with that body which he had when he went down to the grave, or indeed, with any body which had ever been his, the preservation of identity will be perfect, and there will be nothing to arrest the business of trial and judgment.

We think, that this consideration goes far towards removing the most startling objection ever urged against the resurrection. It is unquestionable, that the same matter must enter at different times into the construction of different bodies; nourished by seed, which seed is itself nourished by the earth, which earth is the receptacle of the dust of human kind: it is indeed possible, that there are component particles in the arm which I now lift, which have entered successively into the limbs of men of by-gone generations; and when this my body shall be dissolved by death, it is far enough from certain, that none of its dust shall live again until the day of the resurrection dawn gloriously on the globe; the likelihood is rather, that the portion, wrought up into the members of the men of one age, will be yet again after death, once more instinct with motion, and perhaps be often reduced into dust, and then remoulded into flesh, ere the trump of the archangel summons us to judgment. And if the same matter may belong successively to different men, to whom shall that matter belong in the resurrection? You say, that in order to the preservation of identity, men must be raised with their own bodies; but if these bodies may have been composed of the very same matter, how will it be possible that each shall have its own? We observe on this, from our foregoing showings, that the identity of the person is preserved, that the man is the same man, if his future body be composed of particles which at any time have made up his present. It is not necessary that all the dust which hath ever been wrought into his corruptible members, should hereafter be wrought into his incorruptible: indeed, we know not how small a portion of the same matter may suffice for the preservation of identity: this we know, that the man is the same man in the vigour and efflorescence of health, and when wasted by long sickness into an absolute skeleton; the abstraction at one time, and the addition at another, of large masses of animate matter, interfere not at all with personal identity: so that, evidently, the raised man may be the very man who has here been on the theatre of probation, and yet the body in which he walks the platform of judgment, have in it only some fractions of the matter which constitute that which was broken up by death.

This consideration goes beyond our former; but seems equally just. We are imply anxious to demonstrate, that identity may be preserved, and that none of the objections, with which men ply the doctrine of the resurrection amount

to a proof, that the buried individuals and the raised cannot be strictly the same. And with this view we observe, that while on earth the body often changes, but the individual is the same, and that, therefore, the individual will be the same hereafter, if he has only that body which at any time was his. This is a great advance towards the removal of objections; for this assigns large materials for the structure of the future body; and this allows of much which has belonged to one man belonging also to another, without the production of any confusion of persons. But we go further; we observe, that it will not be necessary in order to the individual being the same, that *all* the matter of which his body is composed, should at one former time have been his: undoubtedly it is necessary that some portion (we cannot tell what portion) should belong to him, both here and hereafter: but certainly, when you have placed together these considerations, observing, first, that identity is preserved if the quickened dust have ever before composed the limbs of the individual—and, secondly, that only a portion, and perhaps but a small portion of the dust, need answer this condition—we think that the fact, that what is now part of my body may have been, and may again become, part of another man's, is no argument whatsoever against the probability of a resurrection; a resurrection, that is, in the strictest sense of the term—an event by which there shall be ushered on a future stage of existence the very beings, compounded of spirit and flesh, which have moved and acted in this fallen creation. It is indispensable that, at the resurrection and the judgment, I should be the same person here and hereafter; but I remain the same person throughout great changes of the body, and therefore identity may be preserved if only a small portion of the now component matter enter into my future construction. Hence, it is evident, that, even if much which now belongs to my body, belonged at other times to the bodies of other men, there may yet be enough belonging exclusively to myself, and kept distinct by the omniscience and omnipotence of God, to cause, when wrought into a dwelling-place for my soul, that I shall be the same, still myself, the very individual who now pleads in the earthly sanctuary, and telis his fellow-men of re-opened graves and quickened generations. And thus the objection to the resurrection, from the presumed difficulty of preserving the identity when different bodies have had portions of matter in common, is clearly of no weight; however considerable it may at first sight appear, it vanishes when you carefully investigate what it is which the preservation of identity demands.

Now we are quite aware, that we may have spoken somewhat more abstrusely on this topic than is generally thought consistent with pulpit discourses; but the resurrection is not a subject—and, we may add, these are not days—to which superficial preaching is in any way adapted. The subject suggests many difficulties; and the temper of a mixed audience—seeing that everywhere mind is vastly on the stretch, and our very mechanics are at least *threatening* to overtake our upper classes in the knowledge of theological science—undoubtedly demands that difficulties be fairly met and fully grappled with. The clergy have now a most arduous duty to perform—that of keeping pace with the rapid development of the intellect of our population: there is a fearful risk that the clergy will help greatly to the making an infidel nation, unless the theology of the pulpit commands the attention of thinking men by clear reasoning, as well as the respect of pious men by its orthodoxy. On this principle we have now endeavoured to discuss, without flinching or equivocation, the hard things which are suggested by the doctrine of the resurrection: we have striven to show

you, that there lies no fair objection against the possibility of a resurrection, but that even our finite understandings are competent to the proving that the apparent difficulties are not insuperable.

We have thus attempted, and we trust not unsuccessfully, to combat the infidelity which would pronounce it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. We have now, in the second place, to consider, very briefly, **WHAT ANSWER MAY BE GIVEN TO THE QUESTIONS, WHICH CURIOSITY RATHER THAN INFIDELITY PROPOUNDS, "HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?"** We shall of course limit our reply to that which may be gathered from the Bible; the subject is one on which speculation would be altogether out of place. The grand characteristic of our resurrection bodies is to be, likeness to the glorified body of Christ, seeing St. Paul declares of the Saviour, that "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Now there is every reason for concluding, that Christ when transfigured on the Mount, appeared in that glorified humanity in which he now sits at the Father's right hand. Referring to what he was then privileged to behold, St. Peter speaks of himself as eye-witness of Christ's majesty; thus implying, that the form which the Saviour assumed, was that which he wears in his state of exaltation. And if Christ, when transfigured, exhibited humanity in its glorified condition, we learn, that our bodies, though made wondrously radiant, shall be distinguished, as now, the one from the other by their characteristic features. The Saviour was not so altered as not to be known: the body of humiliation had been certainly changed into the body of exaltation; but the disciples, however dazzled by the unwonted splendour, beheld the Master whom they loved, and with whom they were familiar, in the being whose face shone as the sun, and whose raiment was white as snow. We shall be changed, but not so changed as to interfere with recognition; the glories of the body shall allow of our knowing, and being known, by all our earthly associates. Thus the two states of being are to be most closely linked; and we shall rise from the dead, purified indeed, and brilliant, and indestructible; but, nevertheless, each retaining so much of his own peculiar lineaments, that we shall not be a new rank of creatures, but strictly the same; re-modelled, the body transformed, and yet not losing identity; the parents still recognized by the children, and the children by the parents.

And if we would examine more minutely into the change which shall pass upon our bodies, enough is told us by St. Paul, in the chapter before us, to satisfy all but a rash and unhallowed curiosity. "It is sown"—thus he speaks of the body—"in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." "Sown in corruption:" the principle of dissolution is in this frame-work of matter; and, whatever for a time its comeliness and vigour, it is the heir of death, and must say to corruption, "Thou art my father," and to the worm, "Thou art my mother and my sister." But, "it is raised in incorruption." Each limb as it were, shall be sinewed with eternity; and that which on earth might be worn down by suffering and wasted by disease, shall come forth from its resting-place, inaccessible to decay, imperishable and unchangeable. "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." Here the body is a degraded thing, and the grand business of a Christian is to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." The great endeavour of St. Paul was, to keep under the body and bring it into subjection; thus treating the earthly tabernacle as a polluted vessel, and

reckoning his members as so depraved and defiled, that he must make them his slaves, to prevent their becoming his tyrants. But "it is raised in glory:" no longer the seat of unholy propensities, no longer furnishing inlets by its senses and appetites, for manifold temptations, the body, as well as the soul, shall be rich in purity, and the dishonoured limbs, which have here borne the impress of concupiscence, shall form a temple which shall sparkle with the lustre of righteousness. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." "In weakness!" Who knows not, who feels not, how the body is now a clog upon the spirit, impeding it in its stretchings after knowledge, as well as in its strivings after holiness? If I would labour to be wise, and if I crave acquaintance with the mysteries of science, it is but an inconsiderable portion of my time that I can give to inquiry and study; the body is continually demanding to be recruited by food, and refreshed by sleep, and invigorated by exercise, even when not harassed by sickness; so that the mind can only snatch a few hours for its favourite pursuits, and must suspend them at the bidding of the wearied and over-taxed flesh. But "it shall be raised in power:" no longer needing rest, no longer subject to waste, and therefore no longer requiring to be nourished, the body shall be an auxiliary to the soul in all her searchings after truth, and endowed, it may be, with amazing capacities of motion and activity, passing rapidly across those spreadings of creation which now can be only traversed by thought, and dive into depths, and ascend unto heights, which fancy cannot explore, and imagination cannot reach. We are probably incompetent to the judging wherein the power of the risen body shall consist; but we have the weakness, which is set in contrast with this power, and therefore we may at least be assured, that the glorified humanity shall be freed from that feebleness which here causes us to be soon wearied with labour; that it shall have thrown off those trammels which have here confined it to a narrow spot, and forbade its expatiation over immensity; and that, undecaying, it shall seek no hours of inactivity—fraught with an ever-during vigour, it shall count no duty a burden. Thus, "sown in weakness, it is raised in power." I am now, as it were, cabined and confined in flesh; the spirit is kept down and manacled by the body; and however I may long to soar into acquaintance with what is noble and illustrious, or to emulate the holiness of the bright creatures of another sphere, this earthly house detains me by its weight, or occupies me with its wants: but oh, let me but attain the resurrection of the just, and flesh shall be nothing but an ally to the spirit, in gathering knowledge and in serving the Creator; "raised in power," these limbs shall minister to all the wishes of the cleansed and spotless soul, and every member be an instrument in exploring wonders, and in extolling God.

The Apostle adds yet another particular. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." This, it may be, is the grand distinction, between the buried and the risen; comprehending every other thing, itself scarcely comprehensible. We are sure that the body shall remain a material thing, and that whatever the refining process through which it may pass, matter must be always different from spirit, so that each will keep its peculiar properties. We cannot, then, perhaps, form ideas which shall at all approach the accurate, of the spiritual body; matter and spirit are so distinguished and opposed, that we hardly know what can be meant by spiritual matter; yet it is unquestionable, that the body of the risen Redeemer, though certainly material (for he bade his disciples handle him, and so ascertain by the touch that he had flesh and bones), yet it had in a high degree the attributes of spirit, for it could be made



invisible to the eye of sense, and could enter a chamber with closed doors; thus proving itself no longer subject to the laws which matter now obeys; and at least, if there be a mystery in the nature of the spiritual body, which is at present unfathomable, we may gather from what is thus told us of the Saviour after his resurrection, that matter shall be so etherialized, as to partake much of the independence of spirit, and the body be fitted for accompanying the soul in all her marchings over the area of the universe, and in all her divings into its most secret recesses. Now, if the spirit would travel to far-off worlds, it must go alone on the feeble and failing wings of thought, and without an apparatus for gathering in notices of the unexplored tenancies which throng those distant abodes; and the natural body cannot spring from the earth out of which it was made. But though "sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual body," and the spiritual inhabitant of the spiritual body may carry with it, in all its delighted journeyings, the organs by which it may take the survey, and scan the wonders, and grasp the beauties, of the varied and mighty creation; the rock being pervious, and the waters a pavement, and the clouds a chariot, to matter when refined for immortality. And whatever the power in respect to such as these, of the spiritual body, as compared with the natural, we may be confident, that the alleged change in matter, works a wondrous adaptation of the whole man to the business of serving the Creator. The natural body is a structure which belongs fitly to the natural man, of whom it is emphatically said by St. Paul, "The natural man receiveth not the things of God." When the soul is renewed by grace, the body remains unchanged; and then comes that harassing conflict between the body and soul, which forced the Apostle to exclaim, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But if the body become spiritual, there must be a thorough harmony between body and soul; and to say that the body is no longer the natural, is to say, that it will be the auxiliary, in place of the adversary, of the soul, in the high employment of obeying the will, and celebrating the praise, of God. This, then, is the mighty transformation. "Sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body." While yet a wrestler here with principalities and powers, the believer in Christ is opposed by his own flesh, and all his corporeal organs take part with the foes who would withstand him as he presses on to immortality. His body "is of the earth, earthy;" and the motions of sin work in his members to the bringing forth, if not repressed, fruit unto death! but "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal assumed immortality," the body will be spiritual, not natural; regenerated flesh, sanctified matter; its every organ a minister of righteousness, and its every sense an inlet to the majesty of God. Mysterious change! Matter shall rival spirit in consecration to the Lord; the very walls of the temple be instinct with holiness and breathe of Deity.

Such are the representations, though we have but feebly examined them, which the Apostle gives of the body with which the just shall rise. We are told nothing of the body with which the wicked shall come, for it is clear, in the chapter before us, St. Paul speaks only of the resurrection of the righteous. We know, indeed, that the flesh of the unjust, as well as of the just, shall be imperishable, otherwise they could not be cast to the worm which dieth not, and to the fire which is quenched not. But the natural body may remain the natural; immortalized in its appetites, in its lusts, in its cravings: and of all exhibitions of future torment, there is none, as we have often observed, which

comes up in fearfulness to this, of the perpetuity of lawless desires and unbridled passions. If death do not extirpate the favorite lust from the flesh, if it re-appear at the resurrection, and there be ingrained into the flesh in eternity, the natural body rising the natural, not only unchanged, but unchangeable, we are persuaded, that in this lust there will be an undying worm, an unquenchable fire. The wicked must be out of their element in hell, just as they would be in heaven: passions, where there are no corresponding objects—desires, where there is nothing to gratify them—appetites, where there is no food—lust, where indulgence is impossible. Oh, Sirs, if the resurrection consigns to this—I ask not for an outline, for imagery, for description—to be sown a natural body and to be raised a natural body, you reach the summit of all that is terrible in conception; when you suppose the grave thus sending up the drunkard thirsting for wine where there is no wine, and the miser always hankering for gold where there is no gold, and the sensualist to be galled by the impress of voluptuousness where there may exist the sense, but not the objects, of concupiscence.

Men and brethren, we entreat you, by the marvellous and the awful things of the resurrection, that you hearken to the voice which summons you to repentance and righteousness. The trumpet of the archangel sounds, and the cry is heard, “Ye buried come to judgment.” The whitening bones in the valley of vision must then be bound with sinew and fenced with flesh, and all the dead stand up a countless army. Seeing, then, there is no escaping the resurrection (oh, there may be a mountain on the dust, but the weighty grave-stone shall give way; and our limbs may be hid in the caverns of the unfathomed ocean, but they shall struggle up through the immensity of waters)—seeing, then, there is no escaping the resurrection, ought not each one of us to ask himself solemnly the question, “With what body shall I come; with the natural or with the spiritual? If I am now the servant of sin, yielding my members as instruments of unrighteousness, and if I go down to the grave the impenitent and the unrenewed, then it is certain—certain as that Jesus rose, and led captivity captive—I shall come forth in a body from which passion shall exact every thing for gratification, and over which the fire shall have all power but the power of consuming. But if I now die to sin, mortifying every corrupt appetite, and deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then am I, through God’s grace, preparing the body for a grand transition from the natural to the spiritual: and when those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, having been planted together in the likeness of Christ’s death, I shall be raised also in the likeness of his resurrection.

May we all be animated to the breaking loose from the bondage of corruption; that so, when the Son of Man shall the second time appear, and hold his judgment-seat in the fire and the cloud, we may appear in bodies made like unto his glorious body, and enter triumphantly into the joy of our Lord

## JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

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REV. R. W. HAMILTON.

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“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”—JOHN, xi. 25, 26.

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If ever home, my brethren, was honoured and blessed, it was that of Bethany; though now we find its family sunk into the distraction of grief: tears are new to it. In other suburbs and villages of Jerusalem, their inhabitants had cherished the presence of the Saviour, but only one of those abodes is noted as always offering him welcome, and frequently offering him repose. Its inmates ministered to him of their substance, and there he rested his weary head. Pious friendship and domestic love chose it for their most favoured dwelling. Martha would ply the household affairs; Mary would breathe the holiest dispositions; and Lazarus was, in all probability, the stay and solace of both. Their means, if not affluent, were abundant; they were raised beyond straits and poverty: united in affection, they clung to one another, and resisted all thought of separation: one roof sheltered them, and one hearth cheered them. But though they passed their life together, it was not in the dulness of uniformity; they presented those differences of character, those rainbow excellences, which by varying the monotony of life, increases its zest, and developing the influences of religion in multiform expressions, illustrate the better its beauties.

Still, the circumstance which honoured and blessed that home, was the condescension of the Lord: it always stood with unlatched door for him; and within it he found a calm retreat and refuge: he loved its devoted and affectionate family, the spectacle of mutual attachment, consecrated to pure religion, was refreshing to his oft-sinking mind, and as a balm to his well-nigh broken heart: and in the bosom of this holy kindred, he seems to have rested his confidence and reclined his heart, more serenely than in any other circle; and if he knew a familiar haunt, and found an earthly abiding place, it was in this rural spot, and amidst this chosen society. Each shared in his benign affections. Something intimates a cordiality and freedom of communication to which few were admitted. Deeply solemn, their intercourse flowed onwards unrestrained. Ah, had we records of that gracious, awful, fellowship, a limning of that countenance while it hung over the transfixed group, a report of that voice which spoke in the tones of an hitherto unuttered mercy, an outline of that conversation which suggested doubt and fear, which resolved the one, and allayed the other—when the Master called for them, when Mary sat at his feet, when Martha forgot her too hospitable cares, when Lazarus, little foreboding an early death, looked up to the guide of his youth, the counsellor of his manhood, and the anticipated

friend of his age—when they sung their hymn, when he prayed, when he opened to them the Scriptures, when he lifted up his hands and blessed the simple repast, when he gave them greetings and benedictions, when the evening passed too soon, and the morning broke too late, when the joy of his arrival was only checked by the dread that he must speedily depart again! Oh, homestead of Bethany! Palace never knew the more than twelve legions of angels, which hovered in attendance on thy glorious guest; court never contained the Potentate who once sought thy shade, and accepted thine accommodation—the Lord of Hosts, the Prince of the kings of the earth. And when he last bid them farewell, how unsuspecting were they of trouble! This was their only grief, and their best hope was his quick return. Future intimacy would they predict, an ample recompense for their present deprivation.

What are those wailings from yonder dwelling? Why do those lights hurry to and fro across that vine-entwined lattice? Wherefore is every member of that household shrouded in sackcloth? How has that peaceful sylvan cottage become so suddenly a house of mourning? Death has come up into its windows. Sad things have befallen these heart-broken sisters. Perhaps they had long since marked their only brother's decline of health; they saw the colour of his cheek come and go; nor had they overlooked his sunken eyes: fear predominated, and was prophetic of the event. Or, perhaps, and more likely, he was smitten by an unlooked-for blow. Behold, God taketh away: who can let him? Well may they be bitter in soul. They have seen him die; they have seen him stretched on his bier; they have seen him borne to his tomb: they cannot conceal it from themselves, that the havoc of dissolution and corruption has begun. The light in their tabernacle is put out, which no longer is filled with the voice of joy and thanksgiving; he is not where involuntary expectation waited for him; everywhere he has left his image, and yet nowhere does he appear: that three-fold cord is broken. Cheerless is their mien; weeping endures through their night, without joy coming in the morning. They could speak but on one theme, but dare not entrust themselves with it: they forget all walks but one, and steal alternately unto their brother's grave, to weep there. And they feel one dark aggravation of their woes; when their beloved brother began to sicken, they sent immediate information to the friend who had frequently professed, and proved, his firm regard; but, strange, he has responded no message of pity, and still he absents himself. This appearance of unkindness troubled them.

But he has not forgotten them; his sojourn and his delay are but the preparation for that miracle, by which these destitute women received their dead raised to life again: he ransoms him from the power of the grave; he redeems him from death. Again that habitation is arrayed in pious joy. What is the meeting when first the sisters assume the courage and composure to embrace the brother who was, in no figurative sense, dead, and is alive again—who was lost, and is found? What is the first transport when he takes his wonted place at their board? What are the thanksgivings and voice of melody which close this day of tremendous excitement, both in judgment and mercy? And if the author of the marvellous restoration of the breach made in this family did, on that evening, revisit the scene of so much bliss and gratitude, did mildly gaze on that re-union of its lately death-divided members, might he not address it, and thus explain each motive of his conduct towards them, "For a small moment I have forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee."

But it is not sympathy alone which interposes; though in its most exquisite form and perfect degree. In his acts and averments, the Saviour stands forth with an unwonted authority. Friends and adversaries had often asked, "What manner of man is this? Though we were his constant companions, we were often unable to understand his sayings, and were forced to ask him." But in this crisis, worthy of divine interference, he had confessed himself; "The power of the Lord is present to heal, and still more to awaken the dead." Some of the foldings of his mystery begin to unloose; the clouds that hung over him assume also a less deepened tinge; and radiations of glory escape—utterances of might and majesty are proclaimed. He lifts himself up into a superhuman attitude: he is transfigured by the excess of moral and essential splendour: he speaks with the accents of the incarnate God, "I am the resurrection and the life.

In the consideration of these words, let us attend, in the first place, to THE DECLARATIVE STYLE IN WHICH MESSIAH ASSERTS HIS PREROGATIVE AND CLAIM. For is it not strange, that he who himself must die, who has often intimated that he must die a violent and degraded death, who is now not far distant from that cruel and ignominious death—that he should express himself in phrases like this? Is this description of himself befitting a mortal's lot, and a creature's rank? Nor is the strength of this representation otherwise than raised on an examination of the obscurity and nature of the terms employed. When Jehovah becomes our salvation, though the meaning is that he becomes our Saviour, yet is it more powerfully stated by, not the declaration with respect to it, but by the thing itself: "The Lord is our salvation"—the thing itself. So when the Lord Jesus declares himself, not only the original and the spring of the resurrection and the life, but takes these facts, and throws them into his character, and selects them for his appellation, we have the strictest testimony, and strongest assurance, that the effects themselves shall be completely signalized, and that the right and the source of producing them are in himself. With him, then, is the title in a world of death, and among a race universally mortal, to reproduce the human body from decay, and to secure to the fleeting soul its immortality.

Still we cannot but be reminded, that this absolute power over the bodies, and the lives, and the spirits of men, is invariably challenged as the inalienable right of Deity. The King of Israel when he received the letter concerning Naaman, King of Assyria, exclaimed, "Am I God to kill and to make alive?" Hannah rendered this ascription: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." This is an awful declaration of the Most High: "See now, that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever." Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death; he will revive us; he will raise us up; and we shall live in his sight. Does the Scripture speak of the resurrection? "We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raised the dead." "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" Does the Scriptures speak of the life that they must live? "The Lord thy God says, he is thy life and the length of thy days." "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" "The God in whose hands thy breath is,

and whose are all thy ways: "With him is the fountain of life." He holdeth our soul in safety: he is the God of the spirits of all flesh, the Father of Spirits: all souls are his. Nothing can be, therefore, more explicit and precise than the Scripture testimony to these facts, nothing than the attribution by Scripture of all these respective rights to the supreme eternal Godhead.

Now it must be our province to shew, that when the Redeemer undertook these designations, to deserve and to support them was no barren boast and empty claim. He demands them on his own pretensions, and sustains them by his own resources. So that this avowal equalizes him with the divinity, and rests upon a manifestation so distinct, that he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. We open the inspired volume, and learn from it, that the honour of this description doth appertain to Him who was born in a manger and hanged on a cross. Psalmist and Apostle alike address the Eternal Son—"Thou in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." The evidence is enlarged by the witness of those equally credible, because inspired, writers. "That ye be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" that Lord being the very same concerning whom the scoffers had taunted, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The prophetic oracle is most articulate in the matter of this appropriation: "His goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." The record he was compelled to bear concerning himself, was undoubtedly true. Now, how does he speak? "Before Abraham was, I am." "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, which was and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty." "I am the living being." The frequent appeal to himself as Jehovah, is replete with this distinction; nor are these declarations more disguised: "The Son quickeneth whom he will:" he is "the Prince of Life:" "This is the true God and eternal life." Well may he say, therefore, to that corpse, "Arise, come forth:" "I will raise him up at the last day." Well may he say unto this spirit, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He can will the length of life through which his beloved disciple shall tarry, and stand at the right hand of God to receive the earliest martyr's soul.

But his mediatorial office and merits substantiate the same declarations. He is not only the resurrection and the life in the right of his own essential deity, he bears respective relations in the covenant of grace; and these support and challenge the same honours. Being *the Redeemer of his people*, every constituent of their being, every interest and portion of their existence, is the subject of purchase: they are "bought with a price," "the precious blood of Christ" is the ransom; "the redemption of their souls is precious," that being the most glorious part of man: but not less important is the redemption of the body. The whole of their constituted nature is, therefore, the righteously acquired property of the Lord Jesus from every demand of punishment, every tendency of sin, the thralldom of earth, the curse of death, and the captivity of hell. The

risen living Saviour "loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might present to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing:" consequently, every form of evil attaching to us, physical and moral, must be relieved. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Do their bodies sleep in the dust? "They sleep in Jesus." Do their spirits exist in a separate manner? They are "present with the Lord." And he shall come again; our "Redeemer liveth;" and "shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." The body rescued from the grave, the soul no longer subsisting solitary, there shall be a perfect reinstatement of the man in all the integrity of his being; while a boundless accumulation of glory shall distinguish him above all that sin and death could ever dispel. Is not then He who has achieved this consummation "the resurrection and the life?" And shall not the song eternally roll, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood?"

But Christ is not only the Redeemer of his people, and thus qualified to claim their redemption, and to will that they be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory, he is *their Head and source of life*. Their entire nature was assumed by him: they are "crucified," therefore, "with him;" they are "buried with him;" they are "quicken together with him;" they are "risen with him;" they "sit with him in the heavenly places;" they shall be "like him, when they see him as he is." Now, whether it be referred to their bodies or their spirits, he came that they "might have life, and have it more abundantly." He is, therefore, denominated "the life." He is "made a quickening spirit." Death cannot approach him, for it is turned into a living thing: he, therefore, identified himself with the holy dead; "They shall live: with my dead body shall they arise."

But in a more peculiar sense he is the life of the soul; not only its existence, but its whole being. This honour, this security, this happiness, springs from that living faith which joins us to the Lord, and makes us one spirit. And thus is his vital power most variously described and represented, as the seed of our spiritual-mindedness, the guarantee of our safety, the partner of our glory. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." All his mediatorial offices point to his exaltation, and pre-suppose the power of his endless life: "Because I live ye shall live also." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." And it is to this life of official engagement and meritorious fulness, as well as to that which forms its basis, its investiture with all authority, and his endowment with all influence, that our Lord alludes: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son," mediatorially and officially, "to have life in himself."

Moreover, the Son of God as Mediator, is *the universal Sovereign* and Judge: he must be the resurrection and the life, therefore, in the widest signification. He is the "head over all things." It is necessary that his enemies and disbelievers be summoned from the grave for trial and for doom: he will so bring them forth; their resurrection will be his act; their eternal endurance of punishment is awfully described, as "in the presence of the Lamb:" he is their light, though they have said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." He is their life: wherefore they shall "ask for death, but shall not find it; and desire to die, but death shall flee from them."

But all these illustrations of this august character are incomplete, without a distinct mention of that controul which "the resurrection and the life" wield over the invisible world. Devils knew him when the man of sorrows, and shrunk from his defiance; nor is it more arduous for him to "bind the old serpent," and "cast the accuser of the brethren down." Angels, authorities, and powers, are "made subject to him:" he is "Lord, both of the dead and of the living;" he hath "the keys of death and of the unseen state:" and while the spirits of them who were sometimes disobedient are in prison, his people, whether they live or die, are the Lord's. All power is given unto him in heaven and earth; and peculiarly is the abode of happy spirits, whose dwelling is not with death, the palace of the Great King: and he still remembers us pilgrims and sojourners below, now that he has come into his kingdom. The personal claim of the Son to be the resurrection and the life, (these prerogatives being claimed by the triune Jehovah,) the peculiar and personal claim is established upon certain acts which he has performed, as the surety and substitute of his followers. He has died, and thus has obtained eternal life for us: through him we enjoy the spiritual and heavenly life: he is "the bread of life;" he is "the living stone," we "live by him:" "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also walk in newness of life." His own resurrection is the condition: so is he denominated "the beginning;" "the first born from the dead;" "the first fruits of them that slept." And since he dieth no more, and death hath no more dominion over him, our flesh shall rest in hope, and our souls be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord our God. Oh, wonderful voice of our Beloved, which breaketh upon the silence of this world's despair, and insinuating into the variety of this world's observance, testifies him to be what all sense opposes, and all appearance contradicts, and still what orphan hearts must best enjoy, and favoured friendship most fervidly anticipates—the resurrection and the life: and we shall be planted in the likeness of that resurrection.

We proceed briefly to examine, secondly, THAT COURSE OF BENEFICENT OPERATIONS WHICH MESSIAH ENGAGES TO ACCOMPLISH. It is not corporeal resurrection, and mental immortality, which are alone, or principally, intended in this emphatic form of speech; superior acts are intimated, as spiritual in their nature, and important as the value of the soul. There is a life which springs from a process of moral resurrection. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Without this, though the soul exists, and exists immortally, this is not its life; it is dead while it liveth: but we can trace principles and elements worthy of it. By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of the spirit: and this is the eternal life which consists with the immortality of the soul, but is not necessary to it. The future existence of the wicked is never thus described; theirs is "everlasting destruction." Thus the resurrection of life is contrasted with the resurrection of damnation: some "awake to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." The wicked are as immortal as the righteous; but the immortality of the wicked is never denominated "eternal life." The physical resurrection and immortality of man, are introduced as the earnest and the ground of these higher hopes and these better promises.

These involve, first, *the substitution of a moral life for a moral death.* "He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live." This we are



obliged to regard as distinctly asserting a present death: by the exercise of faith that present death is overcome: what can that be but a spiritual death? And that a future life shall succeed to it: what can that be but a spiritual life? To the same purpose our Lord declares, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." This cannot be the general resurrection, for it is said to be *now*: it is partial, also, being dependent on the hearing of those who are called. Now there is sensual and intellectual life in the sinner who is still in the death of sin and condemnation, and of the carnal mind: he lives, and moves, and has his being; but, as to every holy and useful end, it is *a name* to live only. The Christian truly lives through his blood: he is "alive from the dead:" he is "alive to God through Jesus Christ:" the law has passed by him; and when in his own blood he said, "Live;" the love of Jesus is "made manifest in his mortal body." We are not only saved by the life of the Redeemer; we "live—yet not we, but Christ liveth in us: and the life we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us." He spake during his earthly sojourn of eternal life, as in immediate present enjoyment: "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God:" "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Other Scriptures bear witness to the same terminology: "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him:" the believer "hath eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." This is the regeneration which strengthens amid bodily debility, and grows amidst bodily decay: the outer man may perish, and the inner man be renewed day by day. It is a blessed habit of thought and of feeling, which rests on no contingency, and is exposed to no vicissitudes; and however the subjects of this life are judged according to men in the flesh, they live according to God in the Spirit.

But another blessing is added to this, secondly, *the restriction of that penal evil, which is comprehended in the sentence of animal death.* "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die:" a catastrophe revolting in itself. It is guilt which makes death so terrible. Death is by sin; and it is the triumph of Christianity, that it alters the very character of death, and repeals all its judicial consequences: for it puts the dying saint into a relation of amity with his Maker; puts that dying saint into the very presence of his Maker, and inspires him to commend his spirit into the hands of the God of truth, who has redeemed him. And so beneficial is this change, so complete is this revolution, that there is an effacement of the original aspect of death. Was it a sentence and a curse? "To die is gain;" "Death is your's;" "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord;" "Them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" Christ shall "make us all live;" "There shall be no more death"—its pains are loosened, its snares are broken, its terrors are dispelled. But death occurred in the appointed order, and after death was the judgment: death bound us hand and foot for the stroke of the second death; it delivered us into the hands of the executioner. Its succession however is subverted. These are the sayings, true and faithful, touching this strangely abandoned procedure: "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life:" "Death shall no more separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Suffering generally accompanies, and debasement always follows it; but among all the ingredients of its

cup, not a drop of the curse is mingled; and of all its brooding clouds, not one is charged with vengeance.

And this view is enforced by the comparatively indifferent manner in which Christ alludes to the death of the pious and the good: investing it with all seriousness, still he treats death as a very nullity. "Who hath abolished death?" "He hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil:" "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste of death: he shall never see death:" "Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die:" "O grave where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?" If such sayings as these, my brethren, (and they are the sayings of the inspired volume) if such sayings as these have any meaning, and any sense, how low shall the pride of death be reduced; into what narrow limits must its influence be contracted, and under what scorn and defiance shall it descend at last? It is now a bodily shadow; a phantom form; and its mockery is to be made ashamed, is to be disputed, is to be seen no more for ever. So signal the victory that is to overturn the enemy that is at last to be destroyed, that every vestige of its tyranny shall be blotted out; not a print of his footsteps shall be recognized; his memory shall be extinguished; not a trace of association shall survive; and he is banished, lost, and swallowed up in the redundancy of that power, and in the brightness of that triumph, which crushed him: as a giant rearing his stature, and brandishing his fury on some tall cliff, is only magnified by the sky against which his form is set, yet, when plunged into the ocean, he scarcely impresses it, and he finds a grave sufficiently capacious and vast to inclose in its gulf millions and millions more. "Death shall be swallowed up in victory."

There appears no moral necessity that the believer should die at all. I say, *no moral necessity*. It is no exaction of righteousness upon him: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?" But the circumstances of death are preserved in his case. It is therefore an arrangement of wisdom and benignity: it is a proof of his Father's pity; it is a pledge of his Saviour's care and sympathetic love: it assimilates us to our Redeemer, and draws forth the fellow-feeling of that heart, which once recoiled from death itself. It seems to keep us in lowliness of mind by constantly placing before us the humbling of this vile body, "dead because of sin." It disciplines a peculiar class of virtues, for this end of our conversation requires patience, and fortitude, and faith. And were the righteous exempted from the mortal blow to which the wicked were exposed, it would give rise to a palpable distinction, a fearful demarcation between them, telling us to walk by sight, and superseding our walk by faith, secularizing a nature whose properties are spiritual. Therefore, we only die because death is the most suitable portal by which we can enter heaven.

But all this contradicts our external impressions: we see and we feel the predominance of death; and therefore, most justly may the question be urged, "Believest thou this?" It is not only an exceeding and great promise, but it is a hard saying to our evil hearts of unbelief. Most difficult is it for us when the lovely forms of the dead are shut up in their coffins, and laid down in their graves, to believe that the spiritual life is beating high in the departed one, and that there is so little of death in this change, that the dead has not really died. But it is faith which removes even the dark mountains, and we may follow its guidance and realize its spirit where the grisly monarch holds his most undisputed empire; and it will enable us not only to predict its defeat, but to

announce his annihilation. We may be so broken in the place of dragons, and be covered with the shadow of death; but faith recognizes him as near to justify, and unfolds to us in our most trembling cowardice a place of refuge. Strong in faith, the feeblest mortal may invite the approach of this strange visitation: "Pass over me thou desolate change. Environed as thou art in darkness, shrouded as thou art in mystery, unreported by any who have experienced thee, thy voice is but my Saviour's bidding, thy descent but my Saviour's touch. Yes, it is not thee that I obey: I see His beckoning hand, I hear His greeting language—'Follow me.' I stagger not at the promise: against hope I believe in hope. The last mist is dispersed, the last misgiving is quelled: Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?"

And how often has this been proved? The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torments of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die; but they are in peace: their hope is full of immortality. The developments of this holy secret will often vary: we know not what kind of death we must die. Sometimes the Christian dies in transports of joy; sometimes only with the meekness of unfeigned faith: *now* it is triumph—*then* only not defeat. Circumstances will modify our death in endless diversities; and not unfrequently these diversities regulate and counterbalance each other. They have their respective, though not invariable advantages. *This* resembles the gorgeous sunset of the tropic sky, dazzling, but suddenly quenched, leaving little reflection on the horizon; and *that* like one of the Northern clime, where the atmosphere is less refined, but where the very vapours, catching the rays of the sinking orb, paint its decline with softer hues, and perpetuate its twilight glory long after its stronger blaze has vanished.

We know that as we brought nothing into this world, it is certain we can carry nothing out. What a deluding thing is death? It robs us of all! The messengers who rushed into the presence of Job, one overtaking the other, each with his tale of woe, whoever precedes being outdone by the next, unfold a series of calamities, without parallel in the quickness of their succession and severity. The Sabean banditti and the Chaldean army, combined with the storm and the tempest, conspired to leave him desolate and childless: but yet he hears all this news at once. Let him be the most ennobled, the most powerful, the most wealthy inhabitant of earth, the swift-footed witnesses hasten to him, without order or forbearance. One breaks in upon him and tells him that his proud course is closed: while he is yet speaking another declares he must no longer retain a single possession: another draws out the dismal narrative by saying that he can never enjoy again the caresses of relatives or the pleasures of friendship: they tell him of the loss of cheerful light, the withdrawal of the lovely landscape—how strangers shall tread his halls, and revel on his dainties—how the vacant eye shall read his epitaph, and the listless foot shall trample on his grave. While the law bids the curious link of the body and the spirit to dissolve, sternly urges the dreadful severance between, and flings the corrupting body into the sepulchre, bearing with him, as he must, that thinking conscious part which cannot forget, and never dies; yet, though death strips all others, it cannot deprive the believer of aught. No theft can be committed on him; the riches and the ornaments peculiar to the soul so inhere in him that no violence can detach them; and in unnumbered instances we have seen the people going forth from its bondage, laden with treasure fit to be laid up in heaven, and to aggrandize an eternal existence; the Spirit has gone forth with its life-healing influence.

But if this be true of the believer, what is the condition of the unbeliever? If it takes a hold upon those who must frequently be asked, "Believest thou this?" what is the case of him who sits in the seat of the scorner? What is the case of him who is without Christ, and therefore without hope? There is a refuge for that man who has hitherto wasted his most precious opportunity, his most sacred seasons, who has thrown upon the foolish vanities of earth his present, his eternal all. It is not yet past recovery; there is still the cross, and open still is the way that will conduct the sinner to it. It is like the great altar of old, known in the former country of the Israelites; it is the great altar to flee to: there only can we find pardon, there only can we find peace. And oh, may He come forth this morning especially for the comfort of his people, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life." Render him no disdainful glance: he regards no penitent sinner with a repulsive manner; his language is, to one and to all, "Why will ye die? I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. I, the resurrection and the life, will that he should turn from his wickedness and live."

## THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

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CHRISTIANITY affirms our future existence its postulate. It is not the revelation of the fact, but a description of its nature, and a provision for its beatification. And it is for him who impugns "the word of life," still to bear the burden of his own immortality as he can! The only difference between him and his fellow-travellers towards eternity, is, that he has thrown away the torch and the staff, which the others acknowledge to enlighten and help them. The argument must rest with the infidel: he must prove that man is *not* immortal: for this is the obligation on any one who sets himself in defiance of general consent.

Now, whatever is, may still be; a body impelled into motion, continues in motion: and the presumption is, that man, who at present exists, will always exist, unless the strongest reasons can be opposed. Is such a contrivance likely to perish? And if he continue to exist, should not his being, as it advances, become more grave? Extricated from its littleness of pursuit, and disciplined of its frivolity in taste? Is not his immortality the pledge of a more solemn state of things? Can the *grub* of time be the *butterfly* of eternity?

Death will, however, be urged as the palpable extinction of the being. But no man will assert that then a single atom of the body is destroyed. The organic structure is altered; fibre and fluid are decomposed; the whole enters into new combinations, but not a particle is lost. Why may not the same be true of the soul? It was held by the body—the body has been affected by mechanical causes which could not reach the soul—the soul has become disengaged. Many changes took place in that body through life, and yet the soul was the same. And to the last, amidst the wreck of its corporeal vehicle, how often does it triumph. I speak not of the hero, the martyr, the patriot, who kisses the block, the chief who chaunts the death-song—but of one whose springs of life are shivered, and all his vigours spent. There a lambent fire plays, which no chill and damp of death can extinguish. There a might puts forth itself, victorious in that grasp, beneath which all things wither. And have we not witnessed the holy spectacle? The mind rising in majesty, while all its barriers were falling from around it! It is then greatest when it might be expected to yield—then freest when it might be expected to waver—then boldest when it might be expected to shrink! "Death is thus a spontaneous act, a more ardent prayer of the mind\*." Are not then the probabilities strongly in favour of the soul's independence and indestructibility? And should a desire be felt to confuse the properties of matter and spirit, of which the human being in his present state is compounded, we shall again remit the disputant to the common sense of mankind. All allow them to be as different things, as differing and inconvertible properties can prove them. And whatever physiological hardihood has dared, we wait with perfect composure for it to prove, that man is a mere machine; that intellect is the result of organization and a modification of matter, most subtilized and alternated; that thought is an effect of refined substance and arrangement, even though it will allow, that no more of grossness enters into its nature than into the effluvia of a rose, and the tone of a

\* De Stael.

vibration. And if soul and body be such foreign essences, how can it be supposed that they are subject in themselves to the same accidents, or perish by the same fates?

And on the supposition that there is no immortality for man, et the sceptic attempt to vindicate the character of his God. It cannot be denied that it is the fervid aspiration of our nature, that the cessation of being is regarded by us as the greatest possible infliction, and that each yearning of our bosom disposes us to "give all that we have for our life." Something of this feeling, we admit, may have been benevolently given, though death were the last scene of all, as a precautionary instinct, that we might prize and guard so important a deposit. But this is a nobler tending of our being. It cannot bear that its garner of affections and its treasure of purest delights shall, in a moment, be crushed. It cannot endure that its high studies, and wonderful acquirements, shall be instantaneously blotted into night. It cannot brook the sudden transition from the intellectual soul, into the sleepless clod. And yet the theist must conceive that the Deity has raised these hopes to crush them, and taught men to ascend a mount, whence they might descry the boundless prospect, that they might die on that mount. And thus represented cruel to man, he is described as equally unjust to himself. His creatures made capable of understanding him, are perplexed with his conduct, but confide in its destined explanation. They have only seen "a part of Him." They have heard but a passage of an infinite history, and beheld but a scene of the eternal drama. They "wait the great teacher—Death and God adore." But while their spirits are rapt in anxiety, they perish in the suspense! Ready to burst into the song of wonder, love, and praise, their lips are sealed in endless silence.

Let, then, the unbeliever consider his case. He is hastening to judgment! He will soon enter into eternity. His rejection of Christianity does not, in the slightest degree, alter these laws of his being. For him there is no pause, no choice. He is borne resistlessly forward: however his spirit may recoil, his step cannot. Each moment, each pulse, testifies his progress. He is always accountable, and shall live always.—REV. R. W. HAMILTON

## REFLECTIONS ON DEPARTURE.

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REV. T. BINNEY.

KING'S WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL, EASTCHEAP, MAY 25, 1834.

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“ Arise, let us go hence.”—JOHN, xiv. 31.

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I CAN easily perceive, by the aspect of the congregation this afternoon, that many of you have been led here on account of the peculiarity of our circumstances; that you have come to listen to the last sermon, and to mingle in the last Sabbath-day meeting in this place of worship. On this account, therefore, brethren, instead of an *introduction*, I will begin with an *application*. There is another last sermon, and another last meeting: the opportunity will come in which *you* will be sitting and listening to the last sermon that you will ever hear on earth; the moment will come when the voice of some preacher will be addressing the Gospel to your ear, and to your heart, for the last time. Aye, and there is another meeting in which you will mingle, the last meeting, in which the wicked and the righteous will be mingled together on earth, and when they will be separated, and when “ every eye shall see him,” and when you shall be there.

Now, brethren, do you ever think of this? You come to listen to the last sermon, and you come to meet in this last assembly; but do you ever think of this other assembly in which you will assuredly stand? That voice which once shook Sinai, will be heard again, and *you* will hear it: the lips that are now pronouncing mercy, and offering salvation, and ready to pronounce pardon, will pronounce a blessed welcome to his disciples, and will pronounce the sentence of condemnation to those who refuse it; and *you* will hear it. Oh, let us think of this, brethren; and let us lay to heart this serious recollection: and may God in his mercy grant, that the few observations I may suggest from the passage I have just read, may fall in with this great end, which you ought ever to keep in view—the preparation for that last meeting between you and God.

You can easily perceive, that I shall merely attempt to shew, in a few different applications, some of the various illustrations of which these words are capable; passing rapidly over them to bring them to bear on our own peculiar circumstances, and then adverting a little on their application to ourselves.

Of course, brethren, in meditating on this passage, the very first application of which any of you would think, would be *that in which they were primarily used*: you would apply them to the Son of God in the solemn moment when they were uttered, and you would bring before your mind the circumstances that have combined to give interest and impression to them. “ Arise, let us go hence.”

And where was he going? He was going to the garden, to agony, to the baptism of blood, to the meeting with the prince of the power of the air, to that great and awful conflict in which the prophecy was to be fulfilled, that he should present his soul an offering for sin, and bear the burden of the world's atonement. This was the last night of the Redeemer's life. He had been eating the passover with his disciples; he had been delighting them with his calm and blessed instruction, with his holy promises and consolatory statements: and then, at the close of his discourse, he said, "Arise, let us go hence." He could use these words with ideas, and with anticipations, and with impressions, of which they knew nothing. They had been sitting listening to his voice; he knew that in a little time they would be scattered, and that all would forsake him and flee. The traitor had gone, and made his arrangements, which arrangements were rising to their completion; and our Lord saw this, and felt the moment advancing and approaching: yet there was nothing, either like fainting under the prospect, or rashness, or precipitancy, or passion; but all was calm and tranquil: there was the grandeur, and sublimity, and magnanimity, which ever appeared in his character and conduct; and he calmly said, "Arise, let us go hence." He felt whither he was going: "I will not talk much to you hereafter: for the prince of this world cometh, nevertheless he hath nothing in me; but he cometh that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so do I. Arise, let us go hence."

That moment was approaching on which the eye of God had dwelt from all eternity: for, I apprehend, that the offering of the Son of God in our nature, for the sin of the world, as it was a manifestation of the perfections of God which had never been surpassed, and which never can be repeated, so it was something to draw down the attention of angelic society to comprehend the lessons they were to learn there of the grandeur and perfections of the divine nature. It was something on which the eye of God was fixed; in which there was to be a manifestation to the whole intelligent universe, of lessons which they could learn nowhere besides: and there was now just approaching all that particular work which Christ came into the world to perform, and now was approaching the time in which it was to be accomplished. "Arise, let us go hence."

But we may make another application of the passage: we may bring it down into contact with our own feelings, and may apply it to several circumstances of Providence as they occur to ourselves. You might meditate upon the words in their application to several circumstances in life. It would not be improper to apply them to the very lowest application of which they will admit; to *local removals* of place and of habitation, when the voice of Providence and of God calls us from scenes and from situations where we have been surrounded by kindred and congenial society. We may be called away from our father's house, from all the society, and the endearing recollections that are there. Or we may be called from a particular habitation which we may have long occupied, where we may have felt and experienced much of the blessing of God; where we may have passed through many afflictions; the walls of which, so to speak, have listened to our prayers, and seen the wrestlings of our spirit, and listened to the manifestation of the divine goodness: and when the voice of Providence has said, "Arise, let us go hence," and we feel we must say to ourselves, "Let us go hence," there are many emotions which come upon the heart; and I should never envy that man his feelings, who had never experienced such emotions.



We may apply it to *moral circumstances*, when we may be called to depart from peculiar circumstances of enjoyment, comfort, and tranquillity, and to enter upon scenes of adversity and misfortune, when we are called to experience what is painful and distressing to our mind and heart.

You may give it a higher application still—to what is *spiritual*. I never like to be mystical in the application of Scripture; but I cannot help thinking, when I look at a passage like this, and the human heart and human history, I cannot help thinking of the language of Moses, “Come with us, and we will do thee good:” I cannot help thinking of the resolutions which have often been made, when these words have been uttered and carried home to the heart of a man by the Spirit of God; when he has determined to arise and go to his Father, when he has heard the voice of God saying, “Arise, and depart; this is not your rest;” and he has broken from his fears, and he has arisen, and gone forth in the freedom of his spirit, rejoicing in that mercy which he receives by faith.

It may be applied in another way; it may be applied to *the matter of death*. Death is frequently spoken of as departure. Did you ever dwell upon the import of that word, *departure*? It conveys a grand truth: it is not extinction, but departure—the positive removal, the going, the passing from one place to another; the continuance of consciousness, the continuance of every capacity, and every faculty, and of every feeling; and the passing, the departure of the intelligent spirit, of the mind, with all that makes it what it is, into another place, and another state. The whole of our philosophy, (justly understood,) the whole of the representations of Scripture, sustain this view of the circumstances of death—that the mind does continue its consciousness, and does pass into a state (and what a state to pass into!) where it is to experience, and to experience for ever, the results and consequences of what had been its moral principles and its moral habits; what has been its moral tastes and likings here, are to continue throughout all eternity, and to be the source of its torment, or of its beatitude. Oh, brethren, we feebly think, we must feebly speak, and feebly conceive, of the circumstances of death. You dwell upon it very little; many of you seldom think of it; you do not try to realize it: and if you were to try with ever such intensity, you could do it very imperfectly.

But if our time permitted, and we could take up several different characters, we might, perhaps, get a strong and intense impression of what a revelation there must be made to the conscious spirits of different individuals, who pass into eternity. If you were to take a man distinguished in this world, whose name is universally known, and who had been just satisfied with that, who had made that his god, his heaven, and his happiness, and had existed in his present distinction, and in what we may designate (though there is a contradiction in the terms) his atmosphere of earthly immortality, and never thought of any thing else; what a revelation is made to that man when he departs, arises, and goes hence, and finds that, to all virtuous and holy intelligences, he is an object of contempt and disgust! Yet that is what every godless soul must be, and what every mind must be which passes hence in a state of thoughtlessness, of disregard, opposition, impenitence, and rebellion against God. They feel conscious in a moment, as soon as they pass into that world, in which nothing but truth is felt in all its clearness and in all its fulness—the man who had been something like a god here, in the view of mortals, feels himself, in a moment, to all that is like God, and to all whose praise and applause are

worth having, that he is an object of ineffable contempt. That is death to that man; that is "going hence."

Or, if you take the man who has reasoned himself, or been driven by his passions, into the belief, or the profession of the belief, that there is no God, when God stands revealed before that man, and when he finds the existence, and perfections, and government of God, proved by an evidence which he cannot deny, by a light which comes direct from God himself upon his spirit, and comes with all the intensity of a revelation of wrath, what a revelation is made to that man then!

You may take the man who is dying under the influence of false hope, who has formed erroneous and mistaken conceptions of the ground on which a sinner ought to come to God; who has done this in the midst of light, and opportunities of knowledge, and who therefore stands before God accused of himself, because of that very ignorance: when that man, with the joy, the confidence, and the composure with which he anticipates eternity, awakes, and finds to his inevitable and eternal disappointment, that he has been pursuing a shadow and depending on a broken reed, that has pursued, and will pursue him for ever; that is "going hence;" that is "departing;" to be disabused of all his errors.

So you may take up the case of other individuals of a different character. You may take up the true believer, with whom and with whose state, nobody is acquainted but himself. We may conceive of him dying under darkness, fear, and distress, waking up in the divine likeness, and satisfied with that perfection. We take the individual who died rejoicing in the hope and prospect of the glory that is to be revealed; and even in his case the impression which is made on his mind at the first moment, will be the representations given in Scripture of what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive."

We pass on to notice, in the last place, that we may apply language like this *to our own personal circumstances and situation this day; and in this service as a Church of Jesus Christ.* If we are permitted to see another Sabbath, we hope to be worshipping in another sanctuary; a sanctuary the erection of which hath been occasioned, not by foolish and contemptible ambition, but rendered necessary by the Providence of God; and that Providence has been clearly and distinctly saying to ourselves, under its influence, "Arise, let us go hence."

It would be impossible to do this without a variety of recollections. We look around, and we consider whence we are going. We are going from a place interesting to our minds, hallowed to our remembrances, by the purposes to which it hath been devoted—a place, erected and devoted to God, where his praise hath sounded, where prayer hath been offered, where his word hath been expounded, with which the idea of God and eternity, all that is solemn and sublime in truth, has been associated. "Thou shalt reverence my sanctuary." I envy not the man who, upon entering into a place of worship, does not feel an awe and solemnity on his spirit. I envy not the man who can feel, and look about him, in a place of worship, a place devoted to God, as if he were in a common habitation, devoted merely to the purposes of man. I have always felt, on entering a church, or a chapel, or a meeting-house, or any place which associates itself in my mind with the solemnities and truth of God, an awe and a reverence on my spirit; and I am ready to feel some respect for, and to pay some respect to, the very place, which is associated with the name and being,

and the worship, of the Eternal Jehovah. We are called to quit a place which hath these associations, and hath been thus devoted.

Again ; I think we may say with propriety, guided by the representations of Scripture, we are quitting a place hallowed, we firmly believe, by *events which have transpired within it*. Some of the greatest events in the history of God's government have taken place, in common with every place where his Gospel hath been preached in sincerity, and with the Spirit from on high. The greatest possible transitions have taken place here in the history of human minds : impressions have been made, knowledge communicated, the heart affected, the conscience arrested ; and the results of all that are passing on, and will pass on, and expand and increase in magnitude and magnificence, for ever and ever. Here souls have been born to God. Over this scene, as over every other, where God's truth hath been preached in faithfulness and with effect, I believe that angels have lingered, and that angels have rejoiced over sinners that have repented. And I should envy not any man who should look around on a place devoted to destruction, sacred by associations, and hallowed by events like this, without something like emotion ; and especially those who have here met and mingled in the worship of God, and whose prayers have been answered by the putting forth of his Spirit.

We leave a place, sacred to many of you by *relative recollections* of interest and importance. I mean, that here many of you have the recollection of a pious ancestry : here you have looked on the forms and the countenances of parents whom you now see no more ; here you have been led by them, to the house of God : here perhaps you were dedicated in the holy ordinance of baptism to the God of your fathers : and here your parents have borne you upon their hearts ; and when the man of God hath prayed for the young, they have thought of the little ones sitting at their side, and they have sympathized with the feelings of the man and the minister, and they have offered up their prayers and their supplications for *you*. You have recollections of this nature, and you look back upon those with whom you have thus come to the house of God in company : they have departed ; but the place is here, and the place is sacred and dear to the recollection.

Again ; the place is sacred to many of you by *personal recollections*, as well as relative. Here you yourselves have been moulded and impressed by the truth which you have heard : here God hath come to you in connexion with the preaching of the word, and the various services of the Church : here you believe you have received into your own minds the incorruptible seed of the kingdom, which liveth and abideth for ever ; and you rejoice, and give God thanks, that you were led here to hearken to the voice of the man of God, in exhibiting that truth by which you trust you were saved and sanctified. Aye, and many of you have peculiar recollections of seasons and of sacraments, in which the truth that had been dwelt upon, hath been peculiarly appropriate to your personal circumstances ; in which prayers that have been offered have just met your state of feeling ; in which you have received recollections which you treasure to this day ; and you look upon some of the scenes and circumstances in which you have mingled with devout thankfulness, and will do so for ever.

There are other views, brethren, besides these. You have to look back upon *painful recollections*, as well as such as those to which I have referred. Many of you have often engaged in the ordinances of God's house, and many have

received spiritual benefits from them ; yet you have to look back upon services and sermons neglected, and Sabbaths misimproved ; when you have heard with indolence, or a critical and improper feeling ; when you have conversed on what you have heard with flippancy, instead of retiring with it to pray. You have to look back to various circumstances and occasions in which you have not endeavoured to extract the benefit and the blessing which was intended ; and, you feel, that while you rejoice in what you have received, and what benefit you trust you have enjoyed ; oh, there are deep feelings of penitence to mingle with the expression of the joy.

Some of you have deeper and more painful feelings than these still. Some of you are conscious that you have sat here under the sound of the Gospel from your infancy, and you have sat here only to be hardened—hardened by the very Gospel which was intended to soften and to bless. For you have hitherto resisted every application, and every appeal, and every exhortation, and you are living, though the children of pious parents, and parents that may have passed into the skies, though you were the object of many prayers and supplications, though the Gospel has been preached faithfully and effectually, and urged on your mind and conscience—you still live without God and without Christ in the world. All the Sabbaths and the services you have enjoyed here, I was going to say they are *nothing*, but I dare not say that ; they are *something*, they are *much* ; and though they have been hitherto nothing in the production of any spiritual effect on your consciences, they are recollected by God, and they will increase and aggravate your criminality and your punishment, if you still resist and put away from you his mercy, and die impenitent after all.

Brethren, I need not dilate upon the peculiar feelings with which we ought, and must, leave a place like this, after the observations which I have made. I might mention, without enlarging upon the subject, that you leave, and we expect you to leave, with regret, even though there may be other considerations to excite other feelings. We admit, that by many of you, who have associations with no other place but this—who have the recollections of your infancy clinging around the very building, there is something like a delicate regret to be indulged as to a place, so sacred to your feelings, which is about to be destroyed. We may easily imagine, that there may be feelings of this nature, in looking about upon a place which is to be annihilated, no longer to exist, though dear and sacred to the imaginations of your heart. You will indulge regret from the little you have benefitted, and you should regret the inefficiency of the service in the preaching of God's word here ; its general inefficiency, because, that may have been caused by your neglect of prayer, your forgefulness to bear the man of God, or the men of God, upon your hearts in your supplications : for, brethren, it should never be forgotten by you, it should never be forgotten by the Church, that the success of the preaching of the Gospel depends as much on the prayers of the people, and the faith of the people, as upon the prayers and faithfulness of the preacher. If the minister is not so successful and efficient as he might desire, and as others might desire, the fault should be laid to his people as well as to him. They forget the exhortation of the Apostle, "Pray for us, that the word of God may have free course, and be glorified." The prayers of the Church are as necessary for the preaching of the Gospel, as faithfulness, affection, and faith, on the part of him that preache .

You cannot but have *gratitude* at a moment like this : gratitude for all the

personal benefits you have received; gratitude, that though we depart, and though the place is to be destroyed, it is not because the Church of God is to be extinguished; it is not because the Church of God, that has existed here so many years has ceased to be. No; we trust we live: we trust that the Word of God liveth in us and among us, and we have reason, therefore, to be grateful and to rejoice, that, though we depart from this place, where our fathers and where we have worshipped, we trust, we have before us a sphere of larger activity, where the truth of God will be still maintained, the Gospel of God preached, and the glory of God promoted; and, therefore, we desire to go on with hope and with prayer, that He would go with us, whose blessing maketh rich, and who, when Paul planteth, and Apollos watereth, giveth efficiently the increase.

Let me conclude with one or two observations to different classes. There are some, though not many, persons present, who must have very peculiar feelings at this moment; some of my venerable, and aged, and respected friends, who witnessed the erection of this building, who were present at the preaching of the first sermon, and are now present at the preaching of the last. Though there has been on this spot a house for God, a house in which the Church now worshipping in it hath continued to worship for nearly one hundred and forty years, yet this building itself has been erected but forty years: and there are some present who recollect all the circumstances and all the transactions, who had a part and duty in connexion with that erection. To such, it seems appropriate to say, that in the course of nature, very soon the voice of Providence will be to them to arise and to depart hence: very soon, with respect to them, the earthly house of their tabernacle will be dissolved; and we trust, that by faith in the atoning sacrifice, and by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we trust, that they are prepared to enter upon the building of God, a building not made with hands, but which is eternal in the heavens. May grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, rest upon them by the influence of the Holy Spirit! May such persons manifest the maturity and mellowness of aged disciples; and may they long be continued to those that are young in years and in the Church, to be before them, and to manifest before them, all the Christian graces and virtues, by which those are to be exercised who come unto Christ, and are devoted to his service!

I would address myself for a moment to the young and active; the young that *ought* to be active; for there is that class of persons as well as others: I mean those connected with the Church. My dear young friends, and I do not mean in that very young persons, but I mean, persons that are in the vigour and enjoyment of all their full health, and the powers of their mind and body; who feel that they are in the midst of all the many occupations of life, and with all their vigour and their strength attaching to them; who ought, therefore, to feel, that it is the time for their being active for God: if you have been zealous and active, and if you have hitherto been desiring in the various ways, and in connexion with the various societies with which opportunity is given, by which you can glorify God, we are about to remove into a larger sphere, where we shall have ampler opportunities, with a desire to have enlarged zeal, and to manifest greater devotedness and greater activity; if you have hitherto been not so active and so zealous as the power and grace of God, operating upon your heart, ought to have made you, then with your desire to go hence,

and in the new sphere on which you are entering, endeavour to have new principles and new feelings, and seek to have large opportunities by which God may be glorified by your zealous desire to promote his cause. Oh, brethren, there is round about us ignorance to be removed, affliction to be mitigated, poverty to be alleviated, and a variety of modes by which good can be done: and the motive which we should gather from the occurrence, ought to be a constant moving and impelling power to work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can labour.

One word to the impenitent and the negligent, who are still living in their sins, in spite of all that they have heard, and all the privileges and blessings which they have enjoyed here. My brethren, you are about to remove with us; you go with us: you attach yourself to the place and the congregation, from various circumstances of old associations and connexions. Observe, where you are going the Gospel goes with you, the mercy of God goes with you, opportunities for repentance go with you, the cross of Christ goes with you, the ministry of reconciliation goes with you: these things will all still be enjoyed and urged upon you. But there is another removal, when you will leave all these behind you: when you are called to arise and to go hence, not merely to change your locality on earth, but to change them for eternity. You must leave the Gospel behind you, the ministry of reconciliation behind you, the Sabbath behind you, the opportunity of repentance behind you: all the instructions which God hath appointed for your conversion and your sanctification, all must be left; and you must enter into that world where the Gospel will never be heard, the call to faith never heard, the offer of mercy never heard; but where your moral and spiritual nature must bear the results and consequences of your sins and your impenitence for ever and ever. And how soon that removal may be, you know not, I know not; none know. We should, therefore, live, with a perpetual impression on our hearts of the uncertainty of the moment, that it may come at any moment: and, therefore, brethren, let me close by affectionately entreating and exhorting you, that to-day, this day, if you will hear God's voice, harden not your hearts. "Now, then, we beseech you, to be reconciled unto God; as though God did beseech you, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God: for he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

May God grant his blessing to these few observations; and so far as they have been appropriate and accordant with your feelings and your sentiments, may they be sanctified and blessed to your religious improvement. Amen.

## THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

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REV. J. A. JAMES.

KING'S WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL\*, FISH STREET HILL, MAY 28, 1834.

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WE are assembled, my dear hearers, under the most auspicious circumstances, and with feelings of unmingled and sacred pleasure, to set apart this building, by prayer and praise, by reading and explaining God's holy word, for a place of public worship, according to the principles and usages of Protestant Dissenters. It is sometimes the case on occasions like the present, that our feelings of delight are alloyed by the recollection of the circumstances which originate a new place and a new congregation; for it must be admitted, and on some accounts regretted, that such new congregations do commonly arise from a spirit of division and alienation. No such spot is upon our feast of charity this morning; no such cloudy shadows fall now on this hill of Zion: all is harmony and love; not only is there peace within, but peace with all that are around. I offer my sincere and hearty congratulations to the minister† and people who are to worship here, on the arrival of a morning which rewards so much labour, terminates so much anxiety, answers so many prayers, and awakens such lively and joyful anticipations. The blessing of the Lord rest upon his servant, and upon those committed to his care; may his life be as long, his conduct as blameless and holy, his ministry as useful, and his retirement as calm and serene, as those of his venerable predecessor‡ who presided so long over the Church which is now committed to his care; and whose name and honours, we rejoice to think, will be long borne in our Churches, by sons who have reason to call him blessed, and to be called blessed by him.

I believe it is not unusual when a new country, or part of one, is discovered, and ceded to a particular monarch, to unfurl his flag, and to claim it in his name. What is this but a new territory, to be ceded to the King of kings and Lord of lords? And this day will I endeavour to unfurl the banner of the cross, and to claim it for him. The words I have selected as the subject of discourse, are—

“And there they preached the Gospel.”—ACTS, xiv. 7.

To gratify curiosity by information on matters of general literature and history, or to please the taste by facts that appeal to the imagination, was no part of the object of those holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Although they informed us, that the great Apostle of the Gentiles stood amid the beauties of Athenian glory, they tell us of nothing connected with his visit, but of his grief over the wickedness of the inhabitants of that illustrious city. The statues and the temples—the very fragments of which now, in some minds, almost call up the idolatry that reared them—and which were then in the autumnal charms of their vicious loveliness, which had not

\* Opening of the Chapel.

† Rev. T. Binney.

‡ Rev. John Clayton, Sen.

then experienced any influence from the storms of human violence, and the wintry season of Greece, passed with them silently to oblivion; and now that the sacred historian relates the circumstances of their visit to those Grecian cities, every thing is passed over in silence but one solitary fact, which other historians would have thought beneath their notice to record. The cities and their inhabitants, for aught that the writer of the Acts of the Apostles cared or thought about them, but as immortal souls, would have passed down the stream of time unnoticed, had not those cities been the scene of apostolical labour, and had it not been said, that "there they preached the Gospel."

This incident, at the present time, awakens interest in more worlds than one. Many a glorified spirit in heaven, and many a miserable ghost in perdition, are looking back to these cities, and to the fact recorded concerning them, and with emphasis, partaking of course of an entirely different character, are saying, "There, indeed, they preached the Gospel." It is with this fact, my brethren, that the solemnities of this morning are associated. We are commencing transactions here of which through eternity, the short, the simple, the sublime record will be, the language of the text. It is not as a place of splendid architecture, it is not as a place of royal residence, it is not as a seat of learning, a hall of science, an asylum of misery, a fountain of mercy, that the memorial of this house will be preserved; but as a place where the truth as it is in Jesus was preached: a circumstance which will connect our business this morning with the cause, which is to emerge from the wreck of nations, and the ruin of worlds, as an everlasting monument to the praise and glory of divine grace.

I shall adopt the most simple and inartificial division of the subject; even as it will be thought by some, I have selected a subject exceedingly trite. In the first place, I shall explain what we are to understand by the Gospel; secondly, shew what it is to preach the Gospel; and, thirdly, endeavour to prove the importance of preaching the Gospel.

In the first place, I am to endeavour to explain **THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL**. In etymology the term signifies "glad tidings:" in theology the term signifies the glad tidings of salvation through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. By "the Gospel" we are not to understand what is usually denominated the New Testament, as distinguished from the Old; for there is much Gospel in the Old, and much law in the New. It is the ministration of *life*, as distinguished from the ministration of *death*; it is the foundation of a sinner's hope, as distinguished from the rule of the creature's and the Christian's conduct. It is called "the Gospel of the grace of God," because the whole system originated in free and unmerited favour: "the everlasting Gospel," because it occupied the counsels of the divine mind from eternity, remains the same amidst all the changes and revolutions of time, and will extend its benefits over eternity. It is called "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," because it is intended to manifest the attributes combined in the moral character of Jehovah in all their harmony and glory. It is called "the Gospel of the kingdom," because it is the basis on which the whole kingdom of the Redeemer rests. It includes in itself the divinity of our Lord's person; the atoning sacrifice of his death; the justification of a sinner, by faith, in the sight of God; the renovation of the heart, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; the universal invitation to all sinners to avail themselves of its rich provision of promise, that all that believe shall be saved. One word, but millions of ideas; uttered in a moment, but perpetuating



its blessings for ever; including what can be comprehended only by the All-wise and Infinite Mind.

In the second division of discourse, I shall state **WHAT IT IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL**. Of course it summarily means, to explain its nature, to exhibit its blessings, to enforce its obligations; but I must be a little more particular here, and enter into some details.

To preach the Gospel, is not to exhibit exclusively a system of morals, even though it may be a system of Christian ethics, and far removed from the coldness of Seneca or Epictetus: for, viewing man as a condemned sinner, perishing under the guilt that he has contracted, is it Gospel to him to tell him how good he must be? Pardon is what he wants, and nothing is Gospel but what tells him how it is to be obtained. Neither is the preaching of the Gospel to be understood as meaning the everlasting and unvarying exhibition of the high and awful doctrines of God's sovereignty in personal and eternal election: for can it be Gospel to an individual asking in all the solicitude of an awakened mind "What shall I do to be saved?" to one simply told, and told nothing else, that God from eternity has chosen a people for himself, and that peradventure he may, or may not, be one of them? I do not mean to say, that either morality or the doctrine of the divine decrees, is opposed to the Gospel; but I am simply affirming, that the exhibition of these truths and obligations, separately and by themselves, is not the preaching of the Gospel in the spiritual meaning of the phrase.

What is it? First, *the exhibition of the crucifixion of Christ as a fact, in connexion with the design of that fact, as connected with the moral government of God*. I say, there must be a union of the fact and of the design, or there can be no Gospel. Separate the death of Christ from its design as an atonement for sin, exhibit that death merely as the closing scene of even the first of martyrs, the highest of the witnesses of truth, and it is no more in fact Gospel, than the presenting of the death of one of those illustrious individuals whose sufferings are recorded in the pages of the Christian martyrology. The atonement of Christ is not merely a doctrine of the Scriptures, it is the Scripture itself: it is that which is exhibited in substance in the New Testament, in shadow in the Old; and it is the connecting link between the two. To deny the doctrine of the atonement, is not so much to misunderstand the testimony of Scripture, as to contradict it. This then is the Gospel—to exhibit Christ, as the propitiation, through faith in his blood, for the remission of sins.

In the second place, to preach the Gospel, is *to exhibit Jesus Christ in the divinity of his person*. The divinity of Christ is essential to the atonement. An atonement, properly understood, signifies an equivalent, either in kind or in effect. The atonement of Christ of course partakes not of the character of an equivalent in kind; but unquestionably it does, and must partake, of the character of an equivalent in effect. Now, brethren, if this be correct, can there be an atonement made by a mere creature, that, viewed in the relation to the moral government of God, can be an equivalent in effect, compared with the result of the everlasting perdition of all that have transgressed. It is a remark of Fuller, that to speak of any mere creature, however exalted, making atonement for sin (and he is here, you will particularly observe, reasoning against the Arian hypothesis) to speak of any mere creature, however exalted that creature might be, making atonement for sin, is just as if it had been said, the king of Gre

Britain, when he pardoned the deluded votaries of the Pretender, set forth a worm, tortured upon the point of a needle, as an exhibition of his justice, at the time that he was disposed to manifest his mercy. This, then, is the preaching of the Gospel—to exhibit Him, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but took upon him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Thirdly, to preach the Gospel, is, *to exhibit the atonement and righteousness of Christ, as the exclusive foundation of the Christian's hope of acceptance before God.* Without the doctrine of justification by faith, there can be no Gospel. Let it be known, or imagined, that there is something more than the work of Christ necessary for the reconciliation of the sinner to God, that something yet remains to be done to complete the ground of his being admitted to Divine favour, and the silver trumpet is dashed from the lips of the preacher, the rising beam of hope is extinguished in the heart of the sinner, and the whole world of transgressors is thrown back at once into everlasting despair and hopeless night. The doctrine of justification by faith is the Gospel, and then we preach the Gospel, when we declare, that “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Again: to preach the Gospel, is *to exhibit the death of Christ as the great means, in the hands of the Spirit, of the sanctification of the sinner's heart.* Justification is but half the word salvation; sanctification is the other half. The man that preaches only deliverance from the curse of the law by faith in the righteousness of Christ, preaches but half the Gospel. Go to the sinner, go to the miserable criminal in jail, withering away under the power of a loathsome and fatal disease, and tell him you have brought him the pardon of his sovereign, who in his great clemency has determined to resene him from death; he will turn upon you with half-closed eye, and if there be strength left, he will ask you, with his half-suppressed and silent voice—“What is the clemency of my sovereign to me? I shall be a dead man, notwithstanding his pardon, in a few days or a few hours.” To meet this man's case, you must carry him, not merely the pardon of his sovereign, but the medicine of his physician; and only the union of these two favours can meet his case. And so is it with the sinner: let him only have pardon, being under the power of a moral disease, that pardon will be of no avail to his happiness: you must provide him with sanctification, or you meet not his case: with an unrenewed heart, an unsanctified nature, he must be a wretch upon the highest throne in glory; he must find a hell in the immediate vicinity of the throne of God himself. Therefore, a man is preaching the Gospel as entirely, as effectually, when he is preaching sanctification through the influence of the truth, as when he is preaching justification through faith in the cross.

Again: to preach the Gospel, is *to exhibit the invitations of mercy co-extensive with the aspect of the atonement, and to exhibit both co-extensive with the reach of human guilt and misery in the world.* My brethren, if we are not to invite all, we can invite none; and the advocates for the restricted system are perfectly consistent with themselves, when they adopt the latter course: but their consistency with the testimony of God's word is another matter. The Gospel can be no glad tidings to any man, if, on its own account, it is not to be published as a record of divine grace offered to the guiltiest of the human race. Blot out that word “whosoever,” from the pages of Scripture, and you

have put out one of the brightest beams of the Gospel: take away that word, and the whole world is full of the torture of uncertainty as to *who* are invited to partake of the blessings of salvation. Retain that, sound it, explain it, enforce it, spread out the riches of divine grace before a lost world, present the blessings of salvation, and tell all that hear, that they are invited to accept, believe, and live; and you then preach the Gospel.

I have glanced at the influence of the Spirit; I must return for a moment or two to that. We preach the Gospel, when we exhibit *the provision God has made for the renovation of the human heart, by the work of the Holy Ghost*. It has been conjectured by some, and not without the apparent support of reason and revelation, that the design of the human system in the moral government of God, was, to prove to the universe, and for ever, that the creature who had once broken his allegiance to God, could never, under any circumstances, be restored again, but by the special interposition of God himself. And here, then, we have the provision: for, brethren, even after the sacrifice had been offered upon the cross, and the invitation had been sounded out to all the world, not an individual of the human race would have been saved, had there not been a provision made, in the wisdom and mercy of God, that by his holy Spirit, sinners should be made willing in the day of God's power.

Lastly, we preach the Gospel of Christ, when we exhibit *as the supreme and ultimate object of Christian hope, the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come without a sin-offering unto salvation*. "As for the personal reign of Christ," says the great Dr. Owen, "I leave this to the persons with whose discoveries I am not, and with whose curiosities I would not be acquainted." These, brethren, are the truths which are to be exhibited in preaching the Gospel; which will substantially be exhibited from this pulpit; which are exhibited with a greater unanimity of opinion, and with a greater harmony of spirit, in that denomination to which we belong, than perhaps in any other. Without creeds, without articles, without condemning those who adopt them, we have, by the blessing of Almighty God and the effusion of his holy Spirit, maintained that agreement of sentiment, that unity of the Spirit, which we consider, not our boast but our glory, and that which we regard as a token for good that God indeed is with us.

In the third head of discourse, on which I shall, perhaps, dwell rather longer than on the preceding, I shall shew **THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL**.

In the first place, consider *the grandeur and sublimity of its ultimate design*. That design is nothing commercial, nothing scientific, nothing political, nothing philosophical. The minister of Jesus Christ, when preaching the everlasting Gospel of the Redeemer, was infinitely above the philosopher in his study, the statesman in his cabinet, the traveller in his course; above all that occupy themselves by merely secular pursuits, however lawful or however dignified they may be. Brethren, we magnify not our office for our own sakes, but for the sake of the object which we contemplate in that office; and we are bound to affirm, that all that the human mind can contemplate, all that the human imagination can conceive, compared with the end of the ministerial office, and the preaching of the Word of God, are but as the puerilities of children, and the trifles of a moment. Our object is, the salvation of immortal souls, in connexion with the manifestation of the divine glory. Souls! Do we think

properly upon what we mean when we speak of souls? Not merely the seat of intellect, but the soul—the seat of moral character, of happiness, or of misery. It was said by an American preacher, (and there was no extravagance in the assertion, for where can be found representations, or who can advance them, that can be hyperbolic or extravagant, when immortality is the theme?)—it was said by this preacher, that were there but one soul destitute of the Gospel, and that soul was at the very extreme of the earth, it would be worth while for all the people in America, did no stronger obligation detain them at home, forthwith to embark, and search out that soul, and to carry the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to him for his salvation. In the salvation of one soul there is a deeper interest, and a wider comprehension of happiness, than the history of this great world of ours includes in it, (separate from eternity,) dated from the creation, and going on to the conflagration.

Surely, then, brethren, the preaching of the Gospel, which is the instituted means of saving souls, acquires a character of importance which nothing else that hath come within reach of the imagination, can possibly sustain. Oh, let poets, in the pride of their genius, let philosophers, in the scorn of their intellect, let statesmen, in the pursuit of what they consider to be higher and nobler objects, pour their contempt, if they will, upon the simple, sacred institute to which I am now alluding; but let them know, (and it is the language of truth and soberness,) that the erection of one such place as this, will furnish a greater accession to the virtue and the happiness of the moral universe, than all that poets ever wrote, all that philosophers ever discovered, all that statesmen ever enacted. We therefore, brethren, throw back the contempt with which the ministers of righteousness are sometimes treated; and we say, that the proudest monuments of human genius are not worth a moment's thought, compared with the salvation of one of those children belonging to your Sunday Schools.

In the second place, the importance of the preaching of the Gospel may be gathered from the consideration of *the collateral benefits which attend the accomplishment of its ultimate purpose*. I am quite aware that I may now seem to come down from higher to lower ground; descending from heaven to earth; leaving eternity to contemplate time. But there are advantages in representing the matter in this point of view, and in shewing that the Gospel, while it shall conduct its believer to glory, and honour, and immortality, is, as has been often repeated, sowing and scattering the seed of social order, happiness, and improvement, in its path. Look at the influence of the preaching of the Gospel upon individual character: for be it recollected, as has been already observed, that whom the Gospel saves it sanctifies; and it is in its beneficent design, it is in the comprehension of its power and purpose, to sanctify men whom all except the Gospel, and the preachers of the Gospel, have abandoned as utterly incorrigible, and given up as beyond the reach of improvement. There are no desperate characters in the view of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is the glory of the preacher of the Gospel, that he can send his voice into the darkest haunts of iniquity, that he can address the lowest and the most wretched slave of Satan, and tell that man there is mercy that can reach his case, blood that can wash away his crime, and power that can change his hard and wicked heart. I not only speak to my brethren in the ministry, but I speak to those who form our Churches, when I say, how often have we witnessed there petition of the scene that was presented in the Corinthian Church:

“ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” If characters not altogether as abandoned as these, have come before us as they once had been, yet still have there not been cases analogous to them, in which we have seen the reforming and sanctifying process of evangelical truth? How often have we seen realized the beautiful imagery of the Prophet, “ Instead of the thorn shall come up the myrtle-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the fir-tree?” We have known characters formerly as grievous as pricking thorns, as wounding briers; men that were the pests and disturbers of society; but they have become, by the power of the Spirit upon the preaching of the Word, its ornament and defence; and thus have resembled the fir-tree, refreshing the weary traveller by its shade, and the myrtle, rejoicing him by its odoriferous fragrance. Characters once fierce and rough, rude and savage, relentless and unforgiving, changed by the power of religion, exhibit the virtues of saints, the graces of angels, the image of the great God himself.

My brethren, it is the Gospel only that can do this: many testimonies might be brought forward in proof; I shall read one of no ordinary individual, whose language is familiar with many of you, but not, perhaps, with all, and which is so much in point, that though known to some, I shall not scruple to read it: I mean the appeal that was made by Dr. Chalmers, on leaving a former charge, and on referring to the earlier part of his ministry, when that great intellect was not enlightened by the illuminating influence of the Spirit of truth, and that noble and capacious heart was not yet sanctified by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. In his farewell address he has the following language:—“ And here I cannot but record the effect of an actual, though undesigned experiment, which I prosecuted for upwards of twelve years among you. For the greatest part of that time I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, and the villainy of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny; in a word, upon all those diversities of character which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and the disturbers of society. Even at that time, I certainly did press the reformation of honour, and truth, and integrity, among my people; but I never once heard of any such reformation having been effected amongst them: if there was anything at all brought about in this way, it was more than I ever got any account of. I am now sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the proprieties of social life, had not the weight of a feather in the moral habits of my parishioners: and it was not until I got impressed with the thorough alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God—it was not until reconciliation with him became the distinct and prominent object of my ministerial exertions—it was not until I took the scriptural mode of laying the method of reconciliation before them—it was not till the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit, given through the channel of Christ’s mediatorship withal, set before them as the unceasing object of their hope—it was not, in one word, until the contemplation of my people was turned to those great and essential elements in the business of the soul, providing for its interests with God, and the concerns of eternity, that I ever heard of those subordinate

reformations, which I aforetime made my earnest and my zealous, but, at the same time, I am afraid, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations." Did mortal tongue, or mortal pen, ever bear a testimony so striking as this, unless under the guiding influence of inspiration, to the necessity of the preaching of the Gospel, even for the reformation of mankind? If vice could ever have been charmed out of its propensities by the splendour of language, if profligacy could ever have been arrested in its course by the majesty of genius and the force of oratory, then had not the profligate gone from beneath the sound of that man's voice to his sin, but had sinned no more: but even this distinguished servant of the cross tells the world for their instruction, and multitudes will listen to his instruction, that he could not moralize men, but by evangelizing them.

My brethren, to carry on the representation from individual character to society (for what is society but a collection of individuals?) the same remark will apply. Families that were once the torment of themselves, the terror of their neighbourhood, the disgrace of their species, by the preaching of the Gospel have become purified, harmonized, and elevated: the moral aspect of towns, cities, and provinces, has been changed, by this simple, sublime, mighty institute. To refer to the language of this celebrated preacher again, he remarks of the preaching of the knowledge of Christ crucified, referring to the Highlands of his own country—"But for this, the fierceness of our ancestors would have come down unsoftened and unsubdued to the existing generation; the darkling spirit of superstition would have frowned upon us from the North; and these plains, now so peaceful and so happy, would have been laid open to the fury of merciless invaders. Oh ye soft and sentimental travellers, who wander so securely over this romantic land, ye do well to choose a season when the angry elements of nature are asleep. But what is it that has charmed to their long repose the more dreadful elements of human passion and human injustice; so that while her torrents roar as fiercely, her mountain brows look as grimly, has thrown so softening and sacred an influence over the minds and the manners of her living population?"

My brethren, this is as correct in sentiment, as it is beautiful in expression. I am no enemy to education; give it to the widest extent: let us have improved systems of legislation as well as of education: let philosophy go on with its discoveries, and art with its inventions: but oh, attempt not to persuade me (for I am not to be persuaded, with the testimony of Scripture and with the facts of history in my perception) that all this is enough to reform the habits and purify the minds of society. I am aware that education is the idol of the day; I am aware that the praise of knowledge is sounded forth, (and let the praise of knowledge be sounded forth, for it is not good that the soul of man be without knowledge;) but we are mistaken if we suppose that any thing short of the preaching of the Gospel will purify society, will elevate the human race, and will meet the moral necessities of the people.

Even eloquence, eloquence in the pulpit, will not do without the Gospel. Massillon could make the Grand Monarch tremble on his throne, and pause for a moment in the career of his iniquities: but when the sound of Massillon's voice was hushed, the trembling left the heart of the King; he paused no longer in the career of his vices, but rushed with more vehemence from the momentary restraint upon his licentious character. It is recorded of Narnine, an Italian and Roman Catholic preacher, that during the season of Lent, he preached in

the pulpits of Rome, and with such effect, that half the city, as they went from beneath his sermons, along the streets, audibly exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" Two thousand crowns were spent in one single week in the purchase of ropes for the formation of whips, to inflict the laceration of a self-inflicted penance. When he preached before the Pope to the cardinals and bishops, he represented the evils of non-residence in so frightful a manner, that he alarmed between thirty and forty bishops back to their dioceses. In the pulpit of the University of Salamanca, he induced, by the simple eloquence of his voice, and the representations which he made, eight hundred students to renounce the pleasures, and pomps, and honours of this world, and betake themselves to the different monasteries that were open for their reception. But it was all mere transient excitement: Narnine himself lived to complain of his want of success, and, soon after the effects to which I have alluded, with disappointed hopes and a disgusted mind, retired to his cell: the bishops went back to the court; the whip-makers' gains were diminished, for whips were no longer in request; and Rome remained the Augean stable, with all its thousand years of accumulation of moral guilt. Now mark what was wanting in Narnine's preaching;—the Gospel. Eloquence moves the passions, but it is the Gospel of Christ alone that can change the heart: and let us have Narnines or Massillons in our pulpits, but if we have not the Gospel, whatever internal and external effect may be produced, the heart will not be changed, and the soul will not be converted to God. My brethren, in addition to your principles as Christians, I appeal to your principles as patriots. If you love your country, if you would do it good in the most effectual manner, promote the preaching of the Gospel.

Thirdly, the importance of the preaching of the Gospel may be learned from *its adaptation to accomplish these effects*. Now look at the Gospel itself; look at it, and observe its adaptation to do good. Are men moved by what is strange, and their curiosity arrested by it? Here is a God incarnate; the union of the divine and human natures in one person; the agony of the garden, the crucifixion of the cross: where can be found in the whole range of human events any thing so strange? Is the demonstration of the evil of sin, the inflexible justice of God, the rigid terrors of the law, calculated to arrest the conscience of the sinner and startle him in his crimes? Where can we see this demonstration as we see it in the cross? Is the exhibition of love and mercy calculated to melt the heart? Where are such love and mercy as are in the cross? Is the message of good-will from an individual whom we have injured, who has us in his power, who could destroy us in a moment, calculated to move the heart, to bring us to compunction, to draw us to his feet? Where can be found such a token of good-will as is sent to sinners in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? The Eternal God is represented as inviting, commanding, and entreating the rebel whom he could crush in a moment, (and whom he must crush if he do not accept the offer of mercy to him) to come to his arms and be for ever blessed. Oh, brethren, it is the Gospel that subdues, in the power of the Spirit, the hard heart of the sinner. It is true we must preach the law; we must roll its thunders over the conscience; we must discover its threatenings to the mental eye of the transgressor; but the very flash that terrifies, must at the same time disclose to the trembling wretch that there is a refuge at hand; the very lightning of the sermon that scares him must, at the same moment, let him see, even by the lurid glare of such a discovery, that there is an asylum at hand. The cross must be seen; we must float the music of mercy to the sinner's ear; and that

is the way, by the blessing of God, to awaken the feeling of hope in his heart. No man will give up his sins as long as he despairs of their pardon ; for despair is one of the wickedest, as well as at the same time most wretched things, in existence.

Now look at preaching, and see its adaptation to promote these ends. I am quite aware that it is the doctrines of the Gospel in the hands of the Holy Spirit that, whether private or public, in education or in sermons, form the instrument of the conversion of the soul from the error of its ways ; and I am aware that God has made use of all methods for the accomplishment of this end ; but there is a peculiar adaptation in preaching to accomplish these purposes. The way in which God accomplishes his gracious designs in the salvation of a sinner, is by instruction and impression. Now it certainly is not claiming too much for the ministerial office, to suppose that habits, and long terms of study, have prepared the individual who occupies it, to throw considerable light on the darker portions of Holy Scripture, and to render other parts plainer than they would otherwise seem to be, at least to the common minds of his hearers.

And as to impressions—impressions as connected with the instruction—the power of oratory has been acknowledged in all nations, savage and civilized, that have ever lived upon the face of the earth. The susceptibility of the human mind to audible and forcible impressions, to the impressions of audible and forcible truth, is confessed to be one of the first principles of the mental economy. “The human face divine, and living voice,” have been, in ten thousand times ten thousand instances, the means, in the hands of the Spirit, of impressing that truth on the heart and conscience, which had before been read without effect innumerable times in the privacy and stillness of the closet. Hence, many a preacher, by the simple and unaffected earnestness of his manner, has carried away his hearers upon the tide of his own feelings : his eye has helped his tongue ; the workings of his countenance disclosed the secrets of his heart : they heard what he said ; they saw what he felt ; his manner was a lucid comment upon his matter, broke down the limits that language imposed upon the communication of ideas, and gave to those who listened to him, a view and a feeling of the subject, which the clearest and most impassioned language, read alone, never could have done.

My brethren in the ministry, suffer the word of exhortation, from one who would gladly have resigned his post this morning to any of you, and who would gladly sit at your feet to receive instruction. See, from hence, if this be true, the importance that *the preacher* as well as *the sermon*, should have a heart as well as a mind. See the importance of the preacher throwing his heart and his soul into his sermon, and letting it be seen and felt by all who hear him, that he *believes* what he speaks, and that he speaks *because* he believes. The most learned discourse, if merely learned, and delivered in cold and philosophical language, may sparkle to the eye, like the stars in a wintry night in their heavenly orbits, but it will not send down one beam to cheer or warm the heart of the freezing traveller. I would not, believe me I would not, introduce enthusiasm in the pulpit ; though, in the best sense of the term, where is enthusiasm in place, if it be not in the pulpit—where a man's object is salvation—the subject of his ministry, souls—and where truth, eternal truth, is his message—when he feels that he is between two worlds, between heaven and hell, and endeavouring to snatch souls from the one, and elevate them to the other? But I would not introduce enthusiasm into the pulpit ; that should be the last place



where there is sound and nothing but sound: but still, one should never forget, that we are the servants of Him, who "maketh his ministers a flame of fire."

My brethren, look at the effect of the preaching of the Gospel, under the most disadvantageous circumstances in which it can be placed, where the messenger borrows nothing from the splendours of architecture, from the pomps of ecclesiastical dignity, from the fires of genius. Look at the unlettered itinerant; the man in whose mind the love of Christ, and souls, supplies the literature of Greece, and Rome, and Jerusalem—who knows no language but his own, and can speak that only in unclassic periods, and unpolished sentences: look at that man, taking his station in a barn, and telling the tale of the crucified Lord to his rustic audience; and see him so preaching, that they who came to scoff remain to pray, and eyes unused to weep, pour down the tears of penitence or gratitude. Proud ecclesiastics, bigots to ceremonials and canonical etiquette, may pass by the messenger and his message, with some such feeling as did the Pharisee of old the fishermen of Galilee; but angels, as they pass in their embassies of mercy over the scene, arrest each other in their flight, and pointing down to that despised spot, say one to another, "There they preached the Gospel." And as they see the wonders of the new creation, and all its beauties, arise from the chaos of the unconverted heart and polluted soul, they strike their harps afresh to the praise of Him who said, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Bear with me while, once more, I shew you the importance of preaching the Gospel, *by a reference to the history of its effects—what it has done.* I pass over the antediluvian, the patriarchal, the ceremonial, and the prophetic ages of the Old Testament, not because there was no Gospel preached then, but because we come to ages when it is more clearly and generally preached. No sooner had the Son of God given the commission to his disciples, to go and preach the Gospel, than, on the wings of love and faith, they flew to execute their message. Wherever souls were converted, wherever pagan temples were abandoned, wherever idols were cast to the moles and the bats, "there they preached the Gospel." Persecutors endeavoured to stop their career; but the blood of the martyr illustrated the truth of his Gospel; his dying groan gave force to the testimony of his tongue, and his truth survived himself in the hearts of those who were converted around his scaffold or his stake.

Long time, brethren, the dark ages lasted: what was it, that, when these had rolled away, struck down the third part of the colossal fabric of Romish superstition, and cracked and unsettled all the rest, beyond the architecture of Rome to make it sound again? It was the preaching of the Gospel from the lips of Luther. Leaving other ages, dark, and bloody, and troubled, what was it, when the Church having gained the Act of Toleration, used it as the downy pillow on which it fell asleep, and drawing around her the curtains of repose, gave herself up to slumber—what was it that aroused her from her sleep? The preaching of Whitfield and Wesley. Then were energies awakened in the Church which will never—no, never—slumber again, but bring us on to the Millennium. What is it, that lately awakened the spirit of piety in the Establishment, where it slumbered so long under its lofty turrets? The soft voice of the reader in the desk, did but lull her to a sounder sleep: never, until the faithful preacher of the Gospel lifted his voice, did she awake to righteousness: and she *did* awake, and blessed be God, has gone on diffusing her spirit through halls, and colleges, and churches, and cathedrals, till she has put on the mitre, and has sat down

on the bench. And, if I might call for, certainly not for audible, but yet for personal testimony to the truth of what I might now say, oh, what is it that has converted *you*? If the decorum of public worship permitted, could not many an individual rise and say, "I owe my whole self to the faithful preaching of the Gospel." Oh, brethren, I would not disparage any of the means of instruction, but I *will* do honour to that which God himself has instituted, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." See the importance of preaching the Gospel.

Lastly, I would add, two or three inferences from the subject.

First, we learn *what it is that gives the chief interest, and importance, and glory to places of Christian worship*. Not that they are built upon the compulsory or the voluntary principles; not that they are within or without the pale of the Establishment; not that they have all the splendours of architectural decoration, or all the meanness of what some have called "the religion of barns:" not that they arise to adorn the English scenery with their spires that pierce the skies, and their turrets that throw their shadows on graceful slopes. No; the interest and glory of every place is *the preaching of the Gospel*. Brethren, there have been places, there *are* places, which, with all their architectural splendour, are but mausoleums where piety lies entombed; there are others, though built with wood, and covered with thatch, which piety has adopted for her dwelling-place, and the place of her enjoyment. It is the preaching of the Gospel, and nothing *else*, and nothing *less*, that gives the chief glory to our places. I am a Dissenter; I am a Pedobaptist; I am an Independent; I am a Calvinist: but do I murmur that *Episcopal* places are built where the Gospel is preached? May "my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget its cunning," before I even look with envy, and jealousy, and dislike upon any place where the Gospel is preached, or feel any thing like displeasure when such places, by the aid of the voluntary contributions of those who support the system, are erected. No, brethren; I feel exultation wherever the Gospel is preached: and I look with pleasure on any place where it is preached; so far as that circumstance itself is concerned. God is witness how often I pass beneath the windows of the churches of my own town, (where, happily, the Gospel is preached in almost all the churches,) with a silent prayer for the success of him who ministers in holy things there. Do I look with displeasure, or envy, or jealousy, on the multiplication of places among the Methodist connexion? No; for though the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and personal election be excluded there, those of justification, and regeneration, and sanctification are there, and these constitute the Gospel. Do I look with envy or displeasure upon the multiplication of places among the Baptists? No; for though they exclude the baptism of infants, they preach the bloody baptism of Him who died for sinners, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as the source and the sanctification of the human heart. My friends, the glory of this place is, that here the glory of the grace of God is to be preached; and in looking down the avenue of time, it is delightful to anticipate the effects which will result, by the blessing of God, from the ministry of my brother who is to occupy this pulpit.

Secondly, we learn from this subject *what is the great duty and business of the ministers of religion*. Not to amass and hoard it up like misers, without expending it for the benefit of the human race; not to cultivate a taste for con-

position that shall enable us to produce discourses that will vie with the best models of Greece or Rome; not to give a tone to politics, or any thing of a secular matter; not to preside at the table of our friends in private, in festive and social intercourse with wit or humour; not to preside with decent formality, with even sacred decorum, over the solemnities of public worship; and provide the required intellectual treat for the Sabbath morning, called a sermon; not to descend from the high themes of our ministry, and to dwell only on subjects that are of minor importance. My brethren, our business is to preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God; and woe, woe, eternal woe, be on us if we preach not the Gospel, or if we neglect it for anything else. Oh, what ministers there have been, blessed be God there *are*, in this country, and in this city: but are we, my brethren, are we like the Baxters, and the Howes, and the Owens, and the Henrys of the by-gone age? Have we yet found their mantle? Oh, if we cannot have their spirit and temper without their suffering, for one I would say, Lord, give us their suffering, that we may have their temper. Lead me to the spots, I will not say where they trimmed their midnight lamps, and continued at their studies until the star of the morning looked through their casements, and chided them to their pillows; but I will say, lead me to the more hallowed spots, where they held their nightly vigils, and wrestled with the angel till the break of day. I admire not, I covet not, their gigantic talent more than I do their seraphic devotion. Oh, what a *theologian* was Owen, when he penned his immortal work on the Hebrews! What a *preacher*, when he delivered his sermon upon the Vision of Unchangeable Free Mercy! What a *pastor*, when he wrote his Treatise on Church Government! But oh, what a *Christian*, when, out of the depth and fulness of his experience, he wrote his treatise on the Glory of Christ, on Communion with God, and on Mortification of Sin in Believers, and Spirituality of Mind! And then, think of the illustrious and sublime Howe, who, when he had reared that eternal monument of his fame, The Living Temple, threw his mighty spirit, and developed his powerful intellect, and poured out his soul to God, in his treatise on Delighting in God, the Blessedness of the Righteous! Oh, to be baptized with the spirit of these men!

My brethren, let me remind you, (and I do it with all humility and affection,) who dwell in this great city, that you are looked up to, respected, and beloved, by your brethren in the country. We consider the Metropolis as the heart and head of the British Empire; and we have some such feeling in reference to the ministers of religion. It is with unspeakable delight that it has been often confessed in the country, that the tone of religious feeling, the spirit and temper of the ministers of the Gospel in the Metropolis, are raised, and continually rising; so that we cherish towards you feelings of esteem, veneration, and affection. Oh, let us all provoke each other, more and more, to diligence and devotedness in the great work to which we have set our hands. We are the men of one object, of one business, of one idea; that object is the Bible, that business is salvation, and that idea is the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. We have not a moment to spare from this work; and God grant that we may not wish to have it!

Thirdly, *how important is it that private Christians should feel their obligations to provide places where the Gospel is to be preached.* And here, instead of trenching at all from the sentiment which at this moment impresses my mind, I will throw it out, and leave it. The laymen, the *rich* laymen in the

metropolis, have an awful responsibility attaching to them : whether they have yet considered their situation as it should be considered, is for them to determine. What myriads are perishing around you unprovided with any place of Christian worship ! We none of us have yet sufficiently thought of the tremendous accountability—I repeat the word, accountability—that belongs to us in reference to those who are perishing around us. We are content to come to our own Zion, and provide accommodation for ourselves ; but we have none of us yet felt as we ought to feel, as we must feel, as we should feel, the obligation that lies upon us as Christian Churches, to send out the Word all around us. Were there ten individuals, such as *one* whom I could name in this city, there would not be so many hundreds and thousands destitute of the opportunity of hearing the Gospel in this great metropolis.

Lastly, *if it be our obligation to preach the Gospel, it is yours to hear it, and to receive it.* I shall not enlarge upon this ; I have already trespassed too long on your time, but I will just remind you all, that your opportunities of hearing the Gospel end not with time, and pass not away with the world which you inhabit. There is such a faculty in man as memory ; and that faculty in the case of lost souls, will take up the subject of the Gospel, and will preach to the lost, over again, and through eternity, the very sermons they heard in vain upon earth. Oh, to spend eternity in the bottomless pit, in re-hearing from memory and conscience, when the hearing can only add to our torment, those sermons which we once heard in vain on earth !

But I will not dismiss you at the base of Sinai : for one moment again, I say, look to the cross, from whence the invitation “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And oh, life-giving Saviour, whose prerogative and power it is to convert the heart, send forth thy renewing grace this morning ; that as this house has been set apart for thy service, thou wouldst graciously give thy token of acceptance, by bringing some soul to thyself *now*, as the pledge of what thou wilt do *hereafter*. Bless thy servant, the pastor of the Church ; and bless the Church under his ministration ; that amidst continued accessions of numbers, gifts, and graces, they may dwell together in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace ! And is it a daring effort of imagination to suppose, that at this moment there is a voice from the excellent glory, saying, “From this day will I come down and bless it ?”

I am to announce to you, now, what of course you expect to hear, after the publication that has been given to the fact, that there will be a collection towards defraying the expenses incurred in the erection of this place. In addition to the grant which the congregation has received from their former place of worship, it became necessary that five thousand pounds more should be subscribed by them towards the erection, and, what is necessary and very important, to render the place a freehold. Three thousand pounds of that sum have been subscribed, two thousand remain to be subscribed : how much of that sum is to be paid off this morning, it is not for me to determine, but it ought to be determined by yourselves. I know a place of worship in which it was determined that five or six hundred pounds should be paid off on the day of the opening : it was done : whether this is your determination is unknown to myself. I trust, however, that the day of dedication will be accompanied by your free-will offerings (you know this is the mode that we pursue, that of the free-will offerings of the people ;) and let us recollect that the eyes of the public are on us. We have talked much—and we cannot, we think, talk too

much, provided we talk in perfect good temper, in perfect truth and love, of the principle by which we are distinguished, and provided we make that subordinate to the great object we have in view; and since this is the case, the eyes of the public being upon us, let us in all cases, where an appeal is made to our principles, demonstrate that we shrink not from the expense that it entails upon us. Let it be seen, that we *can*, that we *will* as well as can, support whatever is connected with the worship of God as advocated by ourselves. I would, just in one word, say, the contracting of the debt for which I appeal is your glory; but if it remain it will be your disgrace. I trust, therefore, that the glory will remain without the disgrace. May the Lord give you a spirit of liberality



# INDEX.

---

## ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT OF PREACHERS.

---

PREACHER.	SUBJECT.	PAGE
BENNETT, J., D.D. .... <i>Silver-street Chapel, City.</i>	The Death of Statesmen .....	297
BICKERSTETH, E., A.M. ... <i>Rector of Wotton, Herts.</i>	Nature and Origin of Revivals .....	497
BINNEY, T. ....	The Establishment of the Kingdom of Christ .....	15
—	The Divinity and Grace of Christ .....	305
—	Reflections on Departure .....	561
BLUNT, H., A.M. ....	The Kingdom of Grace in the Heart .....	1
BRANDRAM, A., A.M. ....	The Blood of Christ speaking better Things than the Blood of Saul .....	335
BURDER, H. F., D.D. .... <i>St. Thomas's-square Chapel, Hackney.</i>	The Final Advent of Christ .....	69
BURNET, J. .... <i>Camberwell.</i>	Authenticity of the Scriptures .....	169
—	The Establishment of Zion .....	264
CHESTER, BISHOP OF ....	The Soul and its Capacities .....	452
CLAYTON, G. ....	The Exceeding Abundant Grace of God .....	289
— J. ....	Religious Revivals .....	233
COLLYER, W. B., D.D. ... <i>Hanover Chapel, Peckham.</i>	Religious Claims of the British Colonies. ....	425
CUMMING, J., A.M. ....	The Nature and Author of Salvation .....	321
DALE, T., A.M. ....	The Unspeakable Gift of God .....	385
DENHAM, J. F., A.M. ....	The Nature of the Law .....	405
DILLON, R. C., A.M. .... <i>Charlot'e-street Chapel, Pinlicko.</i>	The Expectation of the Christian .....	475
DODSWORTH, W., A.M. ...	The Sanctified Contemplation of the Second Coming of Christ .....	77
ELLABY, F., A.M. ....	The Humility of Jesus a Pattern to his Disciples .....	416
EVANS, J. H., A.M. ....	Advantages of Early Piety .....	125
—	The Sympathy of Christ .....	349
—	Walking so as to please God .....	397
VLETCHER, J., D.D. ....	Decision for God in Youth .....	135
GUYER, T. S. .... <i>Rude. Isle of Wight.</i>	The Ministration of Angels .....	375
HAMBLETON, J., A.M. ... <i>Chapel of Ease, Holloway.</i>	The Accession of the Heathen to Christ .....	180
HAMILTON, R. W. .... <i>Leeds.</i>	Demoniacal Possession .....	45
—	Jesus the Resurrection and the Life .....	549
HOLLOWAY, T. J., D.D. ...	Apostasy from God .....	145

PREACHER.	SUBJECT.	PAGE
JAMES, J. A. .... <i>Birmingham.</i>	The Influence of Memory increasing the Misery of the Lost .....	505
_____	The Preaching of the Gospel .....	569
JAY, W. .... <i>Argyle Chapel, Bath.</i>	The Preaching and Reception of the Gospel .....	189
_____	The Prosperity of the Righteous .....	357
_____	Grace and Truth .....	521
JUDKIN, T. J., A.M. ....	The Duty of holding fast the Truth .....	65
LEACH, W. B. ....	The Resurrection of Christ .....	221
LEITCHFIELD, J. ....	The First Principles of Religion .....	7
LICHFIELD AND COVEN- TRY, BISHOP OF.	The Superiority of Christian Love.....	458
LONDON, BISHOP OF ....	The Second Advent of Christ .....	56
_____	The Duty of the State to provide Religious Instruction for the People .....	445
LUCY, W. ....	The Connexion between believing the Gospel and its Diffusion .....	213
M'NEILE, H. A.M. .... <i>Rector of Allbury.</i>	Distinction between the Origin and Contents of the Scriptures .....	31
MARSH, W., A.M. .... <i>Birmingham.</i>	The Sufferings, Success, and Joy of Messiah .....	514
MELVILL, H., A.M. ....	The Christian Rule of Charity .....	105
_____	Life a State of Discipline for Eternity .....	277
_____	The Manifestation of the Life of Christ .....	341
_____	The Correspondence between the Death of Christ and the Jewish Sacrifices .....	365
_____	The Resurrection of the Body .....	537
NEWMAN, W., D.D. .... <i>Bow.</i>	Eternal Life . . . . .	253
NOEL, G. T., A.M. .... <i>Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester.</i>	The Christian's Debt to the World .....	91
PARSONS, J. .... <i>York.</i>	God's Testimony to the Faith of Enoch .....	154
_____	The Blessings of the Gospel .....	197
REED, A. ....	The Habitual Consideration of Death .....	96
_____	The Minister's Parting Charge .....	314
ROBINS, S., A.M. ....	The Doctrine of Providence .....	242
SCHOLEFIELD, J., A.M. .... <i>Professor of Greek, University of Cambridge.</i>	Christ the Builder of the Church .....	485
SCOBELL, E., A.M. ....	Instability in Religion.....	227
SHERMAN, J. .... <i>Reading.</i>	Following Christ afar off .....	116
_____	Christ the Husband of his Church .....	465
STRATTEN, J. ....	Isaiah's Vision .....	21
THORP, J., D.D. ....	Hypocrisy in Prayer .....	85
VAUGHAN, PROFESSOR ..	The Deceitfulness and Wickedness of the Heart .....	436
WILSON D., A.M. ....	The Christian Hope of a Time of Refreshing .....	322



# INDEX.

---

## BIBLICAL ARRANGEMENT OF TEXTS.

---

TEXT.	PREACHER.	PAGE
Genesis, ii. 7 .....	BISHOP OF CHESTER .....	452
——— xlix. 4. ....	REV. E. SCOBELL, A.M. ....	227
Leviticus, xvi. 30 .....	—— H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	565
Deuteronomy, xxxvii. 29 ....	—— A. REED .....	96
2 Samuel, i. 21 .....	—— A. BRANDRAM, A.M. ....	335
1 Kings, xviii. 21 .....	—— J. FLETCHER, D.D. ....	135
Psalms, lxxxvii. 5 .....	—— J. BURNET .....	264
——— lxxxix. 15 .....	—— J. H. EVANS, A.M. ....	125
——— xc. 12—15. ....	—— W. JAY .....	357
Proverbs, xxiii. 18. ....	—— R. C. DILLON, A.M. ....	475
Solomon's Song, v. 14 .....	—— J. H. EVANS, A.M. ....	349
Isaiah, iii. 1, 3 .....	—— J. BENNETT, D.D. ....	297
——— vi. 1, 4 .....	—— J. STRATTEN .....	21
——— xxv. 9. ....	BISHOP OF LONDON .....	56
——— xlv. 22 .....	REV. J. CUMMING, A.M. ....	321
——— liii. 11 .....	—— W. MARSH, A.M. ....	514
——— liv. 5 .....	—— J. SHERMAN .....	465
——— lx. 8 .....	—— J. HAMBLETON, A.M. ....	180
Jeremiah, xvii. 9 .....	—— R. VAUGHAN .....	436
Ezekiel, xxviii. 14—16. ....	—— W. B. COLLYER, D.D. ....	425
Daniel, ii. 31—45 .....	—— T. BINNEY .....	15
Habakkuk, iii. 2 .....	—— E. BICKERSTETH, A.M. ....	497
Zechariah, vi. 12, 13. ....	—— J. SCHOLEFIELD, A.M. ....	485
Matthew, vi. 5—8 .....	—— J. THORP, D.D. ....	83
——— vi. 19. ....	—— H. BLUNT, A.M. ....	2
——— xxvi. 58. ....	—— J. SHERMAN .....	116
Luke, xvi. 25 .....	—— J. A. JAMES .....	505
——— xxii. 27 .....	—— F. ELLABY, A.M. ....	415

TEXT.	PREACHER.	PAGE
John, i. 17 .....	REV. W. JAY .....	521
— iii. 9 .....	— J. CLAYTON .....	233
— vi. 66 .....	— T. J. HOLLOWAY, D.D. ....	145
— xi. 25, 26 .....	— R. W. HAMILTON .....	549
— xiv. 31 .....	— T. BINNEY .....	561
— xvii. 17 .....	— J. BURNET .....	169
Acts, i. 3 .....	— H. McNEILE, A.M. ....	31
— iii. 19—21 .....	— D. WILSON, A.M. ....	392
— iv. 20 .....	— W. LUCY .....	213
— xiv. 7 .....	— J. A. JAMES .....	569
— xix. 15 .....	— R. W. HAMILTON .....	45
— xx. 32 .....	— A. REED .....	314
Romans, i. 14 .....	— G. T. NOEL, A.M. ....	91
— iv. 25 .....	— W. B. LEACH .....	221
— xv. 29 .....	— J. PARSONS .....	197
1 Corinthians, xiii. 13 .....	BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY .....	458
— xv. 35 .....	REV. H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	537
2 ——— iv. 10 .....	— ——— .....	341
— vi. 1 .....	— W. JAY .....	189
— viii. 9 .....	— T. BINNEY .....	305
Galatians, iii. 19 .....	— J. F. DENHAM, A.M. ....	405
Ephesians, iv. 28 .....	— H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	105
Colossians, i. 10 .....	— J. H. EVANS, A.M. ....	397
— i. 12 .....	— H. MELVILL, A.M. ....	277
1 Timothy, i. 14 .....	— G. CLAYTON .....	219
— iv. 10 .....	— S. ROBINS, A.M. ....	212
Hebrews, i. 14 .....	— T. S. GUYER .....	375
— x. 25 .....	BISHOP OF LONDON .....	415
— xi. 5 .....	REV. J. PARSONS .....	154
— xi. 6 .....	— J. LEIFCHILD .....	7
2 Peter, iii. 11—14 .....	— W. DODSWORTH, D.D. ....	77
1 John, v. 11 .....	— T. DALE, A.M. ....	385
Jude 21 .....	— W. NEWMAN, D.D. ....	251
Revelations, iii. 3 .....	— T. J. JUDKIN, A.M. ....	65
— xx. 11 .....	— H. F. BURDER, D.D. ....	69





















