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HULSEAN LECTURES

FOR THE YEAR 1841.

BY THE

REV. HENRY ALFORD, M.A.



THE CONSISTENCY OF THE DIVINE CONDUCT
IN REVEALING THE DOCTRINES
OF REDEMPTION.

BEING THE

HULSEAN LECTURES

FOR THE YEAR 1841.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, TWO SERMONS, PREACHED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

BY

HENRY ALFORD, M.A.

VICAR OF WYMESWOLD, LEICESTERSHIRE,
AND LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

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TO

JOHN GRAHAM, D.D.

MASTER OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, AND LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR,

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.

LATE MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

AND

RALPH TATHAM, D.D.

MASTER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,

THE FOLLOWING LECTURES,

Delivered by their Appointment,

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

SUBSTANCE OF CERTAIN CLAUSES RELATING TO THE
HULSEAN LECTURESHIP.

In the Will of the Rev. J. HULSE, M.A., the Founder of that and
other offices in the University of Cambridge.

[Dated July 21, 1777.]

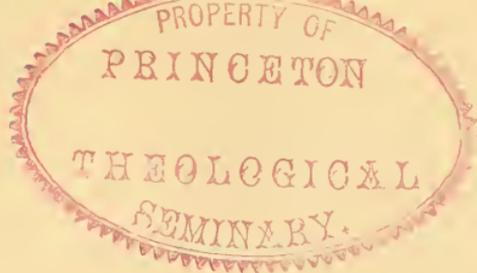
HE founds a Lectureship in the University of Cambridge.

The Lecturer is to be a "Clergyman in the University of Cambridge, of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of forty years." He is to be *elected annually* "on Christmas-day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, and by the Master of Trinity College, and the Master of St. John's College, or any two of them." In case the Master of Trinity, or the Master of St. John's, be the Vice-Chancellor, the Greek Professor is to be the third Trustee.

The duty of the said Lecturer, as stated in the Will, is "to preach" so many as "*twenty* sermons in the whole year," as well as to print them in the same period; and it having been found, in consequence, that few were willing to undertake the office, application was made to the Court of Chancery, with a view the better to carry into effect the intention of its Founder. The result was, that by an order of that Court (dated 21st December, 1830), the number of the Sermons was reduced to eight, and the time allowed for printing

them extended to the term of one year from the delivery of the last of them.

The subject of the Lectures is to be, "the Evidence for Revealed Religion; the Truth and Excellence of Christianity; Prophecies and Miracles; direct or collateral Proofs of the Christian Religion, especially the collateral arguments; the more difficult texts or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures;" or any one or more of these topics, at the discretion of the Preacher. The subject of the Lectures is *not* to be "any particular sects or controversies amongst Christians themselves; except some new and dangerous error, either of superstition or enthusiasm, as of Popery or Methodism, or the like, either in opinion or practice, shall prevail." "And in all the said twenty sermons," now *eight*, it is stated that "such practical observations shall be made, and such useful conclusions added, as may instruct and edify mankind."



PREFACE.

THE following Discourses contain an attempt to trace the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion in their recognition by, and operation upon, the Church of God before the appearance of Christ in the world. This endeavour is made, as tending to the establishment of an important proposition in theology; viz. that so far as the Gospel of Christ contains things absolutely necessary, and only effectual, for the salvation of the soul, it has been the foundation of the faith of the Church in all ages of time.

1. The consideration of this proposition in its application to the Old Testament Churches must necessarily be confined within certain limits, presupposed partly by its very statement, and partly from the nature of the subject itself.

So much of the Gospel system as belongs to its character as the final and full revelation of God to man, must be excluded from our view, and our attention in the first place confined to those fundamental doctrines of which the life, death, and triumph of its Founder were the actual proofs and complete attestations. According to the degree of recognition of the eternal verities of redemption, would the whole ceremonial system, in which these latter events were shadowed forth, tend to inform and reassure the ancient servants of God: while prophecy, having regard passingly to these same events, but mainly to the future effects and glories of God's Church, would be in the same proportion rightly and profitably interpreted. I am then engaged to ascertain to what extent these great truths were recognized; not only as they might be suggested primarily by typical ordinances or the prophetic word, but as they might be acknowledged independently of these, and might have formed a part of the original belief of the Patriarchal Church.

2. Again, in such an enquiry the nature of the subject demands wary procedure and strict

caution. The whole character of the ages under consideration must be taken into account; the usual course of man's reason and God's providence must be followed, in any conjectural inferences to which we may be led; the simplicity of truth must be adhered to in matters capable of *proof*, and the likeness of truth (*verisimilitude*) retained in things probable. This method of proceeding will exclude from our consideration all those fanciful and too often unfaithful etymologies, on which many of the speculations on this subject have been founded; and which are the more dangerous, because, while it can hardly be denied that language originally had reference to hidden properties, we are not now in a situation to deal with the sacred tongue on such a supposition; at the same time that we are not precluded from confirming conclusions otherwise derived by the apparent sense involved in the Scriptural usage of words.

3. It has I believe been asserted, and the complaint is not unlikely to be again made, that the tendency of these discourses is to uphold *tradition* as a vehicle of spiritual knowledge. That such an inference is unjustly made, will

at once appear, when the Christian dispensation is distinguished carefully from those which preceded it. Under the Patriarchal dispensation, and until the giving of the law from Sinai, tradition was unquestionably the only vehicle of religious knowledge: and for reasons expanded in the following pages, we have no ground for supposing that the Mosaic dispensation superseded such knowledge, or exceeded it, but was rather subsidiary to, and explanatory of it. We find more spiritual knowledge current among the Jews even in our Saviour's time, than the law and prophets could ever have suggested. Now such an office assigned to tradition, might have been very consistent with dispensations whose very end it was that their imperfections might be kept in view, and the attention and hopes of men directed to a greater and better revelation: but where do we find any thing analogous to this in the dispensation of the fulness of times—the complete revelation of God's will in Christ? Doctrinal or spiritual tradition is wholly out of place under a *doctrinal revelation*; under a ceremonial economy, it is *indispensable*. Nothing therefore

which I have here said, can be construed as an approval of tradition as a vehicle of spiritual knowledge to Christians. But at the same time, the other side of the antithesis is equally true; viz. that formal or ceremonial tradition, impossible under a ceremonial dispensation, is necessary under a spiritual one;—that while in the ancient economy the form and manner of the service of God was the object of revelation, and required doctrinal tradition to vivify and fructify it; so now eternal truth, being the object of revelation, requires formal and ceremonial tradition to embody and energize it among mankind: so that whatever effects, and in whatever degrees, may be produced on men who deviate from the line of formal tradition, by the great and saving truths of the Gospel, their full and complete effect cannot be looked for, except by those who are in union with the great formal traditions of Christianity.

The other great difference between the two species of tradition will readily be perceived. Under the Old Testament economy, tradition was the key to the interpretation of type and prophecy, and held a place in the mind, not

indeed superior in authority, but loftier as regarded the spiritual being, than the formal code of observances. Now the case is reversed. Tradition is no longer the key to Scripture, but Scripture is the overruler of tradition; inasmuch as a spiritual revelation is of necessity higher and greater, both as a revelation and as spiritual, than that which is traditionary and formal.

In the following Discourses I am concerned mainly with the former dispensation; and have therefore assigned to tradition the place which, under that economy, it cannot be denied that it held.

An opportunity has been afforded me, by the kindness of the Trustees of Mr. Hulse's Foundations, of continuing my argument through another series of Discourses, in which the actual manifestation, and subsequent spread and establishment of the Christian revelation will be considered. By the tenor of those Discourses I shall be content to be judged, as to my estimate of the present office and value of tradition.

4. Those who read these Lectures with a view to the argument contained in them, may

be disposed to complain of the frequent re-statement of the subject, and of the interruptions which the argument suffers by the concluding remarks in each discourse. But as an excuse for the former, it must be remembered that the months of the year at present allotted to the Hulsean Lecturer in the University pulpit, are those during which the influx of residents takes place, after the Easter and the Long Vacations ; that consequently, on two or three occasions at least of his addressing the University, the majority of his audience are wholly unacquainted with the nature of his argument ; and still more frequently are ignorant of the progress which he may have made in treating it.

To the latter objection it may be answered, that the place and time of the delivery of these Discourses will hardly allow the Lecturer to dismiss his audience with a mere theological essay ; and that Mr. Hulse himself has taken the same view of the matter, in directing that “ in all the said Sermons, such practical observations shall be made, and such useful conclusions added, as may instruct and edify mankind.”

If it be suggested that such interruptions to

the argument might be omitted in the publication, I answer that it appears to me highly desirable that the Lectures should be printed *as delivered*; such publication being made rather, I think, as a record of what has been done in accordance with the will of the Founder, and a means of refreshing what has been heard, than with any hope, in the present advanced state of religious knowledge, of adding standard works on evidence to our Theological Literature.

5. With reference to the Hebrew authorities adduced in the following Discourses, the reader will do well to consult Schoettgenius's valuable work, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ in Novum Testamentum*, vol. II. ; de Messia, lib. I. cap. III., where a detailed account is given of the principal Rabbinical writings available for purposes of Christian evidence: and Archdeacon Lyall's *Propædia Prophetica*, Lecture VI. pp. 96—108; and Lecture XIII.

WYMESWOLD, *January 24, 1842.*

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LECTURE I.

DIVINE PURITY AND HUMAN CORRUPTION.

HEBREWS xii. 29.

Our God is a consuming fire.

AMIDST the treasures of evidence which our holy religion possesses, none are so precious nor so copious as those which are furnished from the Scriptures themselves. Christianity may have been sufficiently recommended by presumptive proofs: the purity and beauty of its moral system may have been fully established: the historical accounts to which it is pledged may have been satisfactorily rescued from adverse imputations: while there shall yet remain in the sacred volume uncounted testimonies to the Divine scheme of redemption; arguments yet unapplied, hints yet unexpanded, illustrations yet unimagined.

Nor are we left without example of the use of such evidence, or precedent to guide us in finding it, in the books of the New Testament. The

Epistle from which my text is taken, is especially devoted to enquiries of this kind. And its author not only proves abundantly that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness: but in doing so, he discloses to us many secrets of the Divine economy in ages and among persons unconnected with the Levitical system. Occasionally he brings into prominence some casual allusion furnished by the ancient Scriptures, and clothes the actors in scenes apparently trivial with mystery and dignity: at other times he merely touches with passing mention subjects of deep interest, either because his great purpose being urgent hurried him onwards, or because the minds of his readers were yet unprepared for the reception of the higher wisdom.

To fill up the outline of the teaching contained in that Epistle, were a task as fully worthy of the Christian scholar's ambition, as it is beyond his utmost uninspired ability. There is One only, who is found worthy to loose the seals of the Old Testament mysteries: even He, who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth; who hath shut and no man can open; who at his coming shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and pour fertility and joy over the waste places of our hearts and understandings.

But notwithstanding our inability to complete this work, we are encouraged by our Saviour

himself to undertake and carry it forward. He has bidden those who would be assured of his Divine mission to search the Scriptures; "for," he added, "they are they that testify of me." And if the ancient Psalmist prayed that his eyes might be opened, to discern the wonderful things of God's law, surely we, before whom Christ is set forth crucified amongst us, have abundant reason to believe that the influences of the blessed Spirit will descend on us while engaged in a work so becoming our Christian state: for we are not called servants, who know not what their Lord doeth; but friends, admitted, as we can bear it, into the very confidence of God; nay, sons of his family, waiting, it is true, for the full enjoyment of our inheritance, but exhorted to anticipate, as much as may be, our heavenly state of love and knowledge; to examine what is the mind of God, and compare spiritual things with spiritual.

Seeing then that we are partakers of such privileges, and under the promise of such assistance, I propose in these Lectures to direct your attention to THE CONSISTENCY OF SCRIPTURE IN REVEALING THE DOCTRINES OF REDEMPTION; and to derive from the course of Old Testament history the conclusion, that from the first, and throughout the manifold aspects of providence and grace, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

That this subject has, by implication at the least, been frequently and ably treated, those who hear me are well aware: and my labour has therefore been one rather of selection and arrangement, than of suggestion founded on my own research. I am not however without hope that I may have evolved some matter, which, if not absolutely new, may yet furnish ground for enquiry and meditation: and that for the young theological student especially, these Lectures may prove a useful compendium of Scripture illustration. I may also premise that my path, though frequently touching upon the roads in which others have gone, and for a time coinciding with one or another, is not strictly identical with any of them. My aim will be to establish the fact, that the great doctrines on which the Gospel of Christ is built, have ever been distinctly recognized in the divine treatment of mankind; that they have always been revealed with sufficient plainness to enable the faithful and humble man to believe them, and make them real to himself; and that we have record of some having done so, and having evinced it by their actions and words.

The object of such an attempt will be, to justify the ways of God to men; to shew that the tenets which form the foundation of our Christianity, have not crept into the Church from any unhallowed admissions of Gentile phi-

losophy, nor have been consolidated into necessary doctrines, from having been scattered and ill-defined surmises: but that from the first the revelation of the truths acknowledged in them has formed a part of the design of the Divine mind, dealing out to each age and generation as seemed fit to infinite Wisdom, but never leaving the truth without witness.

On the present occasion, I shall notice the manifestations of the Divine presence to men under the various dispensations; and endeavour to shew their bearing on that which may be called the great preliminary doctrine of Christianity, “that man is born in sin, and the child of God’s wrath.”

On the expulsion of our first parents from Eden, we have reason to believe that the presence of God was manifested to them permanently by an appearance related to have been placed at the east of, or in front of, the garden of Eden. There are some remarkable particulars to be noticed in the verse relating this appearance.¹ “So he drave out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.”

The word here rendered “placed,”² seems to be but inadequately expressed. Its literal rendering would be “he caused to dwell;” and it is

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

² יָשַׁב

the same word which in its substantive form is used to express the tabernacle or earthly dwelling of the Lord, and the brightness or glory of his apparent presence in that tabernacle.

Again, that which was thus placed has been but imperfectly apprehended. 'The Hebrew term rendered "Cherubims," is *the Cherubim*;³ importing beyond doubt an appearance of the symbolic figures which, as we shall see, occur frequently in the Old Testament economy, and of which the prophet Ezekiel, when he saw them, could state,⁴ I knew that they were *the Cherubim*.

Again, the words "a flaming sword" require explanation. "A flame of the sword" is the literal rendering;⁵ and "the sword" may be retained, provided we understand it to be expressive of the attributes of the fire, which was the thing placed. The word itself which we translate sword, is in its primary meaning "withering," or "desolation:" but whether it here refer to the destructive nature of the flame, or to its sword-like shape, there can be no doubt, from the construction of the sentence, and from the analogy of other passages where the Cherubim are introduced, that the fire was the substance, and the adjoined word descriptive of its nature.

³ אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִּים

⁴ Ezek. x. 20.

⁵ לַהֵט הַחֶרֶב

We read that it turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. The literal rendering is, “turning upon itself;”⁶ which words, as we shall see in the sequel, are remarkable from their coinciding with those used in a description given elsewhere.

So that the appearance which guarded from our fallen parents the forfeited paths of Eden, consisted of the Cherubim, accompanied by a wasting flame,—a flame of the sword, turning upon itself, endued with mysterious vitality and motion.

In our enquiry respecting the purport of this appearance, there is one other word which deserves to be noticed. It is that rendered “at the east of,” or as the LXX have it, “over against.”⁷ Its original meaning being “the front,” it assumes as its secondary sense, agreeably to the oriental method of viewing the cardinal points, “the east;” and is so generally rendered by our translators. But as our word “before” relates both to situation and order of time, so this word also signifies priority: and in several passages where one version renders it “at the east of,” and another “in front of,” a third adopts the wholly different interpretation, “from the beginning.” But the primary signification of “standing before,” or “in presence,” seems to

⁶ הִמְתָּחֵהָ־עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ See Ezek. i. 4.

⁷ מִנְּחֵמָה

have entered into the usages of this word more than may have been suspected. In Genesis xi., when the descendants of Noah were dispersing from Ararat, it is said, as they journeyed from the east, they discovered a plain in the land of Shinar: and in Genesis xiii., when Lot left Abraham in Bethel, and went to Sodom, the same word “from the east” occurs. But in both these cases the persons were journeying towards, not from, the east. Accordingly, our translators have rendered the word “eastward” in the latter passage, and in the former have inserted “or eastward” in the margin. Now it has been suggested that the difficulty may be removed by reference to the sense of presence involved in this word, and recollecting that in both cases the persons were going out from the presence of the Lord, the place where his altar had been established. In Deuteronomy xxxiii. 27, we have the expression the God of *Kedem*, *i. e.* as usually rendered, the east. Here we translate, “the eternal God;” and of the principal versions, no one agrees with another.⁸ Here again it is possible that the Divine Presence upholding Israel

⁸ *Hebrew*, מְעִנָּה אֱלֹהֵי קְדָם *English Version*, The eternal God is thy refuge. *Septuagint*, καὶ σκεπάσει σε θεοῦ ἀρχή. *Vulgate*, Habitaculum ejus sursum. *Luther*, Das ist die wohnung Gottes vom anfang. *Ostervald*, C'est une retraite que le Dieu qui est de tout tems. *Diodati*, Che son l'abitacolo dell' eterno Dio.

may be referred to. I have been led to allude to the usages of this word, as being at least confirmatory of the conclusion, which circumstances still to be noticed will yet more confirm, that the appearance of which we are speaking, was that of the Divine presence. I attach no great weight to the word as occurring in this verse,—it is probably here used in its primary simple sense: but I find it afterwards bearing higher meanings, and am disposed to question whether the very circumstance here related may not have given it those meanings.

I may remark on the whole passage, first, that it seems, by an expression in the Book of Wisdom,⁹ “the tabernacle which thou hast set up from the beginning,” to have been anciently understood as I have now explained it: and secondly, that the common notion of angels armed with fiery weapons being intended by “the Cherubim with a flame of the sword,” has, as far as I can ascertain, no foundation in Scripture; “the Cherubim” being every where used to designate symbolic creatures, distinct from angels.

I shall next notice the acknowledged manifestations of the Divine presence to God’s chosen people.

We read, on the occasion of God making his covenant with Abraham,¹⁰ that victims were slain

⁹ Wisd. ix. 8.

¹⁰ Gen. xv. 17.

and disposed in order, and that a smoking furnace and a lamp of fire passed between them.

Again, when the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shewed himself to Moses,¹ we find that a flame of fire dwelling in the midst of a thicket, but not consuming it, was the symbol by which the Divine presence was announced.

Again, when the children of Israel went up from Egypt, the Lord went before them in a pillar of fire.

And in the giving of the law from Sinai, we read, "And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire."²

But these scattered notices are succeeded by the permanent abode of the Divine presence in the tabernacle, which was in the midst of God's journeying people. Moses is directed to make³ two cherubim out of the same piece of pure gold as the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, which were to look towards the mercy-seat, and overshadow it with their wings: "And there," says God, "I will meet with thee from above the mercy-seat, and I will commune with thee from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." And that presence also, as abundantly testified throughout the history, was manifested by fire. We have

¹ Exod. iii. 2.

² Ib. xix. 18.

³ Ib. xxv. 17—23.

the expression, "Fire came out from before the face of the Lord;"⁴ and we find that the priests were not able to enter the tabernacle for the brightness of the glory of the Lord.⁵

Again, in Psalm xviii. a description is given of the Divine appearance, in which the same particulars occur. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils: and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub and did fly: and was seen upon the wings of the wind."

Again, the same circumstances are repeated in the account of Solomon's temple: the cherubim covering the ark,⁶ and the presence of the Lord manifested by fire.

We now pass to the vision of Isaiah, as detailed in his sixth chapter. There we find the presence of the Lord appearing to the prophet. Jehovah is sitting on his throne, the seraphim standing over him, the same symbolic beings who have before been called cherubim; the house is filled with smoke, and coals of fire are on the altar.

A similar vision, but more particularly detailed, was vouchsafed to the prophet Ezekiel, by the river of Chebar.⁷ We find in his description that he saw, and behold a whirlwind came out

⁴ Lev. ix. 24.

⁵ Exod. xl. 35; 2 Chron. v. 14.

⁶ 2 Chron. iii. 10; vii. 1.

⁷ Ezek. i. 4.

of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself (as in Eden): and in the midst thereof, the likeness of four living creatures. These are particularly described: but I shall not dwell on the description, as being irrelevant to my present purpose. Their identity with the previous symbolic appearances is positively asserted in ch. x., where the vision is repeated, and the prophet writes, "This the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, by the river of Chebar: and I knew that they were the cherubims;"⁸ *i.e.* having been, during his priestly ministrations, familiarized with the figures wrought in the temple hangings by that name, when he saw these living creatures, he recognized them as the cherubim.

In the vision of final judgment detailed by Daniel, we read of the Ancient of Days, that a fiery stream issued forth from before him.⁹

And in the Apocalyptic visions of the New Testament,¹ we find the same symbolic beings, the same glory of brightness, with however some remarkable differences hereafter to be noticed.

I have cited sufficient testimonies, (and more might have been added to them,) to shew that the usual manifestation of the Divine presence to the Old Testament Churches was by the element of fire. Our next enquiry will be, what were the operations of that fire, and what spiritual

⁸ Ezek. x. 20.

⁹ Daniel vii. 20.

¹ Rev iv.

truth they must have impressed upon the minds of the ancient worshippers.

I find that its most usual employment was to consume and destroy. In the first passage which we quoted, whether we retain the rendering, "a sword-like flame," or have recourse to the primary signification of the words, "a flame of wasting or withering," we shall alike gather the inference that the property of the flame was to kill and destroy. Indeed, its very situation tended to remind Adam's fallen posterity of the woeful change which had passed upon them. If they heard their great progenitor relating to them the primal delights of Eden, and fondly dwelling on each word spoken in those bowers,

" where God or angel guest
With man as with his friend familiar, used
To sit indulgent ;"

how must their hearts have sunk within them, at the sight of the withering flame which now guarded the avenues to their forfeited inheritance ! How would that horror grow deeper, when some bold unbeliever would perhaps, alone, or accompanied with others whom he might have persuaded, advance to the guarded mount of Paradise, and boast in his power to regain those ancient seats of blissful innocence : and while he were yet vaunting his success, and calling on the gazing multitudes to follow him to glory, the red flame should leap forth from before him that

dwelt between the Cherubims, and consume the blasphemer and his company! What inference could they draw but that man was lost, and glory forfeited; that they were unclean in the sight of God, and altogether at enmity with Him?

Then again, when the righteous by faith brought near their appointed victims at the end of the stated days, and by the divine ordinance inflicted on them the pangs of death; when, having disposed them in order on the altar, they waited till the fire came forth from the Lord, and thus he had regard to their offering, by consuming it in his wrath; what truth, think ye, must have dwelt upon their thoughts as they returned to their homes, and must have accompanied them through their toils and their slumbers? What but this, that they were guilty before God, concluded under sin, the wretched causes of pain and suffering to the creation of Jehovah? And when that depravity to which this appearance gave witness had itself borne down the recognition of itself, and there came forth from God the decree that all flesh should die; how must the favoured Father of the new world have rejoiced with trembling, knowing that in himself, and in his, lived the seeds of that corruption, whose fruit he had seen increase, till it filled the earth, first with the wild orgies of lust, then with a few days' outcry of perishing despair, and now with the blank of universal desolation!

And think ye that the Father of the faithful was not influenced towards his great act of self-sacrificing obedience, as well by that belief in the promise of which we shall hereafter speak, as also by a firm persuasion, deeper than even the yearnings of parental love, that He who gave had a right to take away; that the life even of the seed of promise was forfeited to Him who is too pure to behold evil; that his son, much loved and much promised, was a guilty creature before God, and the just and proper victim of his displeasure, even unto death?

When, again, Moses was commanded to put off his shoes from his feet, for that the place was holy, would not the awful reality of human unworthiness strike home to his heart, when he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God?

And what was all the solemn pageantry of Sinai, the fencing about of the mount, the forbidding man or beast to touch it under penalty of death, the lightnings and the earthquake, but a declaration stronger than words, that the Lord's chosen people were unclean before him? And when all the people said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die, for this great fire will consume us: and God said, They have well said all that they have spoken:"² what imports this commendation from God himself, but that the

² Deut. v. 22—29.

people had been smitten with a sense of their own unworthiness, and the Divine power and majesty, and shrunk from the approach in self-renouncing humility?

And throughout the Levitical dispensation we have the same doctrine preached to the people. First, they themselves were selected from among the nations of the earth to be the people of the Lord; the rest, human-kind in general, are shut out and rejected as unclean: in Israel God's presence dwells, and his fire is in Zion. But into this presence the children of Israel might not approach. One tribe is selected, who alone may serve before Jehovah and abide in his tabernacle. But exclusion from his presence does not end even here. One family alone of this chosen tribe may offer sacrifice before Him, and thus commune with Him in his ordinances. Still, to the sons of Aaron his presence-chamber is not opened: still man is guilty and unclean. One alone is selected, not by men, nor for aught of his own, who may approach the consuming fire. But even to him the Divine presence is shut and forbidden, except on one solemn occasion, on which, beyond any other in the year, the sinfulness and unworthiness of people and priest are specially and emphatically set forth. Should any of these restrictions be violated;—should the people or priests at any time, or the high-priest on any but the appointed day, and

with the appointed purifyings and vestments, presume to appear before the Lord in the pavilion of his presence, the fire from Jehovah would break forth and destroy the intruder. Did not all these ordinances, to a wise and enquiring spirit, accumulate irresistible evidence to the doctrine of human depravity? did they not shew the distance between man and God, and testify to the worthlessness of the endeavour of man to gain the participation of his glory? Verily, the eyes of the Jew must have been blind that he could not see, and his heart heavy that it could not apprehend, before self-righteousness could have tainted and deadened his services.

If we pass now to the prophetic visions, we shall find the same great truths declared.

When the Divine presence was manifested to Isaiah, he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."³ Again, the whole vision vouchsafed to Ezekiel, tended to assert the same. He is ordered, that he may commune with the Lord, to separate himself from that rebellious house; the appearance of the glory of the Lord is shewn to him removing from the city, and giving it over to destruction for its iniquity:⁴ and in the concluding vision of the spiritual temple, the glory

³ Isa. vi. 5.

⁴ Ezek. xi., xii.

of his presence again returns, and the prophet is informed that on account of their sins, God consumed them in his wrath;⁵ but that in this his new and glorious temple He would dwell for ever.

Again, when the Divine presence appeared to Daniel, we find self-abasement and dread to have taken possession of him. "I saw this great vision," he says, "and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength."⁶ And when the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and shewed him his presence, we find the same effect produced: "I have heard of thee," says he, "by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."⁷

In the cases of Gideon and Manoah⁸ we can trace the same misgivings: nor should we forget him who fell at Jesus's knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;"⁹ nor the beloved Apostle, who, when he saw the glory of his ascended and reigning Lord, fell at his feet as dead.¹

I find then throughout Scripture, the manifestations of the Divine presence to men testifying with one voice to man's utter unworthiness and

⁵ Ezek. xliii. 8, 9.

⁶ Dan. x. 9.

⁷ Job xlii. 5.

⁸ Judges vi. 22; xiii. 22.

⁹ Luke v. 8.

¹ Rev. i. 17.

impurity. I find this truth studiously inculcated in God's ordinances to his chosen people, in that ceremonial system which is written for an ensample to us, and contains the shadows of spiritual realities.

Nor do I see any escape left from the inference, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. For we find very little in the above-cited examples analogous to the ordinary contrasts between majesty and meanness, between weakness and power. The foundation of human glory is laid in the esteem of men. Our fame is built on the thoughts of others; and the greatest of the ancient philosophers has well observed, that honour seems to be more in those who confer it, than in him who enjoys it. Take away the conventionalities of pomp and power, and add to the weak and mean that whereof conventionalities have deprived him, and you have but man and man, both erring, both dying creatures. Whereas in the cases considered, the spotless absolute purity of God is set against the inherent uncleanness of man: on the one side we have the Creator and Judge, on the other his fallen and rebellious creature: in the one we have power, infinite, self-existent, eternal; in the other the seeds of corruption are daily growing up unto death amidst a life of dependence, weakness, and wretchedness. It was to shew to the people this great contrast, and imprint on their

hearts the sense of their innate pollution, that Jehovah fenced about his presence, and revealed himself to them as a consuming fire.

But there is one class of confirmations of this inference which must not be omitted. If it be true that this was God's purpose in clothing his presence with terrors, we may expect to find in the confessions and devotional works of the saints of old, distinct recognition of the truth that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: we may expect to see them renouncing self-reliance, and entering into communion with the Father of spirits with deep confession of their unworthiness. Accordingly I find Abraham saying, "Behold I have taken upon me to speak unto God, which am but dust and ashes:"² and be it remarked that this latter is a word pregnant with meaning, as alluding to consumption by fire.

I find Jacob confessing that he is unworthy of (literally, less than) the least of all God's mercies:³ and on another occasion I hear him reviewing his past life, and pronouncing his days to have been few and evil.⁴

I find the mother of Samuel praying and saying, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee."⁵

I find the patriarch Job in his confessions

² Gen. xviii. 27.

³ Ib. xxxii. 10.

⁴ Ib. xlvii. 9.

⁵ 1 Sam. ii. 2.

enquiring, "How shall man be just before God?" and adding, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean: yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment." I find him replying to the Lord and saying, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee?"⁶

I find again David, in his solemn confession after the sin whose consequences pursued him to the grave, saying, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts: create in me a clean heart, O God."⁷

I find Solomon, in his public prayer at the dedication of the temple, beseeching pardon for God's people, and adding, "What man is there that sinneth not?" And in his Proverbs I find, "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" And at the head of his book of mournful experience he places this: "I have seen all the works which are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. (For) that which is crooked cannot be made straight."⁸

I find the prophets also bearing their witness to the same truth.

Isaiah complains that the whole head is sick,

⁶ Job. ix. 2, 30—32.

⁷ Ps. li.

⁸ Eccl. i. 14.

and the whole heart faint; that from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness: and declares that all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And again, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away."⁹

The continual burden of the sorrowful pleadings of Jeremiah is, "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, work thou for thy name's sake: turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

And why should I stay to recount Ezekiel, the stern denouncer of Israel's sin, the remembrancer of God's unmerited mercies, who, under the similitude of a wretched and forsaken infant, sets forth the natural state of Jerusalem:¹ or Daniel, who interceded for his people, and said, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee:"² or Hosea, by whom the Lord complained, that his people, like Adam, had transgressed his covenant:³ or him, who exhorted to turn to the Lord with fasting, weeping, and mourning:⁴ or him, who said, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:"⁵ or him who saw the high-priest stand in unclean garments before

⁹ Isa. i. 5, 6; liii. 6. ¹ Ezek. xvi. ² Dan. ix.

³ Hosea vi. 7. ⁴ Joel ii. 12. ⁵ Habak. i. 18.

the angel, and his iniquity was caused to pass away from him:⁶ or the last of God's prophets, who prophesied of the refiner's fire and fuller's sope, which should purify the sons of Levi?⁷

All these as with one voice plead guilty before God, and approach Him as the humbled victims of his deserved wrath.

If then He shewed himself as a consuming fire, a God that would by no means clear the guilty, we find in his faithful people a consciousness of their uncleanness in his sight, and a self-abasement proportionate to that conviction.

So that, as I stated in the beginning, the great preliminary doctrine of the Gospel has been revealed throughout the dispensations; and that persuasion of helplessness and unworthiness, which precedes and ever accompanies the reception of salvation by grace, has been wrought in the hearts of those who have believed in God since the world began.

What further has been revealed with equal consistency and plainness, we shall have occasion to notice in our succeeding Lectures.

Meantime I cannot but remind you that there has been in our meditations to-day,⁸ a peculiar aptness to the present season. If at any time in our spiritual lives we should be convinced of our deep natural delinquency, it is surely at that

⁶ Zech. iii. 1—4.

⁷ Malachi iii. 2.

⁸ This Lecture was delivered on Palm Sunday.

time when the price which it cost to redeem us is brought so near to our recollections. If at any time sin should be hateful to us, it is surely now, when in looking on Him whom God made to be sin for us, we see the heaviness of his righteous soul, and his sorrow even unto death. Our great day of atonement is at hand, and we shall be called to partake of the sacrifice. There is now no exclusion; the veil is rent and the Holy of Holies opened, into which we, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. But we bear the same sinful body as our brethren of old: we are still full of uncleanness. In proportion then as our privileges are greater, our humiliation must be deeper; our self-renouncing more heartfelt and complete; and our prayer more continual, and more fervent, that our God will cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

LECTURE II.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

JUDGES xiii. 22, 23.

And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands.

SUCH is the remarkable reasoning by which the mother of one of the typical deliverers of Israel reassures her trembling husband, after a manifestation of the Divine presence. And I find in it traces of a general truth, which I shall endeavour to illustrate on the present occasion. In the first Lecture of this course, I maintained, that in the appearances of the Almighty to his ancient Churches, the contrast between Divine purity and human corruption was constantly and emphatically inculcated: that Jehovah manifested himself as a consuming fire, and fenced about his presence with manifold cover-

ings and restrictions, to shew that man was not worthy to appear before God, and that the original paternal aspect of the Creator towards his creatures was changed into one of wrath and severity.

My present purpose will be to shew, that with wrath, mercy was also revealed: in other words, that besides the doctrine of human depravity being impressed upon the ancient worshippers, they also, and in the same act of self-renouncing adoration, learned that sin was pardoned, a satisfaction having been made.

In so doing, I would first direct your attention to the state of things immediately after the fall of our first parents. The sentence pronounced upon disobedience had been positive and unqualified: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Equally positive and unqualified was the curse which had passed upon creation for man's sin: "Cursed is the ground on thine account." On the one side then we have the God of purity and justice, who will by no means clear the guilty; and on the other, man, and man's world, under the sentence of his wrath, and at enmity with him. Why does the sentence tarry? Why are not the offenders blotted out from the universe of God? On the contrary, Man still lives: man's world, with its varied beauties and ministrations of delight, is still around him. But the consuming fire of

God's presence is set up over against the garden of Eden. Now, surely, the victims of his just displeasure will fall a sacrifice to his present vengeance. Now the flame of the sword will go forth devouring and to devour, and earth will again become without form and void. But what do I find, instead of this work of wrath and devastation? I see that the fire of God's anger dwelt among men from that time forward. I see by the very same appearances that proclaimed the distance between man and God, the reconciliation between man and God constantly and plainly set forth. The fire of destruction, which might have consumed the offending world, descends and dwells among men. God can look upon man; can speak with him; can be approached by him. I am not now arguing for any disputed sense of words, or drawing any doubtful inferences: I simply lay before you the state of our fallen parents, unquestioned by any believers in Scripture; and assert that the very fact of this continued existence of themselves and the world around them, sentenced as both had been, and subject to the execution of that sentence, proclaimed to them with a voice not to be mistaken, "Sin is pardoned; God can be just, and yet a justifier." Enough for my purpose is the undisputed narrative of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel: from that I maintain, that there was, whatever it may have been, a place of God's

presence, where he received offerings, and from which he spoke; and that therefore the great watchword of redemption, "God with us," was in the possession of man from the very first entrance of sin into the world.

But though my foundations rest on the simple Scripture narrative, I would build upon them other considerations, not uninteresting nor unimportant. If I examine the nature of the appearance over against Eden, and compare with it the other manifestations of the Divine presence, I find certain symbolic forms common to them all. In the midst of the consuming fire, living creatures moved up and down. We find them in actual presence at Eden; represented in the Mosaic tabernacle; continued in Solomon's temple; revealed in the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and particularly described in the latter; appearing again to the beloved Apostle in Patmos. Now, I am not about to enter on any of the fanciful theories which have been raised upon the names and aspects of these symbolic beings: I wish simply to remind you of the few following particulars, which may be gathered respecting their purport. We find from Ezekiel that they were creatures compounded of the noblest forms in animated nature. We find again, where the prince of Tyrus is compared to one of these, it is called "the impression of

similitude, and the crown of beauty:"⁹ and as identifying it with the appearance in Eden, it is added, "Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God, and hast moved among the stones of fire." Again, in Isaiah's vision, where the Seraphim cry to one another, and ascribe holiness to Jehovah, they add, "the earth is full of thy glory;" or, according to our marginal rendering, "thy glory is the fulness of the earth."¹ Again, in Solomon's temple, by the Psalmist, and by Ezekiel, I find them described as bearing up or carrying the glory of the Lord. I am led from these circumstances to infer that these forms symbolized the animated creation.

Now, if I search the Apocalyptic visions, I shall find this idea strongly confirmed. There² they are represented, as in Isaiah, as ascribing holiness to the Lord God Almighty: and we read, "And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sate on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, saying, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for *thou hast created all things*, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'" In the next chapter,³ they are included among those

⁹ Ezek. xxviii. 12; LXX. version.

¹ Isa. vi. 3.

² Rev. iv. 6 - 11.

³ ver. 9.

who join in the song of praise to the Lamb, as being redeemed by his blood: and the part which they afterwards bear is remarkable; for we read, “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen.”⁴

The sum of these particulars may be thus briefly stated. I find certain living creatures accompanying, bearing up, moving amidst, the fire of the Divine presence. These creatures are compounded of the lord of the creation of God, the king of the beasts of the forest, the noblest of birds, and the most useful of domesticated animals. I find these creatures called the impression of similitude, the crown of beauty; I find them saying that the fulness of the earth is the glory of God; I find that, on their ascription of holiness to the Lord God Almighty, the Church confesses the justice of the ascription, because God has made all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created; and finally, when the consummation of the gathering together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth and under the earth, is announced by the universal song of praise from the

⁵ Rev. v. 13, 14.

whole animated creation, I find these living creatures, as the heavenly symbols of creation, assenting to Creation's doxology, with their "Amen, even so let it be."

Now, on this supposition, the lesson taught to our first parents by the first tabernacle, must have been plain indeed. Amidst, and moving in the very fire of the Divine wrath, they might see the emblems of that creation which had fallen under the curse of God, and which therefore that wrath should blight and wither. And I am not assuming too much in supposing that the meaning of the emblems was then understood. For language was not to them the pliable and conventional instrument which we in these latter days find it. However we view the mysterious account of its origin, and whatever interpretation we put upon the simple assertion of Scripture, that Adam gave names to every living thing; we must gather that the attributes and qualities of things entered into their names, and that they were not chosen at random. And the more we examine into that language, which, if not the very one in which these names were given, is near akin to it and of the same character, the more we are led to conclude, setting aside fanciful etymologies, that almost all words have had primary meanings, distinct from, and including more than their present acceptations. If the impression of truth and reality, which first gave currency to

the appellations of things, has long since been worn off, it was then, at least, sharp and perfect; and the early fathers of mankind no doubt acknowledged in their converse, qualities and resemblances of which we have for ever lost sight.

I believe, therefore, that they further saw in that original tabernacle, the fact that God and his creation were reconciled, that an atonement had been made, and that there was pardon for sin.

I pause not, in my present Lecture, to enquire into the manner in which that pardon was sought and vouchsafed: this will employ us hereafter.

I proceed to illustrate my position by the subsequent testimony of the Old Testament dispensations.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews expressly states, in ascribing the acceptance of Abel and Enoch to their faith, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But how should man seek the God whom he had offended, and from whose voice he fled in consciousness of his sin and impurity, except the Lord had said unto him, "Seek ye my face;" except he had reason to know that the breach was healed, and he was under a dispensation of reconciliation?

But a more striking instance of God's merciful purposes towards mankind is manifested in the history of the deluge. I waive all question

respecting attendant circumstances, and take the simple Scripture narrative. All flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Born in sin originally, but with the means of grace before them, they had rejected the offers of mercy and spiritual life, and had added sin unto sin. "The end of all flesh is come before me," are the awful words of the Almighty. But to whom are they spoken? Not to the destroying angel of wrath, nor in threatening to the trembling world which was about to perish; but in confidence to one of his fallen creatures, even Noah, with whom God was pleased to establish his covenant. Still it seems as if the day of wrath were come. The fury of the Lord is let loose over the creation. All in whom was the breath of life upon the earth died. Why then should one family be saved amidst this general wreck? Might not the eternal promises of God have been accomplished to that faithful man, compatibly with his present subjection to the general judgment of waters? Doubtless: but in the temporal preservation of this family, God testified that his purposes of mercy to mankind were still being developed; that it was needful to the completeness of the counsel of his will in Christ, that the new world should be linked in existence to the old. Can we suppose that one who had preached the righteousness of faith to the rebellious world for so many years, could have been so blind to

spiritual realities, as merely to recognize in his preservation a cause for personal or domestic thankfulness? Can we suppose that he did not see in the appalling desolation around him, and his own exemption from it, a sensible proof of that mercy in the midst of wrath, the belief in which must have long furnished his chief spiritual consolation?

But the waste of waters has disappeared, and the preserved family issue forth upon the face of the fresh earth. What is the first act of God towards man? We might have expected that a code of pains and penalties would have been given, and severity, before unheard of, exercised to keep the purified world from pollution. But it is otherwise. The first act is a covenant of mercy; wherein, while man's depravity is distinctly recognized, God's favour and gracious purposes towards him are set in bright contrast with it.

Next in order after the second father of mankind, I find the patriarch Job preaching by example and discourse, that God's mind towards man is that of a just and pure, but a reconciled Judge. In the midst of his afflictions, I find the reliance of faith: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: He also shall be my salvation."⁶ This feeling towards God, whose wrath was heavy upon him, is set in affecting contrast with the

⁶ Job xiii. 15, 16.

miserable comfort which he received from his earthly advisers: "My friends," he says, "scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God." And St. James writes, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."⁸

In the appearance of God to Moses, and in his dwelling among the tribes of Israel in the wilderness, the same truth was represented. A fire burnt in the midst of the bush, but it was not consumed: the fire of God's presence dwells and journeys in the midst of Israel, a sinful and rebellious people: occasionally it breaks forth on the bold and hardened sinner; sometimes the plague goes out from the Lord, and the work of destruction begins: but on all occasions the judgment is stayed; a full end is not made. An abiding and unchanging purpose of mercy and love is repeatedly asserted: the inheritance of the Lord is not to be cast off, nor his covenant to fail. And at the same time Israel's unworthiness of God's favour is strongly insisted on. They are reminded that it was not for any thing in them that God set his love upon them, but for the sake of his covenant; *i.e.* of his gracious purpose of redemption. In contemplating then the state of his nation, the Jew could not but see a standing proof of the reconciliation

⁷ Job xvi. 20.

⁸ James v. 11.

between God and man, at the same time that he was convinced of the unworthiness of himself and his people to appear before Jehovah.

You will observe, that it is my present purpose to shew you the evidence which the ancient Churches possessed, for believing that a way had been provided for the sinner to live before God. I am not therefore so much concerned with their hopes for the future, as with their convictions of what had been by some means or other effected. I lay aside them for the present prophecy,—properly so called. I lay aside the mass of testimony to the future manifestation of this truth, furnished us by typical ordinances: I wish to illustrate the existence of faith in a *redemption effected*. And I conceive that there yet remains on this point, much vagueness in men's conceptions respecting the early Fathers of God's Church. We are accustomed to view them as anxiously looking down the stream of time, and gaining by faith the sight of a Redeemer to come. So no doubt they did; but it was as the manifestation, open and palpable, on the stage of the world, and in man's flesh, of a great truth on which, as its foundation, their faith rested. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," is an avowal of faith in redemption present and actual, as well as in God's promise of manifesting that redemption in the fulness of time. And I see an

important purpose served by thus viewing the faith of the Old Testament saints, as resting on facts, of which the evidence was continually before them. I see that it takes from them the disadvantage and imputed weakness of being even in expectancy of the promise, and ever disappointed: that it raises our estimate of the consistency and reasonableness of their devoted obedience: that it binds together them and ourselves, in common dependence on the God who from before the foundation of the world hath commanded redemption for his people.

And if I further search psalm and prophecy, I find that the great truths which underprop the spiritual temple are ever spoken of as fixed, and past change in the decrees of the Eternal; while the upper building is avowedly in progress, and its future glories are foretold. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," is their unvarying testimony: while from saint and prophet, from people and priest, the prayer which still goes up from Israel in their blindness and dejection, then went up in the clearness of their faith and the yearnings of their joy, "Build, O Lord; build thy temple." When the sweet Psalmist of Israel in his last words is prophesying of Christ,⁸ his sense of the incompleteness of his own house and times with reference to the promise, is borne down by his fixed reliance on

⁸ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

the purposes of God: "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." When the mournful prophet is bewailing the desolation of his city and people, he is enabled to gather strength and comfort from the assurance, "It is good that a man should both hope and wait for the salvation of the Lord."¹ And another Prophet pleads with God in a dark and dreary time, and says, "O Jehovah, keep alive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known: in wrath remember mercy."² But he passes on to the glory and majesty of the Lord in his designs for the salvation of his people, and ends his song in triumphant faith: "Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation."³

Doubtless such faith required continual prompting and refreshing. Doubtless then, as in the latter days, scoffers would arise, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things are as they were

¹ Lam. iii. 26.

² Habak. iii. 2.

³ Ib. 17.

from the beginning of the creation." The very continuance of nature and man, was to the faithful a standing proof of Redemption: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning."⁴ But even in their minds it was necessary that this conviction should be ever and anon refreshed by open visions, and the sound of the Divine voice, aiding that testimony which had gone out into all lands, but which mankind seeing would not perceive, and hearing would not hear. For this purpose the Lord chose a city wherein to place his name, his covenant appellation, Jehovah the God of Israel: there, while the wasting fire of his anger dwelt, and the light of his presence was not to be approached, his people might ever seek him in ordinances of his own appointing; and though trembling at his majesty, and shrinking from his purity, might from every fresh festival and sacrifice return persuaded, that "If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he would not have accepted these offerings at their hands."

And we have obtained like precious faith with them: in degree differing widely, but the same in kind. The redemption which universal nature and the Divine presence certified to them generally, has been accomplished in detail to us by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Our faith,

⁴ Lam. iii. 22.

like theirs, rests upon incontestable facts: but the foundations of our belief are laid on the building which they helped to raise, and to the completion of which they looked onward in hope. The massive work upon which, from the beginning of the world, the structure has rested, still stands firm and unshaken beneath; but the head-stone has now been laid on the corner, and the symmetry of the temple is rising before us, fitly framed together. Who will now be persuaded to guide his eye downward to that which is rough and unsightly, or half hidden by the heaps of ages? Yet if our dependence upon the everlasting security of our building is to be an enlightened and reasonable trust, and not a mere prejudice, we must “go about Zion, mark well her bulwarks, and trace the setting up of her towers,” even till we are convinced that our house shall not fall, for it is founded on a rock: that “this God will be our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide unto death.”⁵

Nor should I forget, before I let you depart, that the leading fact of our redemption is this day presented to our meditations;⁶ viz. that resurrection of Christ, without which our faith and preaching are in vain, and we are yet in our sins. This day most of us have joined in the great sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, by

⁵ Ps. xlviii. 12—14.

⁶ This Lecture was delivered on Easter day.

which that resurrection has, from the very time of its taking place, been typified and celebrated. We have seen the blood shed for our deliverance, and have spiritually partaken of the body given and glorified for us. Never was chain of testimony so firm and continuous as that to which we have this day added one more link: never was fact supported by evidence so incontestable as that whereof we this day are witnesses. The Lord is risen indeed. Life and immortality are brought to light. The Lord hath remembered his covenant; and he will receive us graciously, and love us freely. If the Lord had been pleased to destroy us, he would not have received this offering at our hands. But as they of old waited and hoped, so must we. The glories of God's Church are yet to come. We wait for the adoption, even the redemption of the body. We look for the Lord Jesus Christ to appear, that we may awake after his likeness.

And pray ye that we may be prepared when He shall call: with our reason satisfied and convinced by the evidences of our faith; our understandings adequately apprehending, and our judgments rightly dividing, the word of truth; our affections set upon things above; our thoughts pure and holy; and the light of our good works so shining, that men glorify God on our behalf.

LECTURE III.

THE METHOD OF RECONCILIATION.

HEBREWS xi. 3.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

I AM contending that the foundation doctrines of the Gospel of Christ were revealed to the Old Testament Churches with clearness sufficient to render their faith a well-grounded and reasonable conviction.

In my first lecture, I endeavoured to shew you that the great preliminary doctrine of man's unworthiness to approach the Divine majesty, was continually set forth before them: in the second, I maintained that the fact of a reconciliation between God and man having been effected, was also clearly announced.

Now if this had been all; if the consuming fire of the Divine purity had shewn them their

own uncleanness, and yet the Lord had invited them to seek his face, and had poured on them his mercies; the faith of the ancient worshipper might indeed have ruled his actions, but could not have satisfied his reason: the power within him might have governed with despotic sway, but could not have brought into its service, persuaded and willing, those faculties whereby God has exalted man, and enabled him to reach out unto knowledge. For the aspect of the Divine economy would have been anomalous and enigmatical. On the one side, they saw a just and holy God, unable to tolerate impurity and sin; on the other, sinning and sentenced man,—but, notwithstanding, the sentence not performed, the purity bearing and dwelling with the uncleanness, the angry Judge inviting the sinner to come and partake of the blessings which he had forfeited. And though uninformed humility, and unquestioning self-devotion, might have overlooked these difficulties, and presumed that all this might take place by some way possible to God, but inscrutable to man; yet I see not how such presumption, however it may actually have influenced many good men of old, could form a reasonable or satisfied faith, worthy to be held up as a pattern to Christians. And yet we know, by the multiplied assertions of the chapter from whence our text is taken, that such faith was possessed by the Old Testament saints.

The question then this day before us is, how God was pleased to reveal to his ancient people the method by which this reconciliation had been effected in his eternal purposes? The solution of this question will be found in a consideration of the leading ordinance which prevailed throughout the ancient worship—viz. Sacrifice. And here let me remind you, that I am not now concerned with its prophetic import, properly so called, but reserve this for future consideration; viewing sacrifice at present as something inserted between the terms of the contradiction which I have mentioned, and dwelling upon that fact in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes, to which this ordinance bore witness. As in the manifestation of God's presence we read, Man is guilty; and in the very subsistence of the material world, and the dwelling of God among his creatures, we read, Man is pardoned; so in the ordinance of Sacrifice we shall read, Sin is punished—justice is done.

Let us recur to the transaction on which our text is a comment. We have seen God's tabernacle set up over against Eden: we now see with what intent. The two first descendants of Adam and Eve approach, at the end of the days—that is, most probably, on some seventh day of rest and worship—to offer gifts unto the Lord. Before we enter on the circumstances, let us look back a while and see what has been happening, while

these sons had been ripening to manhood. We cannot suppose that theirs was a solitary and unprecedented instance of approach to God's presence, or of the presentation of offerings: they must have learned the practice from their parents, who, doubtless, at the ends of the days, during the many years which had elapsed since their expulsion from Eden, had approached and offered by Divine appointment, and with the Divine approval. But what had they offered? I recur to the circumstances before us; and I find Cain and Abel bringing their gifts to the tabernacle. Abel is a keeper of sheep; Cain is a tiller of the ground. Each brings of the abundance of his possessions: Abel the firstlings of his flock; Cain, the fruit of the earth. But I find Abel's sacrifice alone accepted, and am led to enquire into the reason of such distinction. The supposed previous character of the two brothers is brought forward by many to account for it; and doubtless there was much in the disposition of the hating and murderous Cain, which would render him an object of the Divine displeasure. He inclined unto wickedness in his heart, and the Lord would not hear him. But I am tempted to search further into the circumstances recorded, for the grounds of Cain's rejection; especially when I reflect that, under the ancient dispensations, *formal* unfitness is most frequently found to have incurred the open disapproval of

God. And if I am not mistaken, I find it illustrated by a few simple considerations. Cain was the first-born ; and as such, inherited the priesthood. This law of the Patriarchal dispensation is well known. As such, he drew near to offer sacrifice. Now, on examining those parts of the Levitical ordinances which relate to sacrifice, I find that never were offerings of the fruit of the ground made, unpreceded by an offering of slain animals ; that day by day the first duty of the temple was the slaying of the appointed lamb ; that on the sabbaths, two were offered previously to any other sacrifice ; and that on the solemn feasts, more blood was ordained to flow, before the oil and the flour could be presented. And I know that for all this there were deep reasons, which I cannot but suspect influenced also the arrangement of the Patriarchal worship.

Cain, as the priest of his family, had been in the habit of bringing and slaying the burnt-offering at the tabernacle. But the lamb for the burnt-offering was none of his own providing. For it, he was beholden to his brother. With that brother, he had enmity. It is reasonable to suppose this, from the severe and sudden vengeance which he inflicted on him afterwards, on a cause of jealousy occurring. Why then should Abel's flock furnish the greater sacrifice, that which must precede his own, and prepare the way for its acceptance ? Why might not the fruits of his own

field serve the purpose? With such thoughts, at the end of the days, he brings before the Lord the produce of the ground. Without shedding of blood, he approaches God's presence, and stands before the consuming fire.

Now let us observe the conduct of Abel. The priesthood of his elder brother had been as yet honoured by him, and he had furnished him wherewith to offer before the Lord the sacrifice which he required. But now that elder brother despises the ordinance of Jehovah, and approaches him with unauthorized offerings. Shall the service of God be neglected, and the burnt-offering left unperformed? By faith, Abel offers unto God the more excellent, the ampler sacrifice, and the priesthood of Cain is set aside. We seem to see a hint of this in the very form of the narrative. "And Abel, *he also* (as if it were not a matter of course) brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." We need not then enquire further, why the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, and that of Cain rejected. Those who thus understand the circumstances, find a confirmation of their view in the words addressed by God to Cain: "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? if thou doest well, shalt thou not have the excellency? (*i.e.* the preeminence); and if not, is not a sin-offering lying at the door? And unto thee is his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

But wherein did Abel's faith consist, when he offered unto God this ampler sacrifice? Are we to suppose it to have been the mere inflexibility of a blind obedience? could it have been said in that case, that "he being dead, yet speaketh" to us, or "is yet celebrated?" Do we not rather see in his conduct, evidence of a strong persuasion that sacrifice was God's appointed witness to the satisfaction of the Divine justice, the type of that great bloodshedding, without which is no remission? And does not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews further sanction this conclusion, when in speaking of the fully manifested blessings of the last dispensation, he asserts that we have come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than Abel? Does he not imply that the testimony which Abel bore to the ancient Church, but darkly and ill-understood, is openly and clearly borne to us in the gospel of Christ?

But we have not yet exhausted the instruction to be derived from this, the first recorded sacrifice. "The Lord had respect," literally, "turned, unto Abel and his offering." This has been generally interpreted of the consumption of the sacrifice by fire from the Divine presence. Theodotion rendered it, "The Lord consumed by fire the offering of Abel." And certainly, if we consider the way in which the Lord's approval of

sacrifice was afterwards shewn, this interpretation seems highly probable. On the completion of the Mosaic tabernacle, when the victims had been slain, and all things performed in order as the Lord had appointed, we read: "And there came a fire out from before Jehovah, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted and fell upon their faces."¹ On the staying of the plague which was sent upon Jerusalem for David's sin in numbering the people, we read, "David built an altar to the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord: and the Lord answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering."² On the dedication of Solomon's temple the same token of the Divine acceptance was vouchsafed; and again to Elijah on Mount Carmel. And in Psalm xx., where we read, "The Lord remember all thine offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice," we find in our margins, 'or, turn to ashes:' and thus some of the versions have rendered it.³

I find it then highly probable that the acceptance of Abel's offering was testified by the descent of fire from the Divine presence consuming his sacrifice: I know that such was the

¹ Numb. ix. 24.

² 1 Chron. xxi 26.

³ Et qu'il réduise en cendre ton holocauste.—*Ostervald*.
E riduca in cenere il tuo olocausto.—*Diodati*.

sign of acceptance received on many occasions afterwards,—nay, so well understood, as to lead Elijah certainly to expect it in answer to his prayer.⁴

I see then two distinct things to be noted in the ancient burnt sacrifices—both representing great spiritual truths, and both, I believe, understood by the faithful of old: the first of these is the slaying of the victim; the second, the consumption of it by fire. In the first of these, I see the execution of the sentence of temporal death which had passed upon all men, for that all had sinned; in the second, that consumption by the fire of God's eternal wrath, to which all sinners were justly subject.

I now turn to the situation of the faithful worshipper. Humbled on account of sin, corrupt by nature, he approaches the Divine purity, the consuming fire, in full belief of a way of access having been opened, and a reconciliation effected. But when drawing near, what is he commanded to do? He brings with him an animal, wherein is the breath of life. I need not pause in this place to prove to you that he regarded this animal as representing *himself*,—that there was in his mind a substitution of the creature which he led in his hand for his own person: it will be only necessary to remind you of the laying of hands on the victim of sin-offering, and indeed

⁴ 1 Kings xviii. 24.

of the universal tenor of the Levitical expiatory ordinances, to convince every reasonable mind that the victim was regarded as representing the worshipper, and that which was done unto it as done unto him. With this belief the worshipper, or the priest for him, slays the victim on the altar. The sentence of death which should have been executed on the worshipper, descends on his substitute. The blood, wherein is the life, flows down God's altar. The worshipper sees in this the fact, that the Divine justice has found one whom it may strike, and leave him free. But is it possible that he can account the animal slain on the altar to have been this victim? Can he have formed so depraved an estimate of God, as to think that he can be satisfied with the bloodshedding of the inferior creatures as a substitution for the infliction of his wrath on man? Doubtless there was a tendency this way among the children of Israel, and we therefore find repeated cautions given to them, that these sacrifices were not in themselves well pleasing to the Lord. But in the mind of the faithful and intelligent worshipper, no such thought can have had place. He saw, in the dying agonies of the victim, that which he himself had deserved, inflicted on another. This other, as there appearing, could not be taken into his account, as in any way actually affecting the relation between himself and God. But he enjoys the breath of

life, while his representative is slain by God's appointment. So that this part of the sacrifice was to him a solemn declaration of the fact, that he was upheld in life owing to God's justice having found a substitute, other and better than that before him, and having, in the eternity of the Divine purposes, inflicted actual and temporal death upon that substitute.

But this is not all. The victim representing himself, and on which his sins had been laid, has now undergone the first and direct penalty of sin. It now typifies himself, returned unto dust, and so far having accomplished the terms of the sentence. What more can remain? If, as some have supposed, the Levitical, and before it the Patriarchal economy, involved no revelation of a future state, here the instruction given would have ended: the covenant entered into by sacrifice would have pledged the parties concerned in it to nothing further. But I find that the slaying of the victim is not enough to impress on the worshipper's mind a sense of his acceptance. I find that the great and crowning token of God's reconciliation to his people, is yet to come. I see the congregation of Israel waiting, and intently gazing on the slaughtered animals now disposed in death on God's altar. Suddenly the fire of wrath comes forth from the holy place. The victims are consumed; the people shout, and fall on their faces. What did they see in

this Divine act which thus gave them occasion for joy and adoration? What, but that the eternal punishment of sin after death had also descended on the substitute, and was removed away from them? But the consumption of the victims themselves could not be this vengeance. The mind of the worshipper was again directed to an infliction, in the purposes of God, of the extreme fury of the Divine wrath upon another and greater substitute. All they like sheep had gone astray; they had turned every one to his own way: and the Lord had caused to meet upon Him the iniquity of them all.

The faith then which distinguished the accepted worshipper was founded on this satisfaction of the Divine justice, without which God could not be reconciled to man. They looked forward to the fulness of time, when all this should be manifested by actual occurrences. That this time was not yet come, all their ceremonial observances testified. But that the reconciliation had taken place in the Divine mind; that in God's purposes, the blood of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world was a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, those very ordinances also bore witness; giving them typical access to God, and imparting typical purification.

Thus I see how the saints of old might have built their obedience on a reasonable and intel-

ligent faith : not perplexed by the contradiction implied in God being just, and yet accounting the sinner righteous ; but able to see sufficient of the way of redemption, to know that it involved no compromise of the Divine purity, but ensured the fulfilment of the sentence of God's wrath upon sin. I see also that they were enabled to look so far into the things of God, as to know that this had been brought about by the substitution of one for themselves, whose blood should cleanse from all sin, and who should for them bear the infliction of the Divine wrath.

Henceforth, then, I contemplate their faith as directed to this Substitute, as regards both his essential eternal character, and his intended manifestation among men. What more was revealed to them respecting him, will form the subject of our future enquiries.

Let us here pause awhile, and review the steps by which we have advanced, and gather up the instruction which lies by the way.

Faith, the great actuating persuasion of the Christian life, is compounded and knit together of a variety of states of the mind and the affections. If we trace it into its inmost recesses, we shall find the first spring of faith to be a sense of weakness and need—a self-distrust—a giving way within, from consciousness that we are not able to fulfil our parts in creation, or to advance to our greatest happiness. Our idea of subjection

and accountableness to an Almighty Being, however originating, is too firmly fixed ever to be entirely dislodged from our minds. With this Being we contrast ourselves: impure in thought, irresolute in purpose, limited in power, we shrink from the prospect of our meeting with Him, which meeting, however, we feel to be certain. Such misgiving may influence us in various ways, for evil or for good; with one only of which I am now concerned. Amidst it, it may be, we fasten our attention on the record which God has given. There we find an announcement that God is reconciled to man: we find an invitation given to trust in him, to derive strength from him, to look for eternal life at his hands. But not thus at once is the hope which had died within us brought to renewed life. Our highest affections must be wrought by the highest exercise of our inner powers. We cannot command hope and love to spring forth, unless they be sown in the deep soil of an honest and well-convinced reason: nor is it the rank and sudden upspringing of the passions which can bring forth good fruit, but the steady and well-regulated growth of the affections.

At this period then of the workings of our minds, the reason demands to be satisfied, so that our way may be sure before us. Nor has our heavenly Father left the highest power which He has implanted in us, without its legitimate exercise in the highest of all our pursuits. By a series of

facts, recorded on unquestionable testimony, He has shewn forth the reality, and, as far as our understandings can apprehend it, the method of this reconciliation. And let not this last qualification seem to involve any objection to the reasonableness of our religion. There is wide difference between contradictions which outrage the reason, and mysteries which baffle the understanding. The former of these we are never called upon to receive, nor is it in our nature to do so: the latter we cannot but believe, and daily witness in and around us; so that the reason may be satisfied, where the understanding is incapable of apprehending. If we have *reason* to believe—in which expression language itself guides us to truth—that the procession of facts whereby redemption has been testified, was ordained for this purpose, and has been revealed to us by the Almighty and All-knowing Being; then, though that revelation contain mysteries which cannot be apprehended by us, we may yet, on the testimony of our reason, satisfied as it is on its greatest requirement, receive and make our own and the ground of our trust, matters into which our conceptions cannot as yet penetrate. For the affections, which it is the great object of religion to awaken and regulate, are indeed tended and ministered to by the understanding, but are themselves the servants of that lofty and admirable power, the reason, which God has diffused

throughout our race, responding to the motions of eternal Truth, strongest often in the simplest, the overruler of our responsibilities, and the key to our persuasions.

Such then are the foundations of reasonable faith: a sense of weakness and danger, reassured by the conviction that He who alone is able has devised help and salvation for us, and has invited us to partake of these blessings. The indefinite sense of want now becomes the reaching out of prayer; the tremblings of fear are turned to the thrillings of hope; the indolence of powerlessness awakens to the struggle of humility in reliance on Divine aid.

Here I would remind you, that in every component of faith just enumerated, the servants of God from the first have shared with ourselves. Their sense of weakness and need has been the same, for they have been subject to the same infirmities, and the same fear of death; the offers of reconciliation and pardon which are made to us, were made to them; by their own continuance in being, by the dwelling of Jehovah amongst them, by open vision, and by hearing from their fathers, they received pledges for the genuineness and reality of these offers; and by their sacrifices continually performed, they might see that the reconciliation was one not compromising the eternal justice, but fulfilling it to the utmost.

The great difference between them and ourselves lies in this: that whereas they looked onward for the crowning pledge of God's reconciliation to man, in a promised manifestation of the Redeemer, we have received that pledge, and have beheld him by the clearest historical testimony, incarnate, suffering, risen, and ascended into heaven, for us. That which was to them only a subjective ground of trust and hope, based on the assurance that He was faithful who had promised, has become part of the objective and undeniable evidence of our religion. And in proportion to this change, the eyes of our understandings have been enlightened, and the range of our conceptions enlarged. Many kings and prophets have desired to see things which we see, and have not seen them.

If then, even of old, open visions, and suspensions of the order of nature, were not the grounds, but only the refreshments of faith,—not necessary for its completeness, but only vouchsafed to aid its struggle with the flesh; how little reason have we to regret their absence from our times, and how much to fix our faith firmly on its substantial and immoveable foundations, our own insufficiency and unworthiness, God's willingness to pardon and save us, and the wonderful method whereby that reconciliation has been testified, even the life, death, and victory of our spiritual representative, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I dismiss you then with an exhortation of Scripture, which might in all ages have been spoken to the Church, but falls with a voice of tenfold power on us of the latter days:—"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."

LECTURE IV.

THE STRICKEN SUBSTITUTE.

ISAIAH liii. 6.

The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, [or, hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on him.¹]

I HAVE endeavoured to shew, that as the faith of the Christian determines in certain great truths, which we call the doctrines of Christianity,—and those truths are witnessed by evidence capable of satisfying a reasonable mind ; so likewise the servants of God, in ancient days, attained by faith to the same truths, also witnessed by adequate evidences. I have shewn that the necessity of reconciliation with God, the fact of that reconciliation having taken place, and having been wrought by the infliction of the Divine wrath on a substitute, were revealed to the old Testament Churches.

It remains that we now enquire how much they knew of the nature of that substitute. And

¹ Marginal rendering, English version.

this enquiry will be directed not so much to the sacred text itself as we understand it, as to the explanations of that text given by the Jews themselves, and the acknowledged expectations to which reference is made in the New Testament.

I need not in this place remind you, that the attention of the Jewish people has been directed from the earliest times to a person promised in Scripture, and by them denominated "the Messiah," *i. e.* the Christ, the anointed one. I only mention this, that we may at once prove one thing which our argument demands, *viz.* that this Messiah was, in the idea of the Jews, the substitute of whom we have been speaking. We are accustomed to suppose that people possessed with the notion, that their expected deliverer shall be a temporal prince: and there is no doubt that they have usually been prone, and are especially now prone in their time of scattering and desertion, to have regard principally to this part of the Messiah's character. The testimony to the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the suffering and stricken substitute is so clear, that we now find them setting aside the evidence to that part of his character, and adopting only the prophecies relating to his glories and dominion, the sensible proof of which is not yet manifested. But it was not always thus. The crown of glory with which prophecy had invested the future

deliverer was not so bright but that the piercing thorns might be discerned in it: nor was the cup of salvation, in the view of the ancient Church, to be unaccompanied by the dregs of bitterness. We are in possession of Jewish commentaries and paraphrases of the Scriptures, which, though they very imperfectly represent the purity of the ancient faith, yet in some parts bear remarkable testimony to its nature. And from these, in connexion with the sacred text itself, we shall see strong witness borne to the identity of the Messiah with the stricken and dying substitute.

The passage from which my text is taken, contains the most direct assertion in Scripture of the humiliation and sufferings of the Christ. *We* scruple not to apply it to him, having, besides its own plain allusions, the authority of the New Testament for our warrant. The passage begins with the thirteenth verse of the preceding chapter: "Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high;" and the sense proceeds, without any change of subject, to the end of the thirteenth chapter. I wish then to ascertain the opinions of the Jews themselves respecting this description and its subject.

If I turn to the headings of the chapters in their modern Hebrew bibles, I find that in this chapter (the thirteenth), "the innocent servants of God are introduced, whom men regard as sinners, afflict with suffering, and persecute even to death;

and first their humble, then their exalted state is described." And this I believe is a fair statement of their present interpretation. But this general application to the persecuted servants of God has not been by any means acquiesced in among them. In the works of the modern Rabbis, various persons are proposed as here intended: one contends for Jeremiah; another for king Josiah; another for the people of Israel. Besides these, which are the principal, many others are mentioned, Ezra, Zerubbabel, Abraham, and Moses. Others, again, acknowledge the opening verses to relate to the Messiah, and afterwards change the person.

From these conflicting interpreters let us turn now to the more ancient commentaries, some most probably compiled about or before the time of our Saviour. Among them also there seems to be no hesitation in applying the opening verses of the passage to the Messiah. And I find the same unanimity in the application of the verses relating to suffering and expiation in chapter liiird. I take the fourth verse, in which we read, "*Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*" In the Jewish comments we find as follows: "The blessed God brought forward the soul of the Messiah, and said to him, Art thou willing to heal and redeem my sons after six thousand

years? He answered, I am. God replied, Wilt thou sustain chastisements to wipe away their sins, as it is written, He hath borne our diseases? He answered, I will sustain them with joy."²

In this tradition we have a distinct recognition of the words of the verse before us being applied to the sufferings of the Messiah.

Again, the Rabbi Alsheck explains the words thus: "Because the hiding of face, as we learn from the preceding verse, is not on account of himself, but on account of the people: therefore we understand here that he himself literally bears our diseases, as if it had been said, He of his own accord is pleased to bear them, although we esteem him stricken by God, and that according to justice and on account of his own sins, not from love."³ And this same Rabbi says, on the opening of the passage, "the Rabbis of blessed memory with one voice, according to received tradition, assert that here the Messiah is spoken of."⁴

We have yet another testimony to the application of this passage to the Messiah. In the commentary of the ancient Rabbis, on those words in Genesis xxivth, "Let thy seed possess

² Peshikta Rabbati. Vid. Pol. Synopsis, *in loc.*

³ Cit. Pol. Synops. ut supra. Vid. Schoettgenium. Hor. Hebr. et Talmud. in Nov. Test., Vol. II. p. 183.

⁴ Pol. Synops. in ch. LII. 10.

the gate of those that hate them," we find, "This is Messiah the king, who shall be in the generation of the wicked, and shall reject them, and choose the blessed God and his holy name, to serve him with his whole heart. And he shall set himself to seek mercy for Israel, to fast and to humble himself for them, as it is said, 'He was wounded for our transgressions.' And when Israel sinneth he seeketh mercy for them, as it is said again, 'By his stripes we are healed.'"⁵

The inference then from these quotations, which are taken from books acknowledged and esteemed sacred by the Jews, is, that as far as we know it, the opinion of their ancient masters referred these sufferings to the King Messiah. Now, this one point being established, much more that is to our present purpose follows with it.

In this passage sacrificial terms are used: the very animal day by day offered in the temple, is brought forward as a type of the suffering person; and allusion is made to the laying of sin on the head of the victim, where it is said, "The Lord hath caused to meet on him the iniquities of us all."

And I further request your attention to the sort of evidence which we have derived from these Rabbinical quotations. We find modern interpretations conflicting and confused. We

⁵ Bereshith Rabba, *in loc.*

have recourse to ancient commentaries, and we find unanimity and clearness: and one remarkable testimony which I have cited directs us still further back, and assures us that all the Rabbis of blessed memory, as with one mouth, interpret these things of King Messiah.

I am justified, then, in assuming that there was in the ancient Jewish Church, a conviction that the suffering and stricken substitute was identical with the expected Messiah. How far this conviction was spread, or how clearly followed up, is not the purpose of my present enquiry. I find it existing; and the existence of it furnishes me with matter for fresh consideration.

I will use the passage on which I have been speaking, as a key to open the anciently received meaning of other passages, which we understand as relating to the sufferings of Christ. To name them only will be sufficient in this place. The twenty-second, fortieth, and sixty-ninth Psalms are among the best known. The same discrepancies prevail in the interpretations given of these Psalms by the modern Jews. But I ask whether one of the faithful, who could by an understood tradition refer the words of Isaiah to a suffering Messiah, would not also apply to him the expressions in these Psalms? Can he have acknowledged the application in one case, and missed it in the other?

But another circumstance remains yet to be

considered. The New Testament quotations of these and other passages are well worthy of our notice. The Gospel of St. Matthew was written for the use of Jews, and most probably in their language.¹ I find in that Gospel direct citations of these parts of Scripture, without explanation or apology, as relating to Jesus Christ. If I enquire why these passages are quoted, I see that the object in doing so was to identify Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah of Jewish expectation. For if they had not understood them of the Messiah, to what purpose could they have been quoted as applying to Jesus?

Again, the Epistle to the Hebrews is written, as its superscription imports, for the conversion of Jews. It is the work of one well acquainted with Jewish learning and interpretations. Every thing conspires to prove it to have been written by him who was the pupil of Gamaliel, and a distinguished disciple in the Rabbinical school.² I find in that Epistle many citations similarly brought forward from these same and like passages; and

¹ See, for a discussion of the question, whether St. Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew, Greek, or both, Horner's Introduction, Vol. iv. p. 262—265. The preponderance of *ancient* testimony is in favour of the Hebrew original.

² Suppose a person to have read half the Epistle to the Hebrews, and then to have placed before him for the first time the verses 2 Cor. iii. 7—18: would he not at once pronounce them to be part of the Epistle which he had begun?

I ask what could have been the purpose of such citation, unless the persons addressed were conscious of an application to the Messiah? The argument in the Gospel and the Epistle, as addressed to Jews, presents itself in syllogism thus: He that fulfils these prophecies is the Messiah; Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled these prophecies; therefore Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. But unless the major proposition were already acknowledged, what force would there have been in the argument, unaccompanied as it is by any attempt to establish that proposition? Therefore, while I distinctly repudiate the notion that these New Testament citations were made solely as representing the Jewish acceptation of the passages, I contend that at the same time they do represent the Jewish acceptation, and may be taken as involving it.

But I see in the New Testament a remarkable person, who appeared as the forerunner of our Lord, to prepare the people for his ministry, and the work which he had come to perform. Surely, in his announcement of Christ to the Jewish people and to his followers, I shall find him speaking in terms well understood, and implying, "This is that Messiah whom you have expected." Accordingly he opens his mission, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" that kingdom of which their prophets had spoken, and which was well understood as being about to

appear in the latter days. But as John is baptizing, he sees Jesus coming to him: he wishes to testify to the people that this is the King Messiah; and he says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" thus identifying the Messiah with the substitute understood in sacrifice, calling him by the very name of the daily offering, and the victim of the pass-over. This testimony, in my mind, is conclusive that the Jewish people regarded their promised Messiah as the substitute, of whose suffering for sin their sacrifices reminded them.

I infer then, that the faithful Jew saw in sacrifice, a representation of the Divine wrath inflicted on his substitute the Messiah, whose manifestation in the flesh was the subject of promise and prophecy. But when did this belief commence? I find sacrifice of slain animals practised immediately on the introduction of sin into the world. I find it continued without interruption through the general apostasy; nay, so prevalent in one form or other, that it remained in the idolatrous observances of every heathen nation. I see the rites and ceremonies of it having assumed a definite and acknowledged shape among the children of Israel, before the law was given from Mount Sinai. I find that law multiplying sacrifices, but not altering the nature of the ordinance.

It is not then likely that the giving of the law introduced this idea for the first time: nay, we

have reason to believe that the Patriarchal dispensation contained more direct testimony to the person and work of the Redeemer, than the Levitical. It must have descended by a tradition unbroken as the ordinance itself. It must have been strengthened by each renewal of the covenant, and refreshed by each increasing dawn of promise.

Now, in enquiring further into the faith of the ancient Churches respecting the Messiah, I need not stay to prove to you that they expected his manifestation in the flesh of man, and as man. We have all marked with wonder the strong expressions of St. Paul, where he asserts positively, that the seed so often promised applied not to many, but to one, and that seed was Christ; we have seen the hopes of the Jewish mothers, the prophetic fears of the reluctant seer of Midian, the profession of faith which the suffering patriarch wishes engraved with an iron pen in the rock for ever,—all pointing to the same great expected event, the incarnation of the Messiah. And this incarnation, with the series of things which he should accomplish in it, was looked upon as the great sealing testimony of God's love to man, the remembering of the covenant, the real and actual exhibition upon earth of the fulfilment of the Divine purposes in his Anointed. These purposes involved the perfect and unsinning obedience of the substitute, as set forth to them by the

required spotlessness and integrity of their offerings; therefore it was written, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not: then said I, Lo I come, to do thy will, O God." They involved the striking down of the substitute by the wrath of Jehovah; therefore they read, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;" and therefore our Lord himself reproaches his disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?"

These things the faithful expected to see; but they looked for them as the final proof of spiritual truths already made known to them. Did they see in the appearances of the Divine presence their own unworthiness and corruption; and by the very same appearances, a sign that God was reconciled to men, and could dwell among them; and by sacrifice, a type of the method by which God could be just and yet a justifier; and did they identify the slain victim with Him who was hereafter to appear, without any heartfelt gratitude founded on spiritual mercies really granted, and only in dim expectance of something future? Did not the love of Christ constrain them, because they judged that, "if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him?" Did not they love Him, feeling that He first had loved them?

But one important article of their belief respecting this substitute remains yet to be noticed. By faith they saw him suffering for sin; they saw him manifested in the flesh. But they also believed in his eternal power and Godhead. So clearly is this point set forth in the Rabbinical comments, that later Jewish writers have attempted to establish two Messiahs: Messiah the son of David, to whom they apply the Godhead and the final triumph; and Messiah the son of Joseph, to whom they interpret the suffering and the going down into death. I need not stay to refute this idle notion, but shall bring before you a few passages from their comments, from which it is sufficiently evident that by consent they attribute to this expected substitute, powers belonging only to the eternal God. And let me remind you that in so doing, I am at no time pledging myself for the correctness of those interpretations, but only advancing them as subjective proofs relatively to the Jews, to shew what was their traditional view of spiritual things.

The Rabbinical comments on the words in Genesis i. 2, "And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters," state, "This is the Spirit of King Messiah;" thus attributing to their expected deliverer, the creative power of Almighty God.⁸

⁸ Bereshith Rabba, §. 2, fol. 44, cit. Schoettg. Hor. Heb. vol. I. p. 9.

The second of these comments is on Gen. iv. 1, where Eve says, in our version, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Those who are acquainted with the passage in the Hebrew, will remember that the word here rendered 'from,'⁹ is more usually the sign of the accusative case, and that especially in apposition. Thus the ancient comments understand it here, and suppose Eve to have had regard to that promise relating to her seed given in the preceding chapter, and to have said, "I have gotten a man, even Jehovah." The paraphrast on this passage says, "And Adam knew his wife Eve, who desired the Angel; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have obtained the man, the Angel of Jehovah."¹ Respecting this latter term, I shall enquire at length in the next Lecture of this course: I may now anticipate that enquiry, and state that, by "the Angel of Jehovah," they understood, not a created angel, in the common sense of the word, but the sent or incarnate Jehovah himself.

Another important testimony is the received ancient interpretation of the xlvth Psalm. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in citing a verse from this Psalm, writes, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." These words would in my view be enough to prove that the Hebrews so understood the words.

⁹ מִן

¹ Targ. Jonath.

But we have their own comments to strengthen the inference. The ancient paraphrases interpret it wholly of the Messiah. The modern Rabbis have as usual given two applications—one to the Messiah, the other to David: but even thus they have not been able to escape from the conclusion that these words are addressed to the Messiah. They therefore endeavour to strain the sense of them, and read, “God is thy throne for ever;” contrary (which is enough for my present purpose) to the paraphrase whose authority they acknowledge, which explains the words, “The seat of thy glory, O God, is for ever and ever.”²

The last Jewish interpretation of Scripture which I shall adduce, is that of the prophecy in Jeremiah xxiii., “I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.” On the opening words of this prophecy, the paraphrase says, “I will raise up to David, Messiah the righteous.” And in another of their received books we find, “What is the name of the King Messiah? Jehovah is his name: as it is declared, ‘This is his name,

² Vide Owen on the Hebrews *in loc.* Heb. i. 8, 9.

whereby they shall call him, Jehovah our Righteousness.'"³

I shall close these testimonies with a remarkable passage from the dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew. He complains of the unreasonableness of his antagonists in the following terms: "Whatever Scriptures we cite to them which plainly shew that the Messiah is both liable to suffering, and is to be worshipped, and is to be God, such as I have just now quoted to you, they are compelled to allow that these passages are spoken of the Messiah, but persist in saying that this Jesus is not the Messiah: but they allege that he is yet to come, and to suffer, and to reign, and to be the adorable God; which is unreasonable and absurd." And these words, be it remembered, were written in the second century after Christ; they therefore bring down the proof of Jewish interpretation respecting the Messiah later than the principal writings which we have quoted. From the unreasonableness here complained of, the modern Rabbis have since, it is true, extricated themselves; and are now to be found aiding the Socinian and the unbeliever in their denial both of the expiatory suffering and the divinity of the Messiah.

I have then established, that the Godhead, as well as the humiliation, of the substitute was

³ Rabbi ben Nachman, cit. apud Raymund. Martini. Pugio Fidei, p. 517.

recognized in the ancient Church. The passages which I have quoted are contained in books, all of which the Jews greatly revere; some of which they hold to be inspired. These books contain the sum of that oral tradition, which from time immemorial had been current among those versed in the Jewish theology. That they contain many things unfounded in truth and unworthy of credit, I am well aware; but this does not impugn the importance of their testimony to those eternal and unchangeable doctrines upon which Christianity is built. And if these doctrines of the suffering, incarnation, and Godhead of the Messiah were thus recognized by a tradition of immemorial antiquity in the Jewish Church, is it likely that the source of that tradition is to be found in Moses, and that it did not rather come down from the fathers, who possessed the same testimonies of human depravity, the same tokens of reconciliation with God, the same propitiatory rite, the same promises? Could he who walked with God, and prophesied of the glorious coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints, have been ignorant of the person and office of the Judge whose advent he described? Could he who received his son from the dead in a figure, have been without knowledge of the events destined to happen on that spot, when he uttered those words which passed into a traditional saying, that "in that mount Jehovah would be seen?"

Could he, who as a prince had power with God and prevailed, not have recognized the man with the hidden name who wrestled with him, and on parting with whom he called the place "the face of God,"—"for," said he, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved?" I would rather suppose that perchance to the repentant progenitor of mankind, or to his son, under whom men began to call themselves by the name of Jehovah, or to Enoch, or Noah, or to all of these in various degrees, as they were granted audience of God, these great truths were revealed; that they formed the hope and stay of the Patriarchal Church; that they were not forgotten in the family of Terah, when he, a man of declining years, set forth with his greater son in quest of the land of promise; that in the bondage and degradation of Egypt, the memory of them, though crushed, was not extinguished; that they remained deep rooted in the hearts of the faithful at and after the giving of the law in Sinai: so that while they saw in that law many things accordant with these traditional convictions, and sufficient to stamp them as divine, they were conscious of a spiritual strength beyond the power of that law to supply, a justification by a faith independent of those ordinances, which, while it was assisted by them, was by them also shut up unto the hope of something more spiritual, more satisfying, promised from the first, and

in its time to be revealed. Else, why do I find the servants of God the prophets, rising up from time to time, bearing witness to the inefficacy of the law, and pointing men's attention to one whose goings forth had been from everlasting? Why do I find the inspired words which they spoke ever grounded on truths lying deeper than the system under which they lived, and disparaging legal obedience, in comparison with spiritual regard to these eternal verities?

On no other supposition are these things to be accounted for. For if the law had been an additional revelation of spiritual truth, an advance forward in the knowledge of God imparted to man, there would not have been an appeal to higher and more worthy spiritual motives than this law inculcated. "The law was added because of transgressions," is the assertion of St. Paul; it was a parenthetical dispensation; its uncleannesses and purifications were intended to recal the mind to the great doctrines of human depravity and Divine purity, known before, but likely to be forgotten, as the ties which bound mankind to the world became stronger in the lapse of generations: its many sacrifices and oblations were inserted to keep alive the belief of that great sacrifice, available for sin from its first entrance into the world, but in danger of being perverted, amidst the abominations and idolatries of the nations. Otherwise than by these remindings and strengthenings, the

law affected not the faith of the saints of old. The covenant confirmed by God in Christ to Abraham was older than the law, and they had evidence older than this.

I would leave your minds, in concluding this portion of my Lectures, well assured of the consistency of the Divine conduct, and the unity of design in the Scripture revelation. We of the latter days are persuaded, that man's capability of holiness, and advance towards the likeness and enjoyment of God, is grounded upon certain immutable truths; that the necessary change from corruption to purity, from hating God to loving him, is brought about by the entering of these truths into the mind and soul of man, and becoming part of his inward self, and the springs of his new and glorious being. This persuasion implies, that by no other way can holiness ever have been attained; that the same inward spiritual action must ever have taken place, and the same motives have been called into activity, by the same inwrought convictions.

That this was the case, I have been endeavouring to prove. I have been conversant with various degrees of evidence: sometimes strong in universal consent, at other times feeling my way almost alone amidst the obscurities of early times. Whatever may have been done, that Spirit of truth alone, which taketh of the things of Christ and sheweth them to us, can

open our eyes to see the wonderful things of God's law, and make the convictions of our minds to be health and strength to our souls.

We will seek then in his appointed ordinances, prayer, and the study of his word, help for this work; and beseech him further, that in what yet remains to be said, we may attain to his mind in the revelation of himself.

LECTURE V.

THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH.

ROMANS xv. 8.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers.

THE argument which I now take up afresh is designed to shew, that the great doctrines which form the spiritual substance of the Christian revelation, have in all ages been the subjects of the faith of God's people; that though the human race has passed through several states of progressive knowledge, administered as seen fit in the designs of God, yet the deep wants of the spirit of man have never been mocked by food insufficient for them, but constantly recognized and tenderly supplied by our heavenly Father.

We have traced the worshippers of the true God from the first entrance of sin into the world. Whatever darkness may have possessed the earth in general, and whatever hardness of heart may

have prevailed even amidst God's people, we have found a distinct avowal, among men of faith and prayer, of insufficiency and impurity in themselves, and plenteous redemption revealed in the covenant of their God. We have seen the method and details of that redemption gradually unfolded; while throughout the Old Testament history, the foundation doctrines of the future Gospel were firmly fixed in the counsels of God and in the hearts of his saints.

The last of these great doctrines which I brought before you was, The pardon of sin by means of a stricken and suffering substitute—and that substitute, God incarnate in the nature of man. In the course of that enquiry we found the future Redeemer styled, “the Angel of Jehovah;” and I then reserved that name for our further consideration. This, with some other particulars tending to illustrate the doctrinal knowledge of the Saviour which the ancient Church possessed, will employ us on the present occasion.

We find that the Jewish commentators continually direct attention to a person who is denominated the Angel. Elevated above all other messengers and ministering spirits, this person is represented by them as appearing from time to time under various aspects, and with various benign offices. He is called by them the Angel Redeemer; the governor of the world; the desire of Moses and

the Fathers; the face or image of God; the captain of the host of Jehovah. They believed that he was to be born into the world; for they fancy they see in the construction of the text of Scripture, reason to think that Eve said on the birth of her first-born, "I have gotten a man, even the Angel of Jehovah." On many occasions throughout the Old Testament history, they ascribe to him the words and operations of God himself. From him they believe Moses to have received the law: from him they expect another law to be delivered to Jews and Gentiles also. And attentive consideration of the synagogue-worship may further guide us to their sentiments respecting this Angel. We find that the person whose office it was to offer prayer for the congregation was denominated the Angel of the Church; and accordingly we have the ancient Rabbis stating of the Messiah, "He shall pray for Israel." And elsewhere they say of this Angel, that he is the High-priest of heaven, who offers the prayers of the righteous to God.¹ And lastly, we have this remarkable testimony to the exalted power and the mediatorial office of this the chief Angel:² "He is Lord of all who are inferior to himself; for all the armies of heaven and earth are at his disposal, and beneath his hand: and he is the ambassador

¹ R. Moses ben Nachman, cit. apud Witsium. *Miscell. Sacr. Exercit.* iv. § x.

² R. Bechai, cit. apud Wits. *Misc. Sacr. Exercit.* iv. § xi.

of Him who is above himself, who hath given Him to rule over all things, and hath appointed Him lord over his house, and to have dominion over his possessions. This is that Angel, by whom alone is permitted access unto God.”

But another illustrious title was given to this great person, and has been familiarized to Christians by its adoption in the New Testament. He was called “the Word of God,” with reference to his declaring or speaking forth the will of the Father. The ancient paraphrases and commentators constantly refer to this Word of God as a distinct person, and not merely the personification of the actual Divine word. We cannot expect, nor do we find among them, clearness of perception regarding so mysterious a name; but we find enough to lead us to believe that those inner and primeval traditions, on which were founded the esoteric teaching of the expounders of the law, spoke of the expected Messenger, the Angel Redeemer, as the Word of God. Philo, whose writings deal exclusively with the supposed mystic sense of Scripture matters, alludes plainly to this Word of God as a person, “free from sin of all kinds, begotten of God, delegated to govern the world, identical with the Angel of the Covenant, and anointed with the holy oil of God.” He elsewhere speaks of “the first-begotten Word, the Eldest of Angels, the Archangel

with many names: for," he continues, "He is entitled the Beginning, the Name of God, and his Word, the Man after the Divine image, and the Seer of Israel."³

I need not cite more testimonies to establish points which have been so well proved and amply illustrated by others before me: my wish is, from these facts to raise inferences which shall be available for the purpose of my argument.

We see then, by what has past, that the mediatorial office of the future Redeemer was not hidden from the ancient Churches. In our former Lecture, we inferred that the victim slain on the altar was regarded as the type of a stricken substitute of spotless innocence, and we saw that substitute endowed with lofty titles and attributes of Divine power. Now we see a similar reference acknowledged in other parts of the Mosaic ritual. Frequently were God's people reminded of the going-between, or mediation, of some appointed person, in the offices of atonement and prayer. Seldom had they, as a people, direct access to God. And if this shewed them on the one hand their own unworthiness to approach Him, so would the appointed intervention of another ever remind them of that Angel of the Church, by whom alone they had liberty to approach to the Divine presence. And if we can

³ De Agriculturâ, § 12. De Confusione Linguarum, § 28. De Profugis, § 20; ed. Lips. 1828.

put ourselves in the place of one standing among that people, during their solemn ordinances; and see the priests on ordinary occasions, or the high-priest alone on the great day of atonement, mediating between Israel and their God; how can we suppose ourselves at the same time utterly unmindful that these persons, men like ourselves, subject to disease, sin, and death, only set forth the fixed and eternal truth of a better mediation by One who could not sin, nor his priesthood fail? Suggested as the thought would be by tradition from their fathers, bound up among their earliest recollections and firmest persuasions, and confirmed as it was by what they continually witnessed in the temple; could it fail to impress on their minds the necessity of approaching God through Him whom He would send, and accepting the Redeemer as their spiritual High-priest to mediate between God and themselves?

Thus, while they were sensible of the pollution in which they were involved by sin; while they saw evidence that a way was opened for the forgiveness of sin by the shedding of the blood of one for all, they saw that same victim,—for there were not two objects of the promise, but one,—exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to present the prayers and necessities of his people before the throne of God.

And the inference which we have now drawn is a remarkable one, as bearing upon a matter

much and ably discussed of late.⁴ It appears that the *resurrection of the Redeemer* cannot be distinctly shewn to have been recognized as the subject of undoubted prophecy: and it has been well remarked that there is a fitness in the circumstance of its omission, carrying far more weight as evidence, than could the most marked prophetic announcement of it. At the same time, however previous knowledge of the event may have been withheld, we can hardly suppose, consistently with the Divine dealings in other matters, that so integral a part of Christian doctrine as the resurrection and its consequences involved, could have altogether been concealed from the saints of old. Accordingly we find that the ancient believer was constrained to infer some such recovery from death to life, of the appointed Victim for sin. If he saw Him bruised for his iniquities, and yet acting as his mediator and intercessor, his reason might supply the void between these, and gather that, as He was delivered for man's sin, so He was raised again for his justification. And we are not, I think, assuming too much, in supposing that it was this inference which our Saviour himself drew, when

⁴ Lyall's *Propædia Prophetica*, Lect. vii. pp. 121, seq.—No Christian student or minister should omit studying this most valuable work, at his very earliest leisure. It contains a body of Christian evidence, at least as important as that which Paley has amassed, and founded on higher and more convincing considerations.

He opened the Scriptures to the disciples by the way, and asserted that "Christ ought to have suffered these things and to have entered into his glory;"⁵ and St. Paul, when he "reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ *must needs* have suffered and risen again from the dead."⁶ Now whether faith ever assumed so definite a form as this, that an actual bodily death and a material resurrection were looked for in the person of the future Messiah, does not concern my present enquiry. Allowing that these things might have been figuratively understood; allowing every shade of misconception to have been entertained, down even to the darkness of popular error which prevailed in our Saviour's time; we still find the great doctrine of the redemption of man by means of the punishment and exaltation of a Divine yet human substitute, to have been the reasonable inference from those things respecting the Messiah which were generally believed.

But, as connected with this inference, the other title of the Redeemer which we have mentioned must be considered. The ordinary office of an angel was to declare the will of God: and a declaration of the Divine will was expected from the great Angel who was to come. But of what kind was this declaration to be? Not, it is plain, another law of ceremonial ordinances; nor a

⁵ Luke xxiv. 26.

⁶ Acts xvii. 3.

mere clearing up of the difficulties of the first law. More than once in the Gospel history, we have scattered hints of the public expectation prevalent among the Jews respecting the Messiah's teaching. Our Saviour sat by the well in Sychar,⁷ and discoursed with a woman there, whose peculiar boast was her descent from the patriarchs, and her care, to adhere to the true form and locality of divine worship. To her Christ began to speak of the spiritual simplicity of the culture which he came to establish: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This teaching seemed to her of a different kind from any which she had yet heard: her thoughts were involuntarily carried forward by it to the great Teacher of whom she had been traditionally informed, and she said, "Sir, I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Now the spirit in which these words were uttered is plainly that of one persuaded of the imperfect and transitory nature of the system of carnal ordinances under which she lived, and anticipating the effusion of pure spiritual truth from the lips of Him who was to come.

Again, the expected nature of the Messiah's teaching may be illustrated by comparing the words spoken to Christ on two other occasions.

⁷ John iv.

At the time when many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him, Jesus said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."⁸ And on another occasion, one came and said unto him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"⁹ Now this expression, 'eternal life,' was not one familiarized to the Jews by the Mosaic revelation. It occurs but rarely, if indeed it can be said to occur at all, in the present sense, in the Old Testament. And yet it seems to be used as indicating a well known expectation concerning that which the Messiah was to reveal to them. And Jesus himself speaks of eternal life as the known subject of his teaching; not only the boon which he came to bestow, but the state which he came to lay open to their spiritual sight. "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."¹ "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."² I shall have occasion to allude again to these testimonies, in treating another part of my argument: I adduce them now to shew that, beneath the superstructure of error which carnal interpreters had built up, and the worldly notions

⁸ John vi. 68.

⁹ Mark x. 17.

¹ John v. 39.

² John xvii. 3.

of Christ's kingdom which we know to have prevailed, there was a deep foundation of truth; a conviction, however smothered and disregarded, of the spiritual nature of the Messiah's office and teaching, and the blessings which he came to confer. I adduce them, to shew that our Saviour in his discourses with the Jews used expressions and made allusions, which cannot be explained without such a supposition.

Yet another title was given by the Jews to their expected deliverer. He was called the Son of God. And he was generally and usually so called. Nathanael, the Israelite indeed in whom was no guile, on his first introduction to Jesus, perceiving his display of omniscient power, acknowledges him to be the Messiah, and says, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."³ By this title did the tempter call upon Jesus to prove his Messiahship.⁴ By this title did the evil spirits cry out upon him.⁵ By this title did the high-priest adjure him, "Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."⁶ By this title did even the Gentile centurion profess his conviction that the promised deliverer of the Jews had been put to death.⁷ There can then be no doubt, that the Messiah was commonly and popularly so called.

³ John i. 49.

⁴ Matt. iv. 3, 6.

⁵ Ib. viii. 29.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 63.

⁷ Ib. xxvii. 54.

Now the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the beginning of his argument,⁸ deals expressly with this title, as proving the superiority of Christ to the ministers of the former dispensation. And in alleging his authorities for its application, he cites two passages of the Old Testament. The first is from the second Psalm, which we both know by the Rabbinical comments, and might infer from its repeated quotation by the Apostles, was universally applied by the Jews to the Messiah. The other is from a passage,⁹ concerning which it is not clear from other testimonies that it ever was so applied, or, at first sight, that it bears such an application. God promises to David a son to build Him a temple, and predicts manifold blessings as attendant on his reign. In the course of this prophecy, he announces the gracious treatment which the successor of David should receive from Him, by saying, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." These words are alleged as confirming the sonship of the Messiah. It is not now my purpose to explain or justify this particular application, though in my opinion it may be easily and satisfactorily done; but merely, having mentioned these texts, to ask a candid hearer, whether he thinks that a title of the expected deliverer, so popularly acknowledged and so commonly applied, could owe its origin in the popular mind merely to the typical inter-

⁸ Heb. i. 5.

⁹ 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

pretation of such passages? Is it not a far more adequate solution of the circumstance, to account for it by assuming what is for many other reasons highly probable, that there was a deep and ancient conviction from tradition immemorial, that the Messiah was to be the Son of God; and that as often as this idea was or appeared to be shadowed forth in the Law and Prophets, the popular mind laid hold of the words, and so applied them? That the inspired writers of the New Testament should have appealed to such Scriptures, rather than to the unwritten convictions of the people, is on many accounts intelligible. For such convictions are never safe groundworks for personal persuasion; a man, when reasoned with, may disclaim them, and escape from their force: and again, it would have been extremely difficult for the arguer to separate pure tradition from impure; extremely unlikely that the persons argued with would ever have acquiesced in such selection, if made. But the letter of the sacred text was common ground; and veneration for that letter was the distinguishing characteristic of Jewish learning in the Apostles' time. What then can be more probable than that passages of the Old Testament, at first understood in accordance only with immemorial tradition, should have become, by degrees, substituted by the Jewish doctors, as the main evidence of those great truths, which they served once only

to illustrate? And if thus substituted, they would very naturally be alleged by the New Testament writers, as carrying conviction to Jews in cases where there was no wresting nor misappropriation of the original text.

I shall adduce a few other interesting particulars found in the Jewish comments, tending to throw light on the ancient doctrinal knowledge of the future Saviour.

When St. John writes, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory;” it might seem as if he were purposely using the sacred vocabulary of the Jews themselves.¹ The Divine and Personal Word was held by them to be synonymous with the Shechinah, or apparent glory of the Lord, which dwelt or tabernacled in the holy of holies. Their books spoke of a day when this glory should dwell among men in a more general manner than it ever did in the holy place.² They believed that it should be made flesh and blood, and generally seen and conversed with. The very word used by St. John, and which we render ‘dwelt,’ would bring to their minds the tabernacle, and its indwelling of glory. They had been long accustomed to its sound, as

¹ וכתתי שכיתי בהוכם And I will place my tent in the midst of you. Tauchuma, fol. lvii. 2, cit. apud Schoettgen, Horæ Heb. *in loc.* Joh. i. 14.

² Bereshith Rabba, cit. apud Raymund. Martini, Pugio Fidei, Part III. distinct. iii. 12. 1.

applied to sacred things. The tabernacle at the east of Eden, those in the wilderness and in the temple, the future dwelling of God among men, and the glory itself which should thus dwell, were all expressed by one word and its inflexions;³ and the Gentile tongue had the same sound to express the same thing. So that it would seem to them that St. John had used the word in this place, purposely to declare to them the fulfilment of their expectations in sounds familiar to their ears.

When St. Paul declared that Christ was the second Adam, and spoke of the first man as being of the earth, earthy, but the second man, the Lord from heaven,⁴ he was only repeating under the guidance of inspiration, what his Rabbinical education had taught him. The heavenly and the earthly Adam are repeatedly mentioned in the Jewish comments; and in one of them we have these remarkable words, “As the first Adam was alone in sin, so the Messiah shall be the last Adam, to take away sin entirely.”⁵

When our Saviour stated, as he repeatedly did in his discourses with the Jews, that he came in the name of another, even of his Father who sent him, he spoke words with which they were familiar from their traditionary interpretations of Scripture; for they believed that the name

³ שֶׁכֶן · סִימָנָה.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 47.

⁵ Schoettg. Hor. Heb. et Talm. *in loc.* vol. I. p. 670—671.

of God should be in the future Messiah, and actually under this idea gave him a mystical name, the letters of which were the same in numerical power with those of the sacred name of God.⁶

St. John says of our Saviour, "In him was light, and the light was the life of men." So had the Jews said of him before.⁷

The father of John the Baptist says in his hymn of joy, "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us." By this very term did the Jews render the word in the Prophets which we express by "the Branch."⁸

The blessed Virgin, when she rejoices in God her Saviour, says, "God hath shewed strength with [or by] his arm;" in accordance with the title, 'the arm of the Lord,' given of old to the expected Messiah.⁹

Our Lord says to his disciples, "I am the good shepherd." 'The faithful shepherd' was a Jewish name of the Messiah.¹

Again, during the feast at Jerusalem, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;" as he had before said to the woman in Samaria; "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst:

⁶ Vide Schoettg. vol. II. p. 8, *et loc. ibi cit.*

⁷ Targum in Isa. lx. 1. Vide Schoettg. *in loc.* vol. II. p. 188.

⁸ Zech. iii. 8. ἀνατολή, LXX.

⁹ Vide Schoettg. vol. II. p. 9.

¹ *Ib.* p. 10.

but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." These words were to the Jews a forcible declaration of the Messiahship of him who spoke them: for they had themselves interpreted the words of Isaiah, "With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation," of the times of their future deliverer.²

We might proceed with many other New Testament phrases, and shew that the use of them was in accordance with the traditionary expectations and notions of the people to whom they were spoken. But enough has been adduced to shew us that there was a vast mass of doctrinal knowledge among the people, which, though often perverted by misapprehension, and almost buried under the additions of pharisaical learning, yet pointed beyond doubt to matters on which the faith of the saints was fixed, before the giving of the law by Moses. Had the books of the Jews come down to us in their original state, these testimonies would have been far more striking and particular in their character. But their zeal against the Gospel of Christ has led them to erase and mutilate many passages, which in some cases can be proved, and in all must be inferred, to have related to the most prominent points of Christian doctrine.

² Isa. xii. 3; Vid. Schoettg. *in loc.* vol. II. p. 165.

I have as yet brought my enquiries so far as to ascertain what doctrinal knowledge the ancient Churches possessed of the person and office of the great Victim for sin.

I have been, however, but as it were gathering up the fragments of a feast, of which others have partaken and passed by. For how little can one man know of the thoughts and hopes of another, and how much less can one generation trace of the faith or the knowledge of another, so remote from itself! Before ourselves, others have peopled these our halls, and spoken from these our holy places. But even with the abundance of printed monuments of their cares and labours which we possess, how scanty must be our knowledge of the true spirit, the depths of the heart, of an age which has past away! The faint echoes only have reached us of the trumpet sounds, which once stirred the men of God to strife; we have only distant traditions how they walked by the way, and told of the light of truth which they should kindle in our land, by God's grace never to be put out. And yet we can, perhaps, sometimes in imagination transfer ourselves to their days: for their language, their laws, and their manners are ours, or have been since but slightly modified; we may share a portion of their spirit, and revive their withered tokens.

But who shall breathe again the air of the ancient world, or bring up the lives and thoughts

of those, whose very monuments have perished? Who shall measure the vast schemes which laboured in the breast of man, before degrading experience had lessened him to his real powers? Who shall speak of the bounding joys and high-pitched hopes which stirred his spirit, before bitter disappointment had compelled him to fold his hands in misery? And who can tell the strength of faith or amount of saving knowledge, which might have been required to meet in anticipation, or endure in reality, the dread stroke of death, before his name had become familiar, or men had learned to breathe freely in his presence?

Again, who can say how much of divine light may have flowed forth upon the Church from the actual presence of Jehovah? how bright He might have been pleased to make the place, where He caused his glory to dwell?

All these things have now passed away, and the souls of the faithful who witnessed them have entered into their rest; each having had his strength proportioned to his day, and having shared so much of light and knowledge as was sufficient for his time of trial.

But faith, hope, and love have not passed with them. These three yet remain: and while love, the greatest of the three, seems too gentle and too holy to find its resting-place in this world of disunion; faith and hope are ever before us,—to

be seen in the endurance of the saints of God, to be exemplified in our daily works and words, to be established and confirmed by these our appointed labours, and to be approved by Him, before whose judgment-seat we shall all one day stand.

LECTURE VI.

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

ST. JOHN iii. 10.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things ?

THE operation of Christianity upon the heart and life of man, may be defined to consist in a gradual assimilation of his thoughts and ways to the thoughts and ways of God. And so different is this process from anything which takes place in the man not subjected to religious influence, that it is represented to us in Scripture as a new life, endowing men with new faculties and new sensations. The entrance into it is described as a new birth—a being born again, or from above. Now this new life is asserted in Scripture to be the great gift which the Redeemer came to confer upon the human race: and its completion, in the full action of all its faculties, and the full exercise of all its senses, is the great end to which we are taught to look, as the purpose and aim of our

redemption. Following the analogy of the comparison, Scripture teaches us that the man who thus lives, is conversant with, and moves amongst, the objects of an unseen eternal world; that he walks by faith, not by sight; that he knows nothing and no man after the flesh, but every thing and every person by the aid of other principles, and through the medium of other thoughts, than those furnished by the present state of time. And further yet, as our natural life was produced, and is upheld, by the imparting to a mass of inert matter a vivid and mysterious influence from God the Creator, in whom we live and move and have our being; so we are taught that this inner and deeper life is created and continued by the inspiration into our souls, dead and incapable before, of a vital influence from God our Redeemer, acting by and with the counsel of His will, who is the Father of lights, and from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. We believe that to confer this influence, Christ was raised up to the right hand of God; that with this influence he was anointed specially and above his fellows; and that he does, in his heavenly abode of glory, dispense and shed forth this quickening power upon the souls of men. We believe this power to be the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and being the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, as revealed to us in the covenant work of redemption. Now,

if these things be so; if without holiness no man shall see the Lord; if without the influence of the blessed Spirit of God no man shall become holy; if this process of assimilation to God be indeed a new and wonderful life, an enlightening, a comforting, and a purifying process; and if, on the other hand, there were holy men of old, who lived faithful lives and died triumphant deaths, and have passed to their rest in the heavenly city of God,—then I say that this spiritual life, this birth into new senses and faculties, with its Lord and Giver the Holy Spirit, must have been by these ancient worthies felt and known. For whatever additional knowledge may in the course of ages have been conferred upon the Church, in the unfolding of the purposes of Providence, we cannot conceive any time when God's people were left without this knowledge, so entirely essential to the very existence of religion in the heart.

Now to illustrate this *a priori* argument by testimony to the fact, that things were as I have insisted, is the object of my present Lecture. Before doing so, however, one remark is necessary. The gift of the Holy Spirit being so essential and important as we have described it, we may expect to find that this, the great result of the Messiah's coming, was distinctly recognized, and frequently referred to, in proportion to its value and dignity. For it would not argue

that consistency in the Divine conduct for which I am contending, if we found that doctrinal truths which stand lower in the scale of importance were in full possession of the ancient Churches, while this, the first and highest of all, was but seldom recognized, or darkly hinted at.

I proceed then first to consider the direct testimony of Scripture itself. In examining the Old Testament, we find that by far the majority of passages where the Spirit of God is mentioned, have reference to his work of extraordinary inspiration. Prophetic powers are universally and plainly ascribed to the agency of this Spirit, as also in several places is the skill of a consummate workman. To the Spirit is ascribed the power of transporting from place to place, in order to furnish prophetic visions. In one passage in the book of Job, and in the celebrated 2nd verse of Genesis, creative power is referred to the same Spirit. And with regard to the latter passage it may be observed, that the words 'the Spirit of God' can hardly with any fairness be explained away as some have attempted: and that even if they could be, there still would remain for my present purpose the consent of the ancient Church, which explained them as we do now.

Before we notice other operations ascribed to this Spirit, let us consider the use of his name in the connexions already mentioned. I need not here remark, that in the three principal theological

languages the name for the Spirit is the same with that for breath, or wind. But it may be necessary to notice that our Lord, in the discourse from which my text is taken, expressly draws a comparison between the Spirit and the wind of heaven in one point, viz. the exertion of an unseen though powerful influence. And from the reproach which our text conveys, we may in fairness conclude that this analogy between the natural and the spiritual influence was a thing well known, or supposed to be well known, to those conversant with Jewish sacred learning. I see then that it was understood of old, that the extraordinary gift of prophecy, and that of superior skill in ordinary matters, were conferred by an unseen influence from God; and that to this influence was referred the arrangement of the disorderly elements in creation, and the formation, or quickening, of the body of man. But do I find no inward and properly spiritual influence ascribed to the same Spirit? When mankind had corrupted their way before God, I read that God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man; for that he also is flesh." There are perhaps few passages of Scripture, concerning which more doubts have been raised: but adopting any probable interpretation of the words, I see not how we can escape from the inference that the Divine Spirit dwelling in man and bearing testimony against his sins is intended;

and that the words amount to a threat of the withdrawal of that Spirit from the human race. Nor can we otherwise understand the latter clause, than by interpreting it, “forasmuch as that which is born of the flesh is flesh,”—forasmuch as they that are in the flesh cannot please God. So that we have here a clear distinction between the Spirit and the flesh; a clear recognition of a power within man, distinct from his natural thoughts and desires, nay, maintaining within him a conflict and a struggle between the will to do good and the present temptation to do evil.

But it is not in the historical books of Scripture that I shall find the most direct assertions of the indwelling of God’s Spirit in men. The truth is one concerning rather the individual life of the faithful man, than the acts or sufferings of nations. I turn then to those books of Scripture which contain the devotional outpourings of man’s heart to God, and there I find abundant proof of that for which I am seeking. I select that most important testimony contained in the fifty-first Psalm; where, amidst the plainest acknowledgments of natural depravity, and the most earnest supplications for the pardon of sin, the penitent cries out, “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me;” and again, “Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free (or leading) Spirit.”

In the cxliiird Psalm, we have another recognition of the same truth: "Thy good Spirit shall lead me forward in righteousness."

In the retrospect taken by Nehemiah of God's dealings with his people, I find their instruction expressly ascribed to God's good Spirit.

I need not quote from the Prophets their repeated declarations that this Spirit should be poured out in abundance upon the promised deliverer, nor connect those declarations with our Saviour's own application of them. No less clear and undoubted is their testimony to a great outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days; no less familiar to you is the appropriation of that prophecy by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost. I dwell not on these, because my present object is not to deal with prophecy or its fulfilment, but to lay before you the means which the ancient Churches possessed of judging and coming to a reasonable faith respecting great truths, and the way in which it appears that those means were employed.

I pass now to the New Testament, and there I find, as might have been expected, the Holy Spirit mentioned without introduction or apology, as a being whose existence and influence were well known to the Jews. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, written for Jews, the miraculous conception of Jesus is ascribed to the Holy Spirit without any explanation of such an expression.

No one can read the opening chapters of that Gospel, without being satisfied that the person and offices of the Spirit were familiar things among those for whose use the book was intended. Our Saviour again, in his discourses to the Jews, mentions the giving of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer, without any information what was intended by the name.¹ John the Baptist announces to the multitudes the baptism with the Holy Ghost in the same unexplained manner.² Our Saviour, in promising the Comforter to his disciples, explains that name by another better known, “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.”³ St. Stephen, in his discourse to the Jews, applies to them the declaration of Isaiah, that they vexed the Holy Spirit of God; and adds, “as your fathers did, so do ye.”⁴ That they understood these words and their application, their conduct shewed. St. Peter, speaking of the ancient prophets, uses a remarkable expression, saying that “they sought what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify:”⁵ an expression, however, which we shall before long see abundantly justified.

I pass to the Jewish paraphrases and comments. I find in them the being and operations of the Holy Spirit very distinctly recognized. On the second verse of Genesis I read these

¹ Luke xi. 13.

² Ib. iii. 16.

³ John xiv. 26.

⁴ Acts vii. 51.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 2.

remarkable words: "This is the Spirit of King Messiah, concerning whom it is written in Isaiah xi. 1, 'And there shall rest on him the Spirit of the Lord.' But," it is added, "how does the Spirit of the Messiah minister, and how does it come moving itself over the face of the waters? The answer is, When you pour out your hearts as water by penitence, as it is written, (Lam. ii. 19,) 'Pour out thy heart before the Lord like water.'"⁶

I find again, "Whatsoever the righteous do, they do by the Holy Spirit."⁷

I see also that the expressions used in the New Testament with reference to the new and spiritual life, are taken from those of the Jewish theology. The Apostle Paul writes, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." I find the Jews remarking, where God promises to Abraham that he would make him a great nation, that the creative verb is there used, because God would make of him a *new creature*.⁸ I find again, that if a man convert another to the knowledge of the true God, the change is equivalent to a *new creation*.⁹ And again, "the priest by the anointing of the holy oil is made a new creature."

⁶ Bereshith Rabba ad Gen. i. 2, cit. apud Schoettg. vol. i. p. 9.

⁷ Tanchuma, fol. xviii. 2, cit. ap. Schoettg. *in loc.* Rom. viii. 15, vol. i. p. 530.

⁸ Schoettg. i. 704.

⁹ Id *ibid.*

And again, "Whoever occupies himself in the study of the law, is restored anew by receiving another and a holy life."¹ Our Saviour speaks of our new birth by water and the Spirit: and we find his own baptism thus divinely accompanied by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. The Jews also were not uninformed of such an influence accompanying their initiatory sacrament: "A man newly born," say they, "does not immediately receive the Holy Spirit, nor till the ordinance of circumcision. Then the Spirit is poured upon him from above. When he is growing up, and studies the law, a greater effusion is vouchsafed to him. When he becomes worthy to observe the precepts of the law, a still greater effusion is granted. When he marries, begets children, and instructs them in the ways of the holy King, then he becomes a man perfect in all things."²

Here we have a remarkable testimony to the origin and growth of the spiritual life in man. Nor is the following less worthy of note.

In the last verse of Exodus xiv. we read, "The people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses:" and in the beginning of chapter xv. follows their triumphant song of praise. On this the Jewish comment remarks:

¹ Schoettg. I. p. 705.

² Sohar Levit. fol. xxxix. col. 154, cit. ap. Schoettg. vol. I. p. 329.

“Whosoever undertakes any command of the Lord in faith, in him inhabits the Holy Spirit. For we read of our ancestors, that, because they believed the Lord, the Holy Spirit dwelt in them, and they sang their song of praise.” And this follows: “Faith then must be a great thing before the blessed God, for by its means the Holy Spirit inhabits in men.”³

I might add many more testimonies of a similar kind from the same sources; but I forbear to do so, because enough have been cited to shew, by direct witness of the Jews themselves, and not only by inference from the New Testament, that the person and operations of the Holy Spirit were known and believed in by them. I am not concerned with the admixtures of error which are discernible in these testimonies: I take the great facts conceded to me, and on them I build an inference which accords with our assertion in the beginning of this Lecture. For whence came this knowledge and belief? Can anything be pointed out in the law of Moses, anything in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which can be cited as having originally suggested it? Are the being and operations of the Holy Spirit anywhere announced in terms so distinct, or definitions so clear, as to make it probable that the faith of the Church of God in these things was derived from such passages of Scripture? On

³ Schoettg. vol. II. p. 684.

the other hand, we have seen that where the name and attributes of this Divine Person are mentioned, an acquaintance with the matter is presupposed; and that even from the earliest quotation which we have made, we are necessarily thrown back upon a then existing belief of the Church, to account for the form of speech which is used. Our question then recurs, Whence was this belief? From what source flowed this knowledge? We look over the heathen world, we examine into the dark and mysterious superstitions which persuaded the nations: we give no scope to our fancy, and barely admit analogies which obtrude themselves on us in a manner not to be left unnoticed; and we cannot but conclude that to each and all of them, there remains some portion of primeval light deduced through the ancestral family of the latter world. We look upon the house of Israel, and we find them singularly favoured by God, exalted in divine knowledge above the nations, and providentially kept from the inroads of idolatry and ignorance. We find in them the direct line of Noah, the patriarchal and God-fearing line, the line in which the priesthood descended from father to son, with all its duties and observances and traditional lore. Is it likely that the knowledge of God transmitted by this line would be less in amount, or less pure in quality, than that which was borne forth from time to time by the idolater

or the exile? Is it likely that God, who, some generations after Noah, called forth the father of that race, and made his covenant with him, would, during those generations, or in the four hundred and thirty years which elapsed before the giving of the law, have permitted that treasure to be lost, the keeping of which seemed to be the very purpose of the separation and insulated character of the patriarchal families? The ground of God's confidence in Abraham is, that he will command his household and children after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.

Tracing that line downwards, we find it becoming a great nation; we see this nation in bondage and distress: no written law had yet been given, no pillar of cloud or fire was yet among them: this traditional teaching was all on which their religious knowledge, their faith, and their obedience depended. And if this faith and obedience was, at the time of their deliverance from Egypt, of rare example, allowing that declension which is the natural and inevitable consequence of oral transmission; yet this but strengthens my inference, that the knowledge of God and his ways, as imparted to the ancient world, must have been far more, and of a higher order, than has been commonly supposed. I cannot then but conclude that the person and operations of the Holy Spirit became known to

the Jews by traditional transmission from the early world, through the patriarchal line. Now if I found in Scripture anything which seemed to contradict such a conclusion; if, during the period usually called antediluvian, I found no spiritual worship, no record of the achievements of faith, I might still be led to question that which otherwise I might have inferred: but how does this matter stand? We find during that period, the tabernacle of God established among men; we find the voice of God not heard in visions or sought from oracles, but conversing usually and familiarly with mankind; we find the faithful described as maintaining close and intimate communion with God. Enoch and Noah are said to have walked with God: the former is adduced as a noble instance of the triumphs of faith, and is presented to our notice as gifted with the prophetic power of the Holy Spirit; the latter is said to have condemned the world by the precautions which faith suggested, and to have become heir of the righteousness which is by faith, and a preacher of it. Men are said, at a certain time and after a certain event, whose weight in the matter we cannot at this time appreciate, to have begun to call upon, or to call themselves by the name of Jehovah.⁴ I am aware that the interpretations of this passage are many, and contradictory one of another; that

⁴ Gen. iv. 26; vide Pol. Synops. *in loc.*

the most ancient paraphrases render the words, 'then men began to profane the name of the Lord, or began to profane themselves by not calling on the name of the Lord.' But the phrase used is one of constant recurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the sense of invoking the name of Jehovah in prayer; nor can the verb which precedes it fairly bear any other sense than that of 'began,' in its construction here. Besides, after the parenthetical chapter of genealogies which follows, the narrative proceeds to tell us that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men;" as if the verse under our consideration were referred to, and the expression 'sons of God' taken from it. It appears then, that the sacred historian points to some remarkable increase of religious feeling and worship, and separation of those who called on, or called themselves by, the name of the Lord, from the rest of mankind. Of thus much we may I think be certain. But there is at least probability and consistency in the supposition of some divines,⁵ that an effusion of God's Holy Spirit is here implied; a grant of more knowledge, and a more substantial and prominent existence, to the Church of the faithful. However this may be, the division of men into those who feared and those who did not fear the Lord, seems first then to have taken place; the prophetic power seems then to have commenced in

⁵ Edwards's History of Redemption.

the Church, and that mysterious and intimate access to the Divine presence, implied in the expression 'walking with God.'

So far then from the few hints which are furnished us respecting the religion of the antediluvian age militating against my conclusion, they seem to confirm it, and give it fresh warrant.

I conclude then, that from the first, and throughout the ages before the Redeemer appeared, Divine influence was believed to be necessary, in order that man might fear and obey God; that this influence was looked for in the ordinances of God's Church, and as an answer to the prayers of the faithful; and that the agent of it was known as the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of creative, prophetic, and intelligent power, yet dwelling in and enlightening the hearts of the servants of God. And further, that this Spirit was regarded as being poured upon, and emanating from, the future Deliverer; and that a day was looked for, when his being and influence should be better known by a general out-pouring of his gifts on the Church.

Now of all pledges of God's favour to man, the gift of his Holy Spirit is unquestionably the greatest. The new life of holiness of which he is the Lord and Giver, is an earnest of an everlasting state of blessedness in another world. The faithful are described as having here the

first-fruits of the Spirit; a small and prefatory grant of that boundless fulness of joy, which shall be poured upon them when their time of trial shall have ended.

And of all the tests of the religious life in man, this is the surest, and penetrates the deepest. "Hereby know we that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."⁶ For then is the calm and blessed assurance of the holy soul the safest and the steadiest, when, setting aside all fanaticism and spiritual folly, judging in the clear light of reason purified by chastened feelings, it is deeply, unanswerably conscious of the progress within it of the great work of God, tracing his Almighty hand in its joys, and sorrows, and daily trains of thought; marking its advance by evil ever defeated, and good ever acquired; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before; hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and receiving from God the Spirit this its daily bread of life.

It is thus that humble confidence in God is won and kept; thus that we, in common with the faithful of all ages, learn to call God our God, and to rejoice in the hope of eternal life.

But He who forgot not his covenant of old, but in the darkness gave light to guide and to cheer, hath visited us with the day-spring from

⁶ 1 John iii. 24.

on high. He hath poured on our great High-priest the holy oil of his Spirit without measure, and it hath descended even to the lowest skirts of his garment : of his fulness all we have tasted. The sacred leaven hath wrought during these latter ages of the world, and that kingdom of God which cometh not with observation of men, hath been quietly but surely winning its way in the hearts of mankind, and the fabric of human society. The fierce passions, the ungentle manners, the licentious ethics, of the best of the former ages, have been, at least by outward consent, banished from Christian communities ; and more than outward consent may be confidently looked for, in the further advances of the Spirit of truth and love. Of the fragments of beauty and majesty scattered up and down in ages past, hath Christian art built her goodly and glorious temple. The things which others saw, but knew not, have deep and holy meanings now. The very frame of man is become the tabernacle of God : our sufferings and our affections were His, who is as we are in this world : what God hath cleansed, that we cannot call common : and the earth and the fulness thereof are being gathered visibly together in Christ.

Truly we walk on holy ground, and the glory of the Divine Presence is thickening around us. Happy are we, if we know to what we are called ; if we live in faith, and purity, and prayer ; if we

quench not and vex not God's Holy Spirit ; if, according as He has enabled us, we be found workers together with Him—acting and suffering, living and dying, in harmony with his most holy purposes.

LECTURE VII.

THE RESURRECTION.

ACTS xxvi. 8.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

I WILL briefly restate the argument of the course of Lectures which I am now drawing near to a close.

The covenant between God and his people is a covenant of faith. That is, He on his part has revealed to them certain important things affecting their eternal interests; and requires of them on their part, that practical and absorbing conviction of the truth of these things, which we know by the name 'faith.' And this faith arises not from prejudice, nor from ignorance, but is the result, spread over the affections and the conduct, of the well-assured and intelligent conclusions of the reason, that loftiest power wherewith we are endowed. Now Scripture informs us that this faith has been man's part of

this covenant since the entrance of sin into the world: in other words, that a clear and intelligent conviction, grounded on sufficient evidence, has been the reason for the servants of God obeying him, loving him, and seeking him, in all ages.

This being the case, we have directed our attention to that revelation which God has made to man of the redemption which is in Christ. We have seen it assuming as a preliminary truth, the corruption and ruin of mankind by sin; disclosing his recovery from this corruption and ruin by God's grace; the providing of that recovery by the incarnation, death, and triumph of the Redeemer; the progress of that recovery in man by the indwelling and renewing work of the Holy Spirit; the completion of that recovery by the reception of the members of the covenant of faith into eternal glory. We have seen that on these great verities our faith rests: while at the same time we try and prove them by all proper tests and evidences, and strive to be able to give to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in us.

My endeavour has been to make it plain, that these foundation truths of the Gospel have been in all ages sufficiently known to the Church of God to render the faith of its members a well-grounded and reasonable conviction: that, while the prophetic word pointed their expectations

forward to the future display of the facts of redemption on the stage of the world, their spirits rejoiced to see that day, and saw it and were glad—even in its results, the pardon of sin, and the new creation unto holiness.

Thus far have we advanced, establishing and illustrating our argument from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the comments and religious works of the Jews, and those passages in the New Testament which imply an acquaintance on the part of the hearers or readers with the things treated of.

Now, after having traced down from the very earliest times, knowledge of the corruption of human nature by sin,—of its recovery by a slain but glorified Redeemer,—of its becoming the tabernacle of God's Holy Spirit; it might be thought hardly necessary to shew that there was, co-ordinate with this knowledge, a belief that the blessings promised in redemption were eternal, and not temporal; hardly possible that any persons, knowing what ruin it was which sin had wrought, could interpret God's redemption of man from it to have respect to this present world only, and regard the great work of holiness advancing within them as one which should be cut short in the midst of the days. Yet such has been the opinion of one divine of our own Church especially,¹ and of others who have followed him.

¹ Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*.

And I mention this, not to intimate any intention of contesting with him the position which he has undertaken to make good, but merely to remind you that his argument, if confined within its proper limits, interferes not with mine; and that it is only when he exceeds those limits, and confounds, as it appears to me, things perfectly distinct, that I have any cause of difference with him. The author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* has undertaken to prove Moses to have been a divinely commissioned legislator, from the circumstance of his law containing no allusions to a future state of rewards and punishments; and has devoted much of his treatise to establishing this latter point. But in doing this he has not unfrequently wandered out of the Mosaic dispensation, and included the patriarchs and the prophets, who formed no part of that economy, in ignorance of the doctrine of a future state.² And in this notion he has found some at

² To expose the inconsistencies of Warburton, might consume more space than labour. Two examples may be sufficient here. In book v. § 5, we find him asserting in one page, that “the holy Prophets speak of no other but temporal rewards and punishments:” to prove which he quotes Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. On the opposite page we find him contrasting the plain account of the assumption of Elijah, with the obscurely hinted translation of Enoch, and saying, “The reason of this difference is evident: when the history of Elijah was written, it was thought expedient to make a preparation for the dawning of a *future state* of reward and punishment, which in the time of Moses had

least willing to agree with him, even in our own times. It may not therefore be unnecessary or unprofitable to direct your attention to the enquiry, how far the doctrine of an eternal state, and as connected with it that of the resurrection of the dead, were known to the ancient Churches.

In doing this, I shall first notice a concession made by the author himself to whom I have alluded. "Among the Jews indeed," he writes,³ "the Resurrection was become a national doctrine some time before the advent of the Messiah." It would have been perhaps too bold an attempt, though scarcely more bold than some which he had already made, to disprove or explain away the belief in a future state which prevailed in our Saviour's time. I take then what is here conceded, and presume none will be found dis-

been highly improper." Strange then indeed, that the day which dawned when the books of Kings were written, should again have given place to darkness in the time of the latter prophets.

In the same section (1. 3.) we find him allowing that the patriarchs were favoured with revelations concerning the redemption of mankind, which he says Moses purposely omitted; and this caution, he continues, arose from a wish "to keep out of sight *that doctrine* which he had omitted in his institutes of law and religion." Here is a clear admission that the patriarchs were acquainted with the doctrine of a future state. Yet, from his own reasoning in the same section, (5.) *if they were acquainted with it*, the word of God which brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, is rendered of none effect.

³ Book vii. ch. v. 2, note.

posed to question it. I find the phenomenon apparent in the spiritual world at a certain time, and my wish is to trace it to its origin, and give some account of its progress. This enquiry has been very shortly dismissed by the author whom I have quoted. After having stated, as above, that this doctrine had become national with the Jews before the Messiah's advent, he continues,⁴ "It was not collected (we may be sure) from natural reason, nor taught them by their Scriptures, yet collected from the contemplation of their prophets misinterpreted; where the restoration of the Mosaic republic was predicted, in terms which were mistaken by the latter Jews to signify the revival or resurrection of their deceased ancestors."

Now, that there are such passages as those here mentioned, and that they were thus misinterpreted, no student of Scripture and commentators will deny: but allowing this, and even for the present allowing also that neither nature nor Scripture taught them this doctrine, there is still an assignable origin for their knowledge of it—namely, primeval tradition. And I hope to be able to shew not only that they probably deduced their acquaintance with the doctrine from this source, but that no other source can with any likelihood be mentioned as having given rise to it.

⁴ Ut supra.

Now, dealing as we do with traditionary doctrine, we shall necessarily be occupied with matters which lie beneath the surface of Scripture and history; which are rather presupposed than asserted,—rather assumed than enounced.

Beginning then at the very earliest times, I would direct your attention to the state of our first parents, as humiliated and degraded after the fall. What had they lost? The threat had expressed that in the day of the violation of their obedience, they should surely die; and their sentence was in accordance with that threat. But that day they did not die; nay, many centuries passed over their heads before the sentence was fulfilled. The only visible immediate infliction on them was their expulsion from Eden, the deterioration of the soil and its produce, and the commencement of that life by the sweat of the brow, which, though a woeful change in prospect, doubtless brought, as all human experience testifies, its comfort and reward with it. Yet I find from that time, if our former inferences have been correct, a system of worship and a tabernacle of God's presence set up, whose very form indicated that a deeper loss had been sustained than any of these outward inflictions seemed to point at. Man is from this time polluted—debarred access to God without the intervention of rites and ordinances: he has lost that holiness without which no man shall see God. And, however

I may attempt to do so, I cannot withdraw my attention from this part of their misery, nor can I persuade myself that their loss was merely a temporal one. For if it was merely temporal, then their blessedness before was merely temporal also ; and thus the high estate from which sin has cast us down, were at best only a life of refined animal enjoyment, and the high and reaching desires of these souls, then necessarily more high and reaching when not bound down and fettered by impurity, were unsatisfied, undirected, sent wandering over the soon exhausted objects of sense, to find only disappointment and vexation of spirit. For to make the only supposition which remains, and to conceive that such desires did not exist before that mysterious change, which is implied in the knowledge of good and evil, passed on our race, is to admit the monstrous notion that sin has raised us higher in the scale of being ; and to make us almost ready to exclaim, Rather would we be in sin and error, with the treasures of knowledge before us, the sense of our dignity within us, and the hope of immortality bounding in our spirits, than innocent and pure, but unendowed and unenlightened, without aim and without hope.

I cannot then but see, under the surface of the sacred narrative, that the loss sustained by man was not temporal merely ; that he had regard to himself as a living, an immortal soul, who by sin

had forfeited the favour of God. And I see this view confirmed by all that is done to comfort him in this his dejection. To what purpose is the sense of the pardon of sin, imparted generally in his own duration here, particularly in sacrifice and prayer, if not to point to a restoration to the favour and presence of God, in a spiritual sense and in an eternal state? For, temporally speaking, the godly man gained nothing by his service of God. More temptation, more sorrow, more persecution came upon him,—the curse was not taken off, the sentence was not reversed: and though in one case a saint of God was translated that he should not see death, such was not the rule under this dispensation, any more than under the next, which had its translated prophet also; but from sire to son of the righteous line we read, ‘And he died’—died notwithstanding all his piety, all his hopes and faith. So that unless mankind during this time were in ignorance of God’s will and service altogether, which the instances of Enoch and Noah forbid us to suppose, we must necessarily conclude that the blessings which they looked for belonged to the restoration of their souls in a better and eternal state. And this conclusion is still further strengthened by the circumstance that we have recorded, by the Apostle Jude, a remarkable prophecy of Enoch respecting the coming of the Lord to judgment, which can bear no satisfactory explanation, ex-

cept on the supposition of the utterer having reference to a future state of existence. This prophecy is quoted as forming one of the mass of primæval traditions then current: who shall say how many of the same kind have been lost to us in the lapse of ages? That important matters were at this time thus preserved in knowledge, was believed of old; for Tertullian reports, on the same authority, that Enoch enjoined it to his son Methuselah to deliver to his posterity what he himself had received by hereditary tradition.⁵ Let us, however, dwell a few moments longer on the translation of this saint and prophet; and let us enquire what effect it must have produced on the minds of those who were left behind in the Church of God. Suppose them unacquainted with the doctrine of a future state, but long conversant with the piety of Enoch: what reward would they suppose that piety had met with? Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Strange would indeed the great and crowning testimony of the Divine approval have been, if it had only consisted in a snatching away of its object from all that he loved, and life itself, without any bright equivalent for such a loss. Could human reason have employed itself on such an occurrence as the removal of a saint so highly favoured, without inferring thence the reality of some other state,

⁵ De Cultu Fœm. 1.

and better than that from which he was taken ? But happening as it did before men who previously believed in a future state, it would be to them a striking and gracious proof of the truth of God's promises to them, that one of their own number should have sensibly passed away into eternal blessedness.

Now, before we leave this primæval period, let us reflect, that the Scripture account, comprising as it does little more than two chapters of Genesis, is but the record of a few names, and still fewer occurrences, in a long and important portion of the lifetime of the world and the Church: that there yet remains behind, in all probability, much more to be told respecting their belief and hope, than has yet been told: and that though the fancy must be checked and sobered in such matters, we cannot consider it unsafe to suppose that their knowledge was very much more than we have had detailed to us. I believe then, that in the Church before the flood it was believed and known that there would be a future state of blessedness or misery; and that to this future state were the hopes of the saints directed, and not to any promises of deliverance merely temporal.

Passing onwards in the Scripture history of man, I cannot but dwell awhile on the fortunes of that remarkable person who forms the link between the former and the latter world. I can-

not but follow him in his course of patient endurance, his unavailing work and labour of love, a preacher to the world of the righteousness which is by faith. That world, having disregarded his warning voice, is delivered over to the just vengeance of God. It was indeed a day of the Lord's coming,—but it was not that of which the prophetic word had spoken. For there was no seat of judgment, no conviction of ungodly sinners for their ungodly works and words, no accompanying pomp of saints. It was not final, for he and his family were spared to continue the human race, and the seed of promise. It was impossible that he should imagine the announcement of Enoch fulfilled. Nor did he so imagine; for he delivered it down to his descendants as an intimation of something yet to come: and more than two thousand years after, we find it still alive in the mention of men.

But could he, with this prophecy before him, avoid drawing a comparison between the scene of desolation which surrounded him, and the final vengeance which should be taken on sinners? Could the thought but suggest itself, “as the days of Noah, so shall the days of the Son of Man be?” And in his own miraculous preservation, could he but see the ultimate safety of those who, like himself, should be heirs of the righteousness which is by faith? For those were times when great truths were

acted rather than spoken; and the doctrines of grace were enwrapt in the parables of providence.

Once more (for I have before followed this history with a different purpose) behold the patriarchal family assembled round their altar, consecrating, by an offering of thanksgiving and propitiation, the new world which lay beneath them. What are the words in which the gracious announcement is made to them that the world should no more be devastated as they had seen it? “I will not again smite every thing living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, [literally, and in our margin, ‘as yet all the days of the earth,'] seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.” Is there not in this sentence a plain allusion to the time when earth should be no more? “All the days of the earth,” it is a phrase usually employed of something transitory, not of any thing eternal. “All the days of Noah,” we read in the next chapter, “were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died:” and so of others who have passed away. And may not St. Peter be thought to refer to this very expression, when he says, that by the same Divine word which created the world, it, after having been overflowed with water, is kept in store for another display of the divine vengeance?⁶

⁶ 1 Pet. iii. 7.

But we descend to Abraham, who became the inheritor of these traditions, and, it would appear, saw through the corruptions and superstitions of those among whom he lived. And here we find the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in commenting on the command for the sacrifice of Isaac, saying, that Abraham “accounted God was able to raise him from the dead, from which he also received him in a figure.” Could this have been asserted of Abraham, unless the resurrection of the dead had been an article of his belief previously? or can we suppose that a figure such as passed before him on this occasion, could have been designed for the revelation of such a doctrine, unknown before? And in tracing the whole history of this patriarch—the renewals of the promise to him, his conduct respecting the land of promise, and the comment of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews respecting this conduct; we cannot but see in all these particulars, beneath the surface of the Scripture narrative, evidence that the hope of future blessedness beyond the grave was continually in his view, and was had respect to by God. Most of these instances have been brought forward, and ably commented on, in a previous course of Lectures on this foundation:⁷ you heard and may read in those Lectures, of the remarkable

⁷ Hulsean Lectures for 1832, by the Rev. J. J. Blunt, Lect. II.

disparity in the blessing and lot of Ishmael, the son according to nature, and Isaac, the heir of the promise: to the former, earthly blessings and dominion—to the latter, the covenant of God; as if put in contrast, the spiritual against the carnal.

One train of circumstances must not however be passed over, for it affects the question now immediately before us. The land of Canaan had been promised to Abraham—to him and to his seed. And I find it recorded that he remained in the distant expectation of the fulfilment of this promise throughout his life, with one exception. One piece of land he purchased of the inhabitants of the country; it was for a burying-place. Now there might be nothing remarkable in the descendants of Abraham wishing to be buried in the same spot: but when, on the one hand, we find the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews asserting, that “by faith Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones,” and on the other, trace a tradition among the Jews, that the patriarchs shall rise from the dead and possess the land of promise; we cannot but ask ourselves, Did no thought of this kind, or no thought which might afterwards be corrupted into this, exist in the minds of the patriarchs themselves?

I pass by the sojourning of the people of God in Egypt, and take up the history at their departure thence. At this point I see the remark-

able spectacle of a people with ordinances and sacrifice, and the worship of the true God,—and all this upheld, we have every reason to suppose, solely by tradition. Jehovah was known as “the God of their fathers.”⁸ His dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in all probability the annals of times long before them, were current among the children of Israel. “The people which God had purchased,” is their appellation: “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary which thou hast established;”⁹ this is the expression of their confidence. Is it likely that they who knew thus much by tradition, should have lost that greatest hope, that bright light amidst the darkness of bondage and idolatry, in which their fathers lived and died?

At this time God raised up Moses as a deliverer and a lawgiver to his people. By him He gave to Israel statutes and ordinances regulating their conduct in his worship and as his peculiar people; by him He wrought into a system, and bestowed exclusively on one race, that theocracy which subsisted but partially before, and which, previously to the general apostacy of the nations, seems to have had place in some degree amongst them all. On the nature of the Mosaic economy,

⁸ Exod. iii. 15; xv. 2.

⁹ Ib. xv. 16, 17.

as affecting our present enquiry, I shall treat at large in my next and concluding Lecture. It may suffice to say at present, that to reveal truth was not its object, but to bind it up, and secure it against loss by the liminary statutes of strict obedience consistent with it;—that it is never represented to us in Scripture as advancing forward God's people in knowledge and hope, but rather as wrapping up in parables, and veiling from sight, that knowledge and hope which it found amongst the faithful;—that like another fore-runner of our redemption, it was “not that Light, but was sent to bear witness to that Light;” a witness however of a peculiar kind, best characterized in the words of our Saviour, “To him that hath, shall be given; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.” That during the times of that law there were among the Jews faithful and devout servants of God, is to be attributed, not to any direct influence of that law itself, but to those promises of God, given long before the law, but which it served to bind up and consolidate. That these saints did under the law look forward to awaking up after God's likeness and being satisfied; that they exulted in the prospect of the fulness of joy and pleasures at God's right hand, when, after having been led by his counsel, they should be received with glory, was not owing to any lesson which the law had

taught them, but owing to what they knew of God's eternal covenant with his people, made since the world began.

Now if we find, at the time when our Saviour appeared, the resurrection to life a national doctrine among the Jews, can we be at a loss to what source to trace it? Can we any longer say, that it arose out of the misapprehension of some passages in their prophets? For if so, then were God's peculiar people less favoured than the heathens around them; for I find that they, almost without exception, had retained their traditional knowledge of a future state of happiness and of misery,—while, on this supposition, the children of Israel had lost it.

And I can never persuade myself, that such a belief is owing to any inferences which the natural man may draw, independently of a revelation from above. There are, it is true, in nature, many typical processes, which are wonderfully illustrative of resurrection-power, and tend to confirm and establish us in our hopes of eternal life: but what scattered hints like these shall ever first teach man to raise up the sure and certain hope of a rising again to life, against the continued progress to corruption and death which he sees around him? There are again, in these our hearts, thoughts

whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality :

but who shall say that these could make their feeble testimony of comfort and peace heard, amidst the all-desolating and hopeless triumph of death?

I cannot then but infer that God's ancient people—abased as they were by a sense of their unworthiness to appear before God, reassured by the tokens of pardon which were given them, looking for divine influence to restore in them that image of God which they had lost, and expecting in a future age that great harvest of which they had but the foretaste—did not look for the salvation of God as a thing temporal and connected with this world, but eternal; and then to come upon them in its fulness, when they should arise from the dust of death. I cannot but believe that this faith accompanied God's servants down to the very time when He came who brought life and immortality to light;—that he who waited for the consolation of Israel, who desired to depart in peace, for that his eyes had seen the Lord's salvation, spoke in this faith;—that the arguments and addresses of our Saviour to the Jews, were founded on this their faith, at least professed, and by those very words of Christ sanctioned and commended.

Thus I see consistency in the unfolding of God's purposes: thus I see that the eternal state, for which man's present life is but a preparation, has been throughout the history of God's Church,

in the view of those who formed that body, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. But while we anxiously trace the footsteps of spiritual truth, and satisfy ourselves that the longing of the holy soul has ever been after God—his perfections, his presence, and an eternity of joy in Him; let us remember that, of all the additions which the revelation of the Gospel has made to our knowledge and our hope, those concerning this doctrine have been the most extensive and the most glorious. It might have been matter of painful effort to the ancient believer, to answer the hard questioning of carnal doubt—to stand by the bed of death, and gaze on the blank and soulless features, and against that stern negation of all that is bright and hopeful, to assert his belief in a resurrection unto life. And had not the Father of mercies and God of all comfort wonderfully proportioned faith to the need of faith, so that the humblest and deepest reliance on Him is found in ages, not of knowledge, but of darkness and peril, doubtless the hope of man would have sunk beneath its trial, and the light of Israel would have been quenched.

But upon our path the Dayspring from on high hath shined; One is gone up before us into the heavenly places; over the flesh of man death cannot triumph—the grave can raise no trophies; the first-fruits have been gathered, and the harvest shall follow. If we are called to look upon

death, it is but to see the place where the Lord lay : if we follow those we love to the grave, it is but to see where the ministering angels sat, who proclaimed, "He is not here, but risen." And though in the midst of life we are in death, and we know not how soon we may be called away, yet does Christian faith enable us to walk safely, and lie down in peace ; knowing that we have a better inheritance and another tabernacle, and a life that cannot be holden of death.

Thus high is our state of blessedness ; thus clear and distinct our hope. And fearful in proportion is the danger of those who forget their heavenly calling, and walk as children of this present world, setting before them their own desires and selfish purposes, instead of taking up their cross daily, and following Christ. For from the crowd of their fellow-sinners, and the shelter of this world's deemings, they shall pass alone and unfriended into the presence of God the Searcher of hearts : who shall then restore to them that which they have lost,—or how shall they abide his justice, who have rejected his grace ?

If then there be wisdom, if there be faith, if there be purity, hold fast that which ye have until He come ; that ye may sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

LECTURE VIII.

THE USE OF THE LAW.

GAL. iii. 19.

Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.

THAT the character of the Mosaic law should have presented a difficulty to the minds of Christians, is not to be wondered at. For we are not in a situation to take fully into account the circumstances under which that law was given, or the purposes intended to be answered by it. We know but little of the dealings of Providence on a scale so extended: we can hardly grasp in our imagination the process necessary for educating a whole race of men, with reference to an assigned future object. We can but imperfectly conceive the lifting one nation out of its place to be a pattern to mankind; the acting of a great and lasting parable, whose meaning was hereafter to be opened, but which for the time, and to

those who look at it alone and unconnected, should seem unreasonable and unmeaning.

Now my purpose being to establish the consistency of the Divine conduct in the revelation of Redemption, and my former Lectures having treated of those foundation truths on which the spiritual temple of God is built, and established the fact of their manifestation to the ancient Churches; it will greatly conduce to the completeness of the argument, if, in this concluding Lecture, I may be able to give some account of that economy under which the people of God were placed for so many ages preceding the advent of Christ. If I can shew that its character and its provisions were consistent with the Divine proceedings in general, and adapted to further the end then most desirable, it will tend not only to remove out of the way the greatest hindrance to the kind of evidence with which I am concerned, but will help to build up and confirm the argument itself.

This then, with some general considerations on the nature of the evidence which I have been endeavouring to adduce, will occupy us on the present occasion.

I will first direct your attention to the circumstances of the Church of God, at the giving of the Mosaic law. A vast mass of traditionary knowledge was deposited in the congregation of Israel. The depravation of man by sin; his

recovery by the death of a promised incarnate Redeemer; the gift of the Holy Spirit, already vouchsafed as the earnest of redemption accomplished in the Divine counsels; the spiritual and eternal character of the blessings thus promised and granted,—we have reason to infer that a traditionary belief of all these things formed the ground of faith in those days, and among that people. With these doctrines, and as the means of their conservation and proof, had come down to them sacrifice, and the priesthood, and the prophetic word. From among them was to spring the Deliverer—the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel.

But by both these was first a great work to be accomplished, and a solemn testimony borne. He whose thoughts are not our thoughts, has vouchsafed to open to us this portion of his dealings with man. Even with that which is revealed do our understandings grapple at a disadvantage; for what arm of flesh can wield the sceptre, wherewith the Almighty governs his creatures? It was his pleasure that both by Gentile and Jew, the insufficiency of man to attain to Himself should be fully and practically manifested. It was his pleasure to conclude all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be to them that believe.

The nations of the world, gifted with some portion of primæval light—and even in default of

that, with the universal light of reason and conscience—retained not God in their knowledge. Their light they clouded with mystery and superstition: the witness within them they overbore and neglected, till his voice was scarcely heard. Some sunk down in the scale of being, almost below humanity; others advanced to the highest possible eminence of intellectual culture. But neither could the debasement of the savage quench the immortal soul, or exempt from the guilt of sin; nor could the keen shafts of thought penetrate the darkness, in which the knowledge of evil had enwapt the knowledge of good. Deep and deadly was the progress of moral corruption; feeble and insincere were the remedies applied. The light that was in them became darkness; and how great was that darkness!

But how fared the chosen people of God in the midst of this fearful testimony to the ruin which sin had wrought? Had they no part to bear in it, no lesson to read to them that should come after? Might it not yet be said, that all these nations were ignorant of God's ways,—that they had not the glory of his presence, nor the convincing sound of his voice? might it not be yet asserted, that if God would take a nation from the midst of the people with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, and would give them what to do for Himself, statutes and judgments, they might live in them? might it not be alleged on

man's behalf, that though, beyond doubt, when left alone, he sought not and loved not and obeyed not God, yet, with culture and moral light, and a code of observances, we know not what might be accomplished towards the recovery of the Divine image? For this purpose amongst others was the law given to Israel, that it might become manifest by actual proof, that by legal obedience should no man be justified before God. The law was added because of transgressions; to bring out, by the additional test of the application of Divine ordinances to the conduct of man, the innate corruption of his birth. It had thus a purpose with reference to those who should come after, namely, to supply what would otherwise have been a deficient and untried case—that of man furnished with the knowledge of the Divine will, and placed in a condition to perform it. It taught them the utter inability of man, by works and observances, to build up a righteousness before God. It had also a reference to Him who was to come; in that, when man's inability to perform its requirements was fully demonstrated, He came and fulfilled it to the utmost.

But there was another great purpose to be answered by the giving of the law, to which I briefly alluded in my last Lecture: the conservation of the truth among God's peculiar people.

If we look upon Israel at the time of their deliverance from Egypt, we see a people in pos-

session of many of the great doctrines of the future Gospel; doctrines which, from the very nature of the case, were to form the substance of the faith of God's saints in all ages. But the time for the manifestation of those historical occurrences, which were to be the visible shewing forth and full revelation of those doctrines, had not yet arrived. The purposes of Providence above mentioned were yet to be evolved, and to that end a considerable portion of the lifetime of mankind was yet required. And that portion had for its appointed work, the bringing in guilty of the human race, Jew and Gentile, before the purity and justice of God. Yet the covenant of faith was not to be forgotten, nor the promises made void. During this period of general apostasy, there were to be faithful among the faithless. The bright light of Israel was not to be quenched, for all the tempests which might desolate the moral world; therefore did Jehovah make a hedge about it, and enshrine it in a place hallowed and rare of access. The still small voice of the primæval testimony was to be heard among the tumults of strife and lust and carnal warfare; therefore did it not speak in the highways and haunts of mankind, but in the inner recesses of that guarded mount where God was pleased to put his name. And admirable indeed is the Mosaic dispensation, viewed as a means to this end. So constructed that the faithful man could

not miss its continual allusions to spiritual truths, it spoke to the carnally-minded nothing of its holy secrets. Founded on a recognition of doctrines far deeper and more spiritual than itself, it declared nothing new, it anticipated nothing: it acted as a medium of suspense for the hopes and thoughts of God's people, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made.

Again, in its distinctive and absolute enactments it is no less to be admired. It was plainly necessary for the fulfilment of God's purposes with regard to Israel, that they should not follow the apostacy of the nations. Here then the law is definite and precise; the unity of the Godhead is authoritatively laid down, and adherence to this great doctrine enforced by the gravest penalties. This was a doctrine which was not involved in the promise, but had been the first acknowledged by the true worshipper since the world began. Therefore this doctrine is inculcated by the law as of primary importance.

Again, the will of God as regarding the moral conduct of his creatures towards Himself and one another, was that by which his people were to be judged and found wanting; therefore that will is clearly defined and set down in the law. It formed no part of that covenant whereby man shall live before God; it was the test, the rule whereby sin might be known and detected; therefore the law placed it in the forefront of its

requirements. But upon the covenant of faith, its manifestations of the state of man and the purposes of God, its gifts of the pardon of sin and eternal life,—the law, although implying much, declares nothing. It was not its office to save the soul: it could not restore to man that which he had lost; for it was not merely the practice of obedience, but the will and power to obey, which had departed from him. A law from God might define that will, of which he had lost the apprehension; it might convict of that guilt, which the hardened heart did not regard: but when this had been done, what provisions could it contain for removing the misery which it created? To which of its chapters could it send the weary and heavy-laden to seek rest for their souls? For this there was another provision, even those ancient and precious promises which pointed to the consolation of Israel.

Was the law then against those promises? Nay, rather it led men to them: when, having renounced their own righteousness, and embraced the covenant of faith, they betook themselves to the temple and its sacrifices, they there saw every part of the solemn ritual, and every particular of the Levitical ordinances, framed in accordance with the great doctrines of that better covenant; the tears of repentance followed on the pangs of remorse, the humble trust and active endeavour of faith succeeded the helplessness of spiritual

despair : he that slept, awoke and arose from the dead, and Christ gave him light.

For this it was that the saints of old expressed their admiration of the statutes and ordinances of the law ; because they had respect to the oath which God had sworn to their fathers, and the covenant which he had commanded for ever.

So that the law stands not, nor can it be fairly regarded, by itself. We must not contemplate it as a scheme of government merely, nor endeavour to find in it the symmetry or apparent reasonableness of human political constitutions : it was a parable and a sacrament—an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace ; and that grace not given primarily by, nor through the sign, but by it sealed and assured to its possessors. I put away then at once as inapplicable, all those reasonings founded upon the mention or omission of certain truths in the law, as affecting the question of the Divine legation of its deliverer. I do not compare it with human systems, nor judge it by any general deduction from them. It stands distinct from them, as the appointed means of preserving unsullied the purity of spiritual truth ; while at the same time it brought in even God's chosen people guilty before Him.

But to this dispensation belongs another ordinance of Divine providence, no less admirable in its adaptation to the service of the truth. He

who framed the statutes and judgments of the law, knew what was in man. He knew that the formal routine of services required, might in time overbear the great doctrines to which they were in truth the testimony. He therefore raised up from time to time, persons endowed specially with his Holy Spirit, to bear witness to these truths. Such were the prophets, whose mission is represented to us as the active and unceasing work of God's careful superintendence of his people. "I sent you my prophets, daily rising up early and sending them."¹ Such in old times were Samuel and Elijah, Gad and Nathan: such were those whose writings have come down to us; men speaking not of, nor by the law; testifying of mercy, and not of sacrifice; grounding their exhortations and reasonings on truths lying deeper than the system under which they lived. They spoke of the carnal ordinances of the law as statutes that were not good, and in which a man should not live; they poured contempt on the new moons and appointed feasts of an ignorant and dissembling people; they entered into the spiritual meaning of the fast which the Lord had chosen. They were raised up also to excite and bear witness to the hopes of the Church of God, as centered in the future Redeemer. As they were moved by the Divine

¹ Jer. vii. 25.

Spirit, they spake of Him as of one that should be born into the world, and suffer and reign; as of one that should be abundantly endowed with the Spirit, and should inherit an unchangeable priesthood. They spoke in distinct terms of the transitory nature of the law; of a time when the wall of partition should be removed, and the glory of the Lord be so revealed, that all flesh should see it together.

By these two great instruments of the Divine purposes were the chosen nation kept in the profession and knowledge of the truth. These were the two witnesses of God, by which He spoke to the fathers: the one declaring the requirements of his justice—the other confirming the promises of his grace. That these witnesses were disregarded by that people, detracts not from the value of their testimony: nor can we appreciate it more highly than our Saviour himself does, where He puts into the mouth of the Father of the Faithful these prophetic words, “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”²

Thus then, while I can assign to the law of Moses its place in the great unfolding of God's purposes, I see my conclusion respecting it confirmed by the fact, that during its continuance God ceased not to bear witness to its temporary

² Luke xvi. ult.

nature and incompleteness, by his servants the prophets. And thus I see the dealings of Providence in the salvation of man brought into harmony and consistency. For had the law, on the one hand, put forth professions of saving power,—were eternal life the prominent theme on which it dwelt,—had it referred those who were under it to a future state of rewards and punishments, I should have been at a loss how to account for the co-existence of two separate and inconsistent schemes for the redemption of man: and had not the prophets, on the other hand, lifted up their voices on behalf of greater and holier truths,—had not they put forward eternal life, and the pardon of sin, and the power of the Spirit of God, as matters of primary import, I should not have known how to resolve the apparent contradictions before me: a chosen generation, a peculiar people of God, shut up under an insufficient ceremonial system; the promises given to the fathers, down to a certain point in history, increasing in number and clearness, but after that point broken off and laid aside; and, above all, that Church of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, left without the possession of it, or the power of bearing testimony to it.

I close this course of Lectures with some general remarks on the nature of the evidence which I have been endeavouring to adduce.

It is the uniform assertion of the writers of the New Testament, that the redemption effected by Christ was but the final completion and actual demonstration of great purposes which had been for many ages regulating the Divine conduct towards mankind. Now, if this had been told us in default of any record of the earlier ages of the world, we must have taken it upon trust, and could not have enquired further into it. But we have a record of those early ages, which we believe to be authentic. Nay, what is more, we are led by the New Testament writers to infer, that the main reason why this record has been preserved to us is, that we may assure ourselves of the truth of that other assertion. So that we have not only the means put into our hands, of tracing the unfolding of the Christian redemption through the dealings of Providence, but we are advised and enjoined to use them for this purpose. The Old Testament thus furnishes Christianity with one of its most important branches of evidence,—that, namely, by which it can establish its claim to be the completion of the only revelation which God has ever made of Himself to mankind; by which it can prove that the saints of God, in all ages since the entrance of sin into the world, have had no other hope than that which it now sets before them. And if we were deprived of this evidence, one strong position would be taken from us: our Christianity might

be justly, as it has been unjustly, suspected to be a system built up of various philosophical dogmas, and overlaid upon the apparently simple moral teaching of its Founder. Whereas the more clearly this evidence is established, the more will the very similarity on which that suspicion rests be turned against the suspects themselves: for it will appear that if the systems of philosophers and the Gospel have points in common, it is because, of the doctrines of truth revealed to the Church of God, some portion had found its way into the traditionary creed of the nations; because the many lights which brightened the feast within, shed some of their stray splendours over the darkness which was without.³ So that, unquestionably, great service is rendered to our holy religion, by connecting it with, and tracing it in, the course of the Old Testament history.

But while there is no question respecting the value of such evidence, there has ever been shewn considerable distrust of those who have engaged in the search for it. Nor can we deny that they have deserved such distrust in too many cases. Into an enquiry which demanded more than

³ In saying this I am in no wise impugning the existence, independently of revelation, of those moral grounds of obligation on which all religion rests. My concern is with the doctrines of revealed religion; of which it were a negation in terms to assert that the unassisted understanding of man could form any conception.

ordinary caution and fairness, they have too frequently introduced the wanton and unbridled fancy, and an evident predisposition to strain every point for their present purpose. Remote and uncertain allusions have been construed into direct assertions of doctrine; doubtful etymologies have been made to serve purposes to which language has seldom any reference. Acknowledging this as I do, and having, I hope, used it as a warning to myself, I cannot however but remind you that there is also a distrust of such enquiries which is undeserved,—which springs from a spirit of sceptical doubt, or at the least of careless disregard, concerning the record which the ancient Scriptures disclose of God's dealings with mankind; and not unfrequently accompanied by a very inadequate conception of the reality of the objects of faith. And while I shrink not from examination of the validity of the proofs which I have adduced, and trial of the soundness of the inferences which I have drawn, I must insist upon one condition, without which men are not qualified for becoming judges in this matter; and that is, a simple and earnest belief of the Scripture narrative, and a due sense of its importance as a record of the Divine dealings; a persuasion of the absolute objective truth of Scripture assertions, and a reliance on a personal revealed God in Christ, as the Author, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the nature of man. Where these things are

wanting, there cannot be a proper appreciation of the arguments which I have used, or the spirit in which they have been advanced; and this because the members of the Church of Christ, in looking over the history of past ages, see not as man seeth: in their view, the struggles of human ambition are by an unseen hand controlled for holy purposes, and the fitful storms of chance and change directed by an Almighty intelligence after the counsel of his will; in their view, the spirits of all flesh are dependent upon, and called to adore and love, a God who is not far from every one of them; who is not the offspring of their own thoughts or figures of speech, but is the Author of peace and love, and the Fountain from which all blessings flow. And while there is much in the tale of this world's strife and woe which it surpasses their power to interpret aright, and much in their own spirits which must as yet be set by in reservation and uncertainty; yet do they not therefore cast away their confidence, but in the humility of self-distrusting faith, hold fast their persuasion that God doeth all things well; that his Christ, and his Church, and his cause, shall triumph and be exalted; and that towards that holy end have the events of ages past been surely, though mysteriously, tending. In Scripture they read the history of this work as displayed by the establishment of the covenant of redemption. In profane story, human action

may be more stirringly detailed, human motives more accurately dissected; human probability, deduced from our limited views of the works of God, may be less frequently overstepped; the ardent spirit of enterprise may be awakened by the rich narratives of one historian, the severest requirements of criticism satisfied by the stern accuracy of another: but there shall ever be wanting that high and universal import which attaches to the simple Scripture chronicles, as the record of matters in which every son and daughter of man hath individually an interest and a share.

Such is the view in which the Church of Christ contemplates the ancient history of the world, as detailed in the Old Testament Scriptures. And as a member of that Church, I have laid before you as members of that Church, these enquiries, humbly praying that God may render them useful to the establishment of our common faith: esteeming such labour not ill timed in this day of increased knowledge and enlightened speculation: being persuaded that the more the understandings of men are informed, and their reason exalted and purified, the more will the simplicity of God's truth be found to be wiser than the world's wisdom: and holding it as an article of faith, no less certain than consoling, that all our advances in the knowledge of that which is seemly and true, are but steps in the

mighty progress of God's work among men; the unfolding of his purpose, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He may gather together all things in Christ.

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

SERMON I.¹

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

HEBREWS xii. 1, 2.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.

WHAT depth of holy meaning, and what varied remembrances of the past, lie beneath those few and simple words, "the cross of Christ!" They were spoken to the stern rulers of the world in days of old; but they turned in high-born pride from the basest death they knew, and with incurious indifference attributed to the sufferer the leading of tumults in Rome. They were uttered to the Jew; and though his Scriptures were eloquent with promise, and his sacrifices full of symbolic import, he saw in the cross but the failure of an impostor, who could not fulfil the test of coming down from it that he

¹ Preached on Good Friday, 1841.

might believe. They were proclaimed to the wise, and they pronounced them foolishness; to the strong, and they despised them as weakness.

But the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. By these same words was wrought the greatest change which has ever passed upon mankind. First there assembled by stealth a small and humble band of men, who gloried in the cross of Christ. They were persecuted and smitten asunder. Their word went out into all lands, and their sound unto the ends of the world. The little cloud had risen up over the heaven, and there was a great rain. Drop after drop descended into the barren and untended soil of the human heart. The divine Spirit accompanied, sowing the seed of life. The reproach of the cross passed away. The punishment of a malefactor was the self-sacrifice of the good Shepherd; the detected weakness of an impostor was the withholding of Divine power in obedience to the law of love. And thus for a while the cross waxed dearer and more wonderful in the thoughts of men. It became the symbol of their faith. It was borne before armies, and folded to the bosom of princes. But as the figure of Him crucified was nearer than the reality, and the things of time than those of faith, so the outward and visible sign prevailed over the inward and spiritual grace. The symbol of the cross gave

sanction to deeds which the prayer of Him who suffered on it might best have reprovèd ; and the Saviour bled afresh in the persons of those for whom he died. But the living stream of truth has purged off these pollutions, and again runs pure and free. The worldly Church has lost much of its gains ; but the cross none of its dignity.

We are met here this day to commemorate the cross of Christ. From our labours and our studies, we have assembled in this our temple, to think and speak of Him that was crucified.

And there is still much in those simple words which appeals to all our hearts. We knew not when that cross was signed upon us, in token that we were his soldiers and servants ; but there were those who struggled with their tears, when the first seal of immortality was imprinted on each of us, their then newly-found and latest-loved ; and the Christian father and the believing mother yet see on these brows, too often darkened with the clouds of worldly passion, that best and brightest token of the covenant of God. But why do we here meet, and whither must our meditations tend this day ? Not to discharge a mere service of formality, nor to speculate on wonders which are matters of faith ; but to be reminded that the service of the cross is a spiritual service, a daily struggle, to which each of us is by vow and sacrament bound, as well as by

the state of high privilege in which we find ourselves.

We are exhorted to run with patience the race set before us. To many here, life is yet opening its untried course. They enter it with every advantage. Fresh in feeling, eager for action, they might want definiteness of purpose and aim for their energies. But with this the Church of Christ has provided them. She has entered their homes, and claimed those children for her own, whom Christ has bidden us suffer to come to Him. She has led them gently on, ministering help to their infirmities, and knitting their good resolves into compactness and order. She has brought them to renew their vows for themselves, and has given her Apostolic blessing to build them up in the faith. And she has offered them the body and blood of Christ, to be by faith received as food, whereby their souls may be strengthened and refreshed.

So that their race is set before them; and it remains that we conjure them from God to run it with patience. They will find many a hindrance to check their ardour, many an excitement to oversway it. Let them not be discouraged by opposition on the one hand, nor borne away by ill-regulated zeal on the other. They may find the beaten path of duty tedious and uninviting; the wayside meadows may be thick with the fresh flowers of life, and the blue of the distant hills

may tempt them to make haste and escape away : but let them hold onward, upborne by hope, and constrained by love, looking for the blessing of him that endureth unto the end.

And much will they have to hear and bear from their fellow-travellers by the way. Some will point to the path of fame and splendour, whose divergence from the race set before them is too plain : they will bid them listen to the shouts of the world's applause, which welcome each traveller as he arrives at the onward stages in that alluring road : to-morrow those shouts may peal for *them* : why should they follow a dim and distant glory ? why hazard all for the shadowy reward of faith, when they may grasp the substance of sensuous enjoyment ? Well will it be for them, if they can hear such reasonings, and keep their way with patience. Well if they feel that the vow of the cross is upon them, and God's service their first care : well, if they know, that bound to Him as they are by being his children of creation, they are tenfold his by redemption, and adoption into his Church : well, if they have judgment to distinguish between that unsafe and unhallowed praise of men, which is pursued as an object of ambition by those who forget God, and that lawful and refreshing fame which springs up beside the path of Christian duty, those first sparkles of glory which even now track the course of the faithful man,

thickening as he advances, till the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father.

Others again will tell them of new and more varied paths to the knowledge and service of their God; will scorn their obedience of routine and patience; will disparage the faith of those ancient worthies whom they have been taught to follow; will deery the often recurring prayers, the simple and reverent praises, by which we obtain and acknowledge the daily bread of our spirits; will point to crowds converted, means of grace enlarged, mighty changes in progress. And alas for them, if they are drawn aside from the race set before them, by these new and attractive proposals; if they cease to hold fast the form of sound words and sound doctrine; if they sacrifice for apparent present usefulness, that highest of all states of earthly being, which he inherits who persists in doing good against hope. For some way, perhaps, their new path may run beside that which they have forsaken; imperceptibly the distance will widen between them; first the attendant decencies of true religion will be dropped; then the more substantial forms which embody its tenets; lastly the vital doctrines themselves. And this sad and downward change is not without abundant examples in these days of self-seeking and spiritual idolatry.

But it is a weary thing to endure,—a disheartening service, to work without profit. Who is

there that knows aught of any pursuit, and cannot testify that the beginnings are tedious? What art is there, in which the learner can at first refresh his soul with beauty of his own creation? What science, in which the mere novice can prosecute those researches, which shall afterwards be his pure and unfailing delight? Therefore these beginners in the faith have need of patience, to wait and to hope for the salvation of the Lord; not doubting that, as He shall see fit, the highest of all pleasures shall be ministered to them, and the peace that passeth all understanding rule in and keep their hearts.

But He who hath said to them, "This is the way, walk ye in it," hath not left them without example of the patience and endurance which He requires. One is gone up before us, and, as our forerunner, is entered into the heavenly places. In the same way He walked, bearing his cross. From his birth of humiliation to his final agony, He ran with patience the race that was set before Him. Nor did He assume this our nature without its infirmities, nor make a mere shew of endurance. The greater the contrast between his pure and holy soul and the corruption around him, between the power which wrought in Him and the weakness and capacity of pain which dwelt in his human body, the more did He endure day by day. In proportion as He was worthy of all adoration and homage, did the rebukes and

insults which were offered to Him fasten themselves on his spirit. When *we* speak of God's presence, we speak but of the grace of ordinances, and the inner meaning of a sacrament; when we are under the hiding of God's face, we are but beneath the shadow which our own sins have caused to fall around us; but He dwelt from the beginning in the light inaccessible, and when He surrendered himself to suffering, that light was hidden from Him;—the sword of wrath awoke against the man who was the fellow of God. Who can fathom the depth of that anguish which wrung from Him the great and exceeding bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Death has been met by men in its most terrifying and forbidden shapes,—threats and tortures have been exhausted against them; yet the firm resolve has borne up, the cheek has been unblanched, and the frame unshaken. But His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; He was bowed in an agony, and besought that the cup might pass from Him. What must have been the burden that weighed on His spirit, strong as it was in purity and knowledge, to have shaken even its supports, and driven it to its last stay of resignation to the Father's will! Yet He endured to the end. He chose a life of reproach and buffeting; He submitted to the death of a slave and a rebel. He despised the shame. The clearer the spirit,

the keener are the pangs of disgrace. Who can enter into the shame of Him, who sunk under his cross in that street of Jerusalem, with that multitude mocking him, and urging him on to death? Who can tell the sharpness of that insult, which bid Him come down from the cross and prove his Messiahship, or that which taunted and jested at his dying words?

Yet all this was but a small part of his sorrow. We are taught that our iniquities met upon Him, and that God made Him an offering for the sin of the world: and when we meditate on such mysterious suffering, and raise within ourselves the deep questions which such meditation prompts, and from the little circles of human love, and the few whom we bear about in our own hearts, advance to that love which embraced all men in its extent, while it descended into each creature's sins and sorrows, we shall be baffled in our search for any adequate conception of that which He endured. But through all this his purpose was stedfast: and all the struggles of his human infirmity are but signs that as He is, so are we in this world. But He had joy set before him; that satisfaction of divine and accomplished love, with which He should see of the travail of his soul; that seat on the right hand of God, whence He should behold all enemies placed under his feet.

Here then is our example. To Him are we to

look in running the race set before us. And to Him as especially shewn forth in his endurance of the cross. Daily are we to take up our cross, and follow Him. Daily to be willing and ready to suffer with, and for Him. Daily to rejoice if we are counted worthy to endure affliction for His sake.

And in this work of faith and patience we are not alone. We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. We are invited to follow them, as they followed Christ: so that treading in their steps we may arrive at their everlasting home of peace and glory. But to them we do not look, as we look unto Him. They are saints and angels, and, as we believe, ministering around us in offices of heavenly love; as such we think of them with delight, we are knit to them in spirit; we are reminded of them in our Church offices of prayer and praise; where they worshipped, we worship now; around our consecrated walls their voices echoed, and from these our solemn stations many a servant of God has preached the cross, whose brow is now bound with the bright and sunny crown. Therefore we love them and we commemorate them, because they fought for the religious blessings which we enjoy, and bled for the freedom to which we were born, and toiled for the knowledge on which we found our researches. Further we look not to them, but to Him whose servants they were and are, and of whose fulness both they and we have

received. Of none of them can we know that which we know of Him. Of none of them can it be said that they did aught with regard to, or knowledge of ourselves; and therefore, our love to them cannot but be of a different kind from that with which we love Him, who first loved us; who knows whereof we are made, for He hath made us; who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, for He hath himself borne them upon Him. If tempted, He hath taught us how to resist; if reviled, He hath shewn us wherewith to requite; if we weep, He wept before us. And in that hour which is coming upon all of us, when human aid and human example shall be distant and forgotten things, and we shall be left alone with God, the thought and the sight of Him will be most precious; for He passed down into the grave before us, and taught us how to die.

Let this then be the subject of our meditations this day, and the end of our earnest wishes: the humble, sincere, and chastened imitation of our blessed Saviour.

But I must not forget where I am standing, nor whom I am addressing. It might be well, on the commemoration of the cross, to remind every Christian assembly of their vows and duties; it might be needful to tell them that all Christian men are set in high responsibility, and that many watch their errors. But we who assemble here are beyond others in our power

for good or for evil. By the influences of this place, is society in our land purified or corrupted. Very many go forth from us to be the patterns of a Christian life to the flocks entrusted to their charge ; all, to be guides, by station and worldly means, to those around them. Of us then something more than common earnestness and truthfulness seems to be demanded. Of us, men will expect and God will require, every endeavour to shew that our religion is not taken up and laid aside with our academical garb,—a mere outward condition of our inheriting these endowments ; but that it is a deep and sincere sense of the obligations under which we are placed, and the vows which lie upon us. If the very aspect of this place, and the air which we here breathe, seem full of the religion of the cross, the more is the shame of any amongst us who can, with such assistances to his faith, walk unworthily of the holy vocation wherewith he is called. Let such an one bethink himself of his circle of influence and example here ; let him take into account the yearly accessions of young and earnest hearts which that circle is receiving ; let him trace those whom he has hardened, and taught to forget the God of their fathers, and the guide of their youth. He may see them leaving this place, and departing to their stations in life. But by them no bright patterns of Christian virtue shall be exhibited ; from them, if they find

an entrance into Christ's fold, shall no solemn warnings, no sympathizing counsel, no fervent exhortation, flow forth; by their means will be multiplied defaulters from the Church whom we love, and rebels from the God whom we serve.

Indeed, we should walk warily here; and even exceed in strictness, in abstaining from every appearance of evil. We should keep the fountain pure, that the streams may be pure also. We should shew ourselves the disciples of the cross, in all self-sacrifice, in all unity, in all cleaving to the commands and ordinances of our holy religion. It is a time of exertion, and a time of encouragement; the present prospect of Christ's Church in our land is bright and hopeful. Differences there are among us, but they are differences between men who are in earnest; who have on the armour of God, and are in the heat and action. Most of us remember well when the contest was between the faith and the world; between those who felt a God above them and a Holy Spirit within them, and those who knew not so much as whether there were any of these things. That is past by, and we contend upon higher ground. Let then every man, persuaded in his own mind, be careful not to lower the dignity, nor to embitter the Christian love, with which we should proceed in our search for truth. And to this end let the religion of each amongst us be the religion of his heart and life,—and the cross of Christ his chief glory.

For the virtues of those simple words have not yet past away ; nor have their depths been yet exhausted.

At every fresh unfolding of the purposes of Providence, at every fresh leading vouchsafed to the Church, the power of the cross shall flow forth anew, and take more complete possession of men's hearts and lives. At every accession of Divine illumination furnished by the Holy Spirit to mankind, the great wonders of redemption shall be contemplated with a sight more penetrating ; and as we grow in obedience, we shall grow in knowledge.

And now unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN.

SERMON II.¹

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

ST. MATTHEW v. 48.

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

How many precepts and declarations of holy Scripture are we in the habit of passing by, as beyond our attainment or comprehension. How do we live as if those precepts had never been uttered, and speculate as if those declarations had never been made. And unworthily as we thus treat many parts of the sacred volume, the discourses of our Saviour himself furnish perhaps the greatest abundance of commands and assertions usually set aside and neglected. There is that in the holy simplicity of his words, which ill accords with our wishes, sinful and ignorant as we are, of flying from the light, and wrapping ourselves in the robes of hypocrisy; something in the lofty and superhuman standard to which He refers our thoughts and acts, which sets at nought

¹ Preached on Sunday, October 31, 1841.

the customs and deemings of that world, to which we are all too much in bondage. Yet, when we consider the earnest and truthful character of all our Lord's precepts, and remember the confession of his enemies, that He taught them as one having authority, we cannot surely suppose that He lifted up an ideal pattern merely, or exaggerated our duties to prove our deficiencies; but we must conclude that He spoke as knowing what was in man—both his proneness to evil, and his endowment with power for good. And least of all do His words deserve to be accounted unreal, who performed all that He enjoined; who, emptying himself of his glory, passed out of the fruition of supreme blessedness into the exile of a life of faith and prayer; who learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him and are made like Him. When the precepts of holiness came down on men from the mountain that burned with unapproachable fire, they might but serve to shew them the difference between the God of purity and his fallen creatures; but when the Son of man Himself delivers them to us, a thousand human sympathies should be kindled in our hearts: He who spoke these lofty words had passed through the years of helplessness, and the care and nurture of a human mother,—had grown in wisdom and in stature,—wept over the woes of his nation, and

the sepulchre of his friend,—and ministered in his humility to the bodies and souls of men. Nay, he was yet to pass through the conflictive agony of spiritual misgiving, and to enter before us into the valley of the shadow of death. If ever then the words of a teacher and master had claim upon the earnest and humble attention of his disciples, such claim belongs to the precepts of our Divine Lord and Saviour.

I have chosen for our consideration this day, one of the most sublime and comprehensive of those precepts;—one, however, which it is to be feared that few of us practically regard, as influencing our thoughts and conduct. Christ has been speaking of the narrow and selfish conduct of men, in confining their bounty and love merely to those who are disposed to make them a return; He has been pointing out for a pattern to his disciples, the universal and impartial regards of their heavenly Father, who causeth his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust. Then, as if by this reference he had stirred a subject too various in its bearings, and too deep in the foundations of redemption, to be then pursued, He shortly touches the general duty of which he had enforced the particular case: “Ye then shall be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Now the first thing enjoined in these words is, the contemplation of the Divine character. For

that which is to be our pattern, must in this case be sought out and ascertained, not without earnest labour and endeavour. The knowledge of God is not natural to man. To seek after Him, to find Him, and to know Him, are duties frequently enjoined in Holy Scripture. And this knowledge is represented to us as the highest acquirement and exaltation of man: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." So that the knowledge of God is a pursuit truly worthy of the best and highest energies of his creatures. And, notwithstanding that it is necessarily partial and limited, being relative only, and derived from that connexion with ourselves in which God has been pleased to reveal himself; notwithstanding that it is also necessarily, even as far as it can advance, imperfect and impure, clouded by the mixtures of worldly modes of thought and selfish regards; yet even thus it is the best guide to all wisdom, the highest purifier of human thoughts and motives. And when employed in this search, all our faculties are then in their noblest exercise, and the powers which He has bestowed, in their most complete harmony and activity. When that

subtle and strong Intelligence, the spirit of man, which we call by the various names of the reason, the understanding, the moral sense, the imagination, the judgment, according as it assumes one or other of its numerous offices, combines all these in the humble endeavour to know Him who is its author and upholder, and in each of these capacities receives and reflects light from Him who is the Father of lights, we cannot conceive any state of man, which shall better fulfil the high purposes for which God sent him into the world.

We are called upon then, as elsewhere in Scripture, so especially in this precept, to contemplate the Divine character. And if the words of Christ which led to these seem to have respect chiefly to what is called Natural Theology, the proofs of power, wisdom, and goodness in creation and providence, let us not forget how great a revelation has been made to us of the Divine character, since their utterance, by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the descent of his Spirit, and the constitution of his Holy Catholic Church. Let us not forget that in proportion to these our means of knowing God, will knowledge of Him be required of us; that the visible things of creation might have bounded the range of the ancient Gentile's enquiries after God; and the promise made to the fathers, with the types of the legal ordinances,

might have limited the vision of the Jew;—but that upon us a great light hath arisen; that God hath vouchsafed to speak to us as a man to his friend; that there is not now a faculty of our minds, or a lofty desire of our spirits, which may not find its proper and best exercise in searching into the mysteries of redemption. Therefore will He require of us diligence in this search in all its varied directions, and with reference to all his varied gifts.

And if I were speaking to a congregation of Christians whose occupations were those of ordinary men, I might remind them, that every path of lawful duty affords to him who diligently walks in it, during that his progress, glimpses of Divine truth, and appearances whereby God may be known: how much more then when I address an assembly whose very employment is the search for truth, and the cultivation of the highest powers of man. If in the secluded corners of our Christian land I could point to the book of God's word, and the Sabbath services of his Church, and the sacramental ministrations of his servants, as means of seeking after and knowing Him, how much more forcible ought such an appeal to be where the book of his word is the subject of earnest study,—where the services of his Church still offer their daily assistance to its members. If the Christian peasant can from his scanty experience verify the Scripture character of God, and confirm his faith

by his sufferings and his deliverances ; what shall be said to those who have the course of God's providence open before them in the history of the empires of the world, who can enter into the labours, and inherit the experience, of those gone before ? If from the debasing influences of manual toil, and the barrenness of the untutored intellect, the lowly believer can rise in imagination to the glorious descriptions of Scripture, and endure, as seeing him who is invisible ; what shall not be hoped for from those before whom are unrolled the treasures of poetic art, who have been taught the laws according to which the creative mind may wield its mighty and unbounded powers ? As thus employed, thus gifted, thus exalted in aim and opportunity above other Christians, do we call upon you to acquaint yourselves with God—his creation, his word, and above all, that greatest of his works which He carries on within us, even the new creation of the spirit of man, and its restoration in righteousness and true holiness.

And as there are many here before whom this place is now first spreading out its treasures and its advantages, let me remind them, that it is not for nothing that their Creator hath preserved them to come hither, but that they may occupy with those talents which He hath entrusted to them, and bear away hence a rich increase of sound learning, both such as directly concerns the knowledge of Himself,

and such as bears upon and illustrates that highest wisdom. Let me remind them, that now is opened before them the opportunity of raising for their guide through life, that high pattern of perfection of which we are speaking; that in proportion as they strive and toil after it now, will their apprehension of it be clear, and their desire for its attainment earnest, through that life of action and trial which is before them: and on the other hand, according as they neglect and undervalue what is here offered to them, and obey not the call of wisdom here continually made, will their future standard of exertion be low and inadequate, their best powers misapplied or ill-furnished, their lives without usefulness, and their end without honour. And let them not suppose, that this search after the knowledge of God consists merely in acts directly devotional, or studies exclusively theological; nor despise the barren and unpromising aspect of some of the paths in which they will be here summoned to pursue it. The fulness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ, is not to be acquired, but by the united and harmonious progress of all their faculties, many of which have not yet learned their mature and healthy action: the very habit of mental application has often to be acquired; the judgment is seldom at first qualified to pronounce on the usefulness or tendencies of this or that course of study; the imagination has yet to

apprehend those first and unchangeable laws, in accordance with which beauty ministers to the service of truth. Therefore will the pursuits to which we call them often seem to be but distantly related to the great ends of human enquiry, and the thoughts which spring from them will range perhaps wide of those subjects to which they would fain give more direct attention : but meanwhile, amidst their humble and hopeful toil, other capacities shall be expanded within them, new desires shall spring up, inconsistencies shall be removed, and errors purged away.

But what we say to them, we say also to all. Few of us are sufficiently mindful of the responsibility of our intellectual powers, or sufficiently careful to keep pure the inlets of thought. We forget that amidst the following of the devices and desires of our own hearts, to which we are prone, we often know the things which we ought not to have known, and leave unknown the things which we ought to have known. We seek for wisdom without that fear of the Lord which is its only beginning. We say to him, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' And then the varied treasures of history are to us but the sickening details of human selfishness and passion ; the glories and the sympathies of our nature sink down in our view, and become of no price in our esteem ; the beauty wherewith this earth is spread loses

its charm for us, and we range our efforts under the standard of the world's utility; not remembering the end of things, but only looking one step before us, and becoming cold, and heartless, and unspiritual. And the only remedy for all this is, to set the Lord always before us; to bear in mind that He is King of this world, and Lord of the spirit of man; to maintain with Him a personal and constant communion in prayer and the ordinances of his Church; and to look upon ourselves as his soldiers and servants, with his vows upon us, his name our solemn watchword, and his cross our banner.

But let us pass from contemplation to action, from the ascertaining and setting up our standard of perfection, to the earnest following on to attain to it. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As in your search and enquiry after Him you discover from time to time fresh proofs of his perfections, so let every such discovery add to that which you have yet yourselves to acquire and become. And if it should be objected to such a precept, that our pattern should thus be ever shifting before us, that there would be no rest, no end to our endeavours; I reply, that in this consists the very depth of the precept, and its adaptation to the wants of the human spirit. If from the bright array of saints and martyrs we might select one as our ideal pattern, and say, "Let me be like him, and

I am content," there would be a time perchance, when we might at least suppose we had attained to our model, and might fold our hands in indolence. That an example has been proposed to us which precludes this, manifests to us something of the height and depth of His love, who hath set no limit to our exertion short of our capacity of apprehending Himself: and who shall say when that capacity shall be exhausted?

But it may be alleged that the utter hopelessness of attaining to this standard, renders it unreal, and unfit for use as prompting to action. We may ask in return, Does not the ordinary conduct of men furnish abundant examples of an indefinite and apparently unattainable object attracting to itself the thoughts, desires, and efforts? Do we, in our plans for the future, ever distinctly set before us a point which we are sure we can reach; do we, before we stake all upon our exertions, ascertain beyond doubt that of which we are capable, and limit our expectations accordingly? Do we not, on the contrary, ever strive after something beyond present hope; and when success is attained, is not the common language of men, that 'they dared not hope it?' And is there not here again a proof of discernment what was in man, and of adaptation to the usual course of his motives and efforts? Still, I may be told, the thing commanded is impossible; the precept cannot be fulfilled. But

surely the objector is taking for granted more than he finds in Scripture, which is the only revelation of the powers of the spiritual life in man. We there find no such discouraging assertions; but, on the contrary, all exhortations given to Christian perfection, and all encouragements held out that it may and will be attained. And though, viewing the subject from beneath, and taking into our account the ignorance and helplessness and waywardness of man, we cannot venture to predict, in ourselves or in our fellow-creatures, a blameless obedience to the will of our heavenly Father, even in the degree in which it may be apprehended; yet, who can tell, in the progressive work of God's Holy Spirit on our race, in which we have every reason to believe, to what intimate degree, now unknown and unfelt, man's spirit and life may be penetrated by that pure and holy Teacher, so that we may be perfectly conformed to God? And even dismissing this thought from our minds, who taught the objector to limit the Christian's progress in holiness to this present life? The little which we are permitted to know respecting the heavenly state, forbids us to think of it as of an indolent and stationary existence; but rather compels us to expect advances in knowledge and love and obedience, too rapid and vast to be here even conceived. While then we look for the attainment of this perfection in that better state, no

discouragement is thereby thrown upon our present endeavours, inasmuch as we know that they are the seedtime of that harvest, and that as we sow, we shall reap hereafter.

And let me remind you of the test which should ever be applied to discern the genuineness of such complaints of human incapacity and weakness. Are they made from the fulness of experience, from the midst of exertion, and under the pressure of the infirmities which they allege? Then will they ever be accompanied by habits and acts of deep penitence, and unceasing appliance to the ordinances of Christ's holy Church. The soldier, who in the heat of battle feels the enemy growing too strong for him, will ply his weapons and exert all his strength and skill. If, on the other hand, such complaints are made in neglect of the means of grace, and in a selfish and worldly life, they are mere excuses to save exertion and foster indolence,—the cowardly dread of an enemy never actually met in the field. We may therefore weigh them accordingly; remembering at the same time, that he who feels such deficiency most deeply, will generally be the last to allege it as a discouragement, because he will have been taught it by his strenuous efforts to reach Him who is above himself; and while he distrusts his own weakness, this distrust will be absorbed more and more in the increasing con-

sciousness, that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him.

But again, this continual advance, this onward struggle, may seem little in accordance with the modern popular notion of a point of sudden and entire change of heart and life, beyond which all is smooth and tranquil. But till I find such a description of the spiritual life in holy Scripture, I must regard that state as a continued conversion, and a progressive change, in which the Christian of to-day shall have been taught the follies and sins of yesterday, and shall ever be rescued and transformed from his former self, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Still less can I reconcile such high and continued endeavour with the notion of a certain portion of grace once administered, and pardon once vouchsafed, but without renewal on the part of the Father of our spirits. According to this view, our life should be the grave of hope, in which there should be no knowledge, nor device, nor repentance; our prayers would be unmeaning, our praises mere flatteries; our adoption would be turned into exile, our royalty into slavery, our priesthood into disgrace. For who is there among us that hath not sullied his robe of baptismal purity? Who that does not daily need the pity and the pardon of the Lord, and fresh application of the waters of that fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness?

Rather let us believe and trust in his continued renewing power ; rather let us forget the things which are behind, and reach forth to those things which are before.

Thus then, every weight being laid aside, I exhort you to run with patience this race which is set before you. I summon you to a work of unceasing activity, whose demands upon you will not abate, but increase, the further you advance in all that is pure and good ; a work which you can never lay aside as sufficiently matured, nor need put by as inopportune in any circumstances in which you may hereafter find yourselves. In the haunts of men, amidst the stir and business of life, you will remember the pattern after which you profess to strive,—you will be careful that, by no want of truth or justice in your dealings, by no false shame of that which is good, or cowardly adoption of that which is evil, you dim that light which ought to shine brightly before men : in the communion of friendship, and interchange of the charities of life, that same Divine example will ever be before you ; you will think on Him who is the expression of God's glory and perfections, how He walked with those whom He loved and had chosen ; his forbearance, his self-sacrifice, his holy purity of purpose, and childlike simplicity of expression ; and you will remember how He said, “ Greater love hath no man than this, that

a man lay down his life for his friends." In your struggles for advancement, and following that upward instinct which is implanted in us all, you will think upon his saying, "I came not to do mine own will, but that of Him who sent me;" and how He told his disciples that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" more like Him who is the Giver of all things, and the supremely Blessed. And for the temptations from which no day of our lives is free, you will ever be putting on and proving your spiritual armour: so will you burnish the shield of faith, that the darts of the wicked may fall powerless from its surface; so firmly attach it to you, that neither the persuasion of false philosophy, nor the attraction of new and exciting doctrine, may ever prevail on you to cast it away. So will you gird your loins with truth, that amidst the duplicity and hypocrisy which entangle and perplex men's paths, you will pass on unencumbered and free, in uprightness of purpose and oneness of heart; so will you be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, that you shall tread unhurt over the thorny and broken ground of this world's strife and pride; so will you wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that no stroke shall be uncalled for, no aim misdirected nor powerless. Thus will you grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, even till higher opportunities open before you, and new

and glorious faculties are vouchsafed you in another and riper state of our being.

But I must revert for a time to those, whom I before particularly addressed; and remind them of their singular advantages for this great and lifelong work. Many who have passed through the time usually spent here, are now wishing in vain that they stood once more in your position. Many who are busied in active life, and summoned to the conflict with evil, find now the necessity of those weapons, of which they might here have learnt the use, if they would. After a careless and indolent interval between youth and manhood, the spirit may at length awaken to the awful truths and high responsibilities by which it is surrounded: but it awakens in fear and trembling; its habits are vitiated, its wholesome powers destroyed; usefulness and honourable exertion open their upward paths,—but the energies are paralyzed, and the limbs refuse their office; the affections might have enticed onward,—but these are become morbid and degraded: in vain does the land of promise stretch forth for these unhappy persons her bright and fertile regions; the beams of the Sun of Righteousness dazzle them, instead of cheering; the flowers wither at the poison of their touch, and even the waters of comfort are embittered to a palate long diseased. And sometimes we have a darker

picture to draw, and a sadder scene to contemplate: when that death-bed which should have witnessed the ripe and peaceful end of a Christian and honourable life, tells but of the carrying away without remedy of one who has been often rebuked, and has hardened his heart; who is, it may be, softened and repentant now,—but passes away from hope, and love, and the golden opportunities of life, in that bitterness of spirit, in which the tears of penitence can give but scanty ease to the keen agony of remorse. And from such descriptions you may see something of the advantage of your position, who stand on the threshold of your course,—and with energy unimpaired, affections not yet misled, and sight not yet clouded with the darkness of guilt, look up the path of honourable exertion to which we now exhort you, even to that lofty example of perfection, which invites, while it surpasses, all your best endeavours. For you the way is comparatively unencumbered and clear. Holiness of thought, purity of affection, singleness of heart and conscience, a sound and unerring judgment,—these may yet be yours. The prize of your high calling is open to your grasp, if only you close not that grasp on the things of time and sense. The means of grace have not yet lost for you their freshness and efficacy; the answer of the public prayers of the Church has not yet been put from

you by irreverence and neglect; and I would fain believe that you have not yet disused those daily and private communings with God, in which lie the fresh springs of Christian exertion; that you remember where, and by whom, you were first taught to pray;—and fortify yourselves for each day's trial, as well by communing with your heavenly Father, as by recalling the holy peacefulness of a Christian home, and the soft promptings of a Christian mother.

In the name then of Him who sent me, and as if He spoke by me, do I summon you more especially to this work; and lay it upon you, to be diligently and earnestly pursued.

One word more, and I have done. I speak to you in virtue of an office, founded amongst us by a holy and humble minister of Christ's Church, in his zeal for the defence and furtherance of true religion. Of his quiet life of usefulness little record remains to us; but it is related that shortly before his death, when his sleep passed from him, owing to a sharp and lingering disease, he was heard, in the solitude and darkness, fervently imploring that the Divine blessing might accompany his foundations in this University; that they might be the means of turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.²

² Benson's Hulsean Lectures for 1820: Lect. I. p. 20.

When we shall meet him in the great and awful day, may it be found that his prayer has been answered.

THE END.

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