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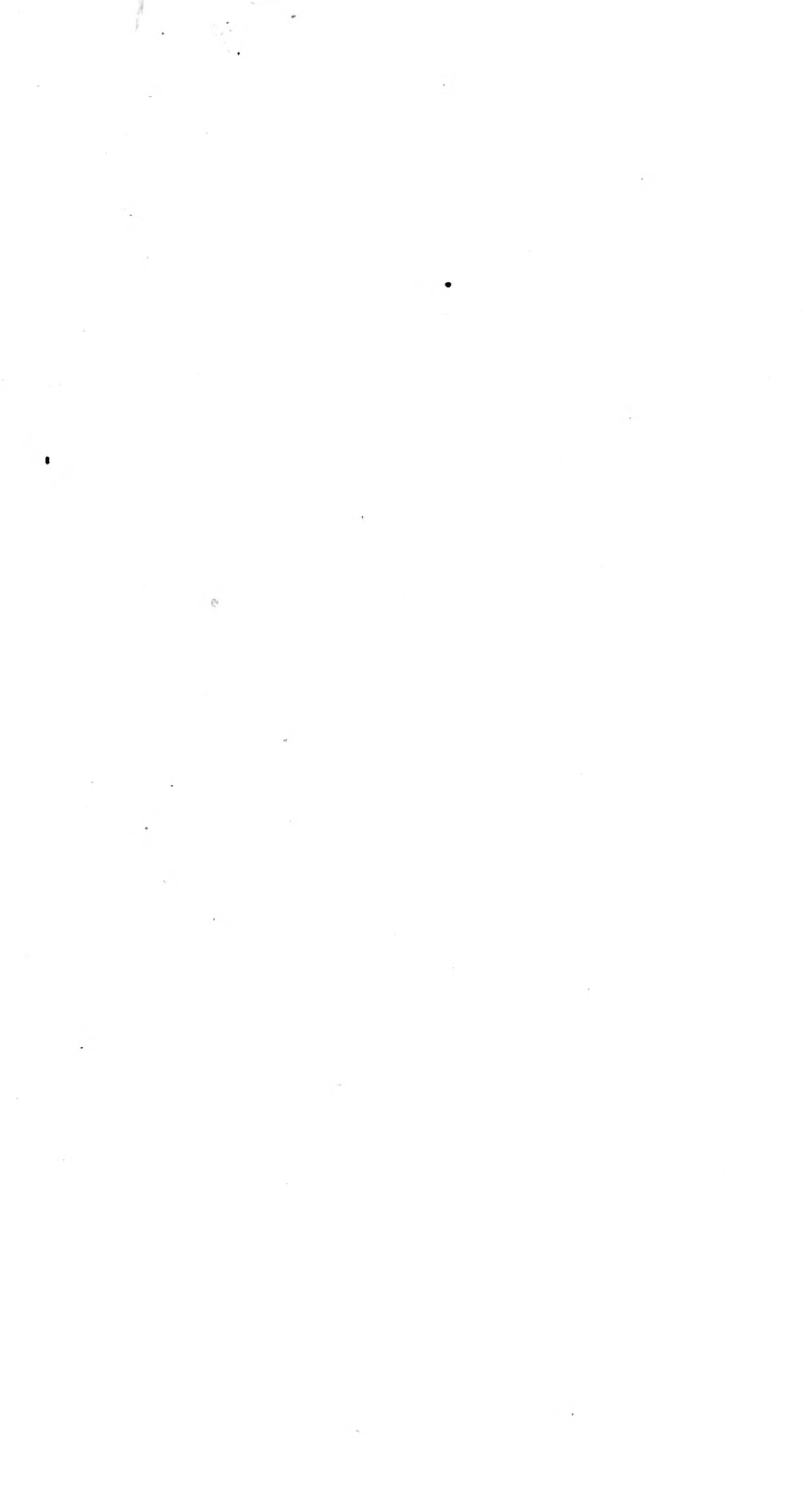
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DISCOURSES

O N

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY JACOB DUCHÉ, M. A.

RECTOR of CHRIST-CHURCH and
St. PETER'S, in PHILADELPHIA;

AND FORMERLY OF

CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

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V O L II.

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C O N T E N T S

O F V O L U M E S E C O N D .

D I S C O U R S E I .

O N P O V E R T Y O F S P I R I T .

St. LUKE, CHAP. vii. Part of VER. 22.

“ To the Poor the Gospel is Preached.”

D I S C O U R S E II .

T H E I M P R O V E M E N T O F T I M E S A N D
S E A S O N S .

E C C L E S I A S T E S , C H A P . i i i . V E R . I .

“ To every Thing there is a Season,
“ and a Time to every Purpose un-
“ der Heaven.”

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I S A I A H , C H A P . x l . V E R . I O , I I .

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“ with strong Hand, &c.”

C O N T E N T S.

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D I S-

C O N T E N T S.

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D I S-

C O N T E N T S.

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D I S-

C O N T E N T S.

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“ Can these Bones live? and I an-
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“ est!”

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D I S-

C O N T E N T S.

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“ sent forth the Spirit of his Son
“ into your Hearts, crying, Abba !
“ Father !”

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V A T E A N D P U B L I C K W O R S H I P .

H A B A K K U K , C H A P . i i . V E R . 20 .

“ The LORD is in his Holy Temple :
“ let all the Earth keep Silence before
“ him.”

D I S -

D I S C O U R S E I.

ON POVERTY OF SPIRIT.

St. LUKE, CHAP. vii. Part of VER. 22.

VOL. II.

A

D I S C O U R S E I.

St. LUKE, CHAP. vii. Part of VER. 22.

“ TO THE POOR THE GOSPEL IS
“ PREACHED.”

IN the verses immediately preceding my text, we read, that John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to our BLESSED LORD, with this remarkable message: “ Art thou he that should “ come, or look we for another?” Anxious for their salvation, he wished to have all their doubts, with respect to the character of JESUS, fully satisfied, and to make them acquainted, as soon as possible, with the nature and design of his

his kingdom. Our BLESSED LORD, who well knew the secret views and purposes of the Baptist in this message, graciously condescended to exhibit such amazing proofs of those mighty powers with which he was invested by his HEAVENLY FATHER, as must needs have convinced these disciples of John, that he was certainly the MESSIAH that “should come,” and that they need not “look for another.” For, “in that same hour,” says the Evangelist, “he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind, he gave sight. Then JESUS answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John, what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the Poor the Gospel is preached.”

The

The evidence which was here presented, must have been strong and convincing indeed, as it resulted from the concurrent testimony of miracles and prophecy. Omniscience, no less than Omnipotence, sealed and confirmed the mission of JESUS. For the words of the Evangelist are a literal and exact accomplishment of a remarkable prediction—Rapt into future times, the sublime and evangelical Isaiah had foretold, that the MESSIAH should “preach
 “good tidings unto the meek, that he
 “should bind up the broken-hearted,
 “that he should proclaim liberty to the
 “captives, that he should open the
 “blind eyes, and make the deaf to hear.”

One of these remarkable characteristics, by which the SON OF GOD was to be distinguished at his appearance upon earth, I have selected for the subject of my present discourse, viz. as a “preacher of Good Tidings unto the Meek;” or, according to the words of my text,

A 3 “a preach•

6 DISCOURSE I.

“ a preacher of the Gospel to the
“ Poor. To the Poor the Gospel is
“ preached.”

The original word, which we render Gospel, signifies good news or glad tidings; so that the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST means, the glad tidings published to mankind by this Illustrious Personage. To those, who have been brought, by the kind dispensations of Divine Grace, to a proper sense and conviction of their fallen state, this Gospel must be glad tidings indeed! From the original apostasy of our first progenitor, we inherit a distempered ruined nature: our whole frame hath lost its primitive health, and strength, and beauty. The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST informs us of a Medicine of Sovereign Virtue, by which this disease may be effectually removed, and the ruins of man completely repaired. JESUS CHRIST himself

self, is the Univerfal Restorer; and the medicine which he applies, is his own Light, and Life, and Strength. “ He
 “ rises upon our souls with healing un-
 “ der his wings;” and, by the salutary influences of his Blessed Spirit, communicates his own heavenly virtues to the sickly sinking frame. “ I will ransom
 “ them,” says he, “ from death: I will
 “ redeem them from the power of the
 “ grave. O death, I will be thy
 “ plague! O grave, I will be thy de-
 “ struction!”

Our natural state is a state of poverty, nakedness, hunger, and want of every kind. The Gospel directs us where to apply for relief; and assures us, that we shall not apply in vain. It directs us to JESUS himself, and assures us, that it is he alone, who can make us rich; that it is he alone who can cloath our nakedness with his own pure and

spotless robe; who can satisfy our hunger with his bread of life, and supply all our wants out of the inexhaustible treasures of his Grace. Such, my Brethren, is, in general, the nature of that Gospel, or of those glad tidings, which in my text are said to be preached or published to the Poor: “To the Poor
“ the Gospel is preached.”—Let us now proceed to enquire who those persons are, that come under this particular designation, “The Poor.”

I. According to one sense in which this name is used, we are to understand all those, who, for wise and gracious purposes, are placed by Providence in low and indigent circumstances, destitute of this world's goods, and constrained, by a painful series of toil and labour, to earn a scanty pittance for the preservation and support of their animal life. To these, who, according to this more common acceptation of the word,
are

are called "The Poor," the BLESSED JESUS tells us, that his Gospel was more immediately preached.

During his pilgrimage upon earth, such was the pride and arrogance of the Jewish Rabbies and doctors of the law, that they looked down upon the illiterate vulgar with a sovereign contempt. They were too mercenary, to instruct them without a reward; and too vain, to associate with them, whilst they were poor and uninstructed. Their lectures and expositions, such as they were, they reserved for their rich and honourable pupils, whose wealth might satisfy their avarice, whilst a connection with their splendid and powerful families would gratify their ambition. Their hatred of the Poor seems to have been of the most malicious kind: for though they took no pains to instruct them in their duty, they were careful enough "to bind
" heavy burdens upon them, grievous
" to

“ to be borne ; whilst they themselves
 “ would not even put forth one of their
 “ fingers to lighten or remove them.”
 Thus hardly treated, or contemptuously
 neglected, by their rulers and instructors,
 well might these distressed, broken-heart-
 ed Israelites, croud around the Meek
 and Condescending JESUS—well might
 “ the common people gladly hear” this
 Divine Teacher of Righteousness! The
 heavenly lessons that flowed from his
 blessed lips, were imparted freely, and
 without reward. They were confined
 to no order, state, or condition of
 men. Their influence, like that of the
 great luminary of the day, reached the
 humble vale, no less than the aspiring
 mount. His doctrine, “ distilled as the
 “ dew ; and, as the drops of rain that
 “ water the earth,” it fell alike around
 the lowly cottage, and the towering pa-
 lace.

Our

Our BLESSED LORD, indeed, honoured the State of Poverty with peculiar marks of his regard. From the history of his birth it appears, that he came into the world in the most needy and indigent circumstances. His Virgin Mother, and reputed father, though descended from the royal line of David, had nothing left of the affluence and splendor of their family. When he commenced his public ministry, the companions and disciples he made choice of, were a set of poor illiterate fishermen. From several circumstances related in the gospel history, we find, that under the protection of Providence, he was supported by the contributions of his friends and followers. Himself gives us a lively but affecting picture of his own poverty: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”

Doubtless,

Doubtless, it best suited the grand design of Infinite Wisdom, in the scheme of man's redemption, that the SON OF GOD should make his appearance in this indigent state. This design was to restore fallen men to their primitive state of innocence and glory; and in order to this, they were to be called from an earthly, to an heavenly life; from a worldly kingdom, to a kingdom that is not of this world. Their earthly nature was to be mortified and subdued; an heavenly nature was to be given them, and they were to be "created
" anew after the Image of GOD in
" righteousness and true holiness." Now a state of poverty, a state in which we are destitute of this world's goods, seems to be most favourable to this blessed change. For though an humble mind does not always dwell beneath an humble roof; though the poor do not always embrace a preached gospel; yet our BLESSED LORD, who was intimately acquainted

quainted with human nature, well knew, that the more a man possesseth of the good things of this life, the more his affections are engaged to it, and of course, that the want of these must have a natural tendency to disengage them. To the Poor, therefore, in a more particular manner, he preached his Gospel, as he had reason to conclude, from their situation and circumstances, they would be better disposed to receive it. And to the Poor let his Gospel still be preached! for without this they must be doubly miserable. The rich and the great have their consolation, or something that serves them for consolation, in this world; “ they, in their life-time, “ receive good things;” but the Poor, who receive evil things, if they are without those real consolations which the Gospel alone can administer, must be poor indeed! If, whilst outward troubles and misfortunes distress them, they should be destitute of internal peace and joy; if their want of temporal comforts should
be

be attended with a want of spiritual blessings, I know of no condition in life more completely wretched. “To the “Poor,” therefore, let the Gospel of CHRIST still be preached!

II. But there is another, and perhaps the truest sense, in which the word, poor, is here to be understood, viz. as it is expressive of that humble, self-abasing disposition of mind, which leads men to feel and acknowledge their own natural weakness, want, and corruption. This is the best, and, indeed, the only preparative for the Gospel of CHRIST. “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” We must first feel the poverty of nature, before we can desire the riches of Grace. We must first labour under the guilt and misery of sin, before we can see the necessity, or desire the comfort of a Saviour. It is well worth our while, then, to inform ourselves, what is the nature of
of

of this Poverty of Spirit, and in what manner the soul is exercised under it.

“ By nature, we are dead in trespasses
 “ and sins.” A state of death, is a state
 of insensibility. We are poor, sinful,
 corrupted creatures, and, at the same
 time, insensible of this poverty, sin, and
 corruption. When the Light of the Spirit
 of God, therefore, breaks in upon the
 sinner’s heart, it opens a melancholy
 prospect to his view. He thought be-
 fore, that “ he was rich, and had abun-
 “ dance;” but he is now intimately
 convinced, that he is “ poor, and mise-
 “ rable, and blind, and naked.”—“ Be-
 “ hold I am vile!” is the language of
 his awakened heart. “ I was shapen in
 “ wickedness, and in sin hath my mo-
 “ ther conceived me. My heart is de-
 “ ceitful, and desperately wicked. My
 “ iniquities are more in number than the
 “ hairs of my head. The thoughts of
 “ my heart are only evil continually.

“ Woe

“ Woe is me, for I am a man of un-
 “ clean lips, and a polluted heart!
 “ Wherefore I abhor myself, and re-
 “ pent in dust and ashes. LORD, what is
 “ man, that thou art mindful of him;
 “ or the son of man, that thou visitest
 “ him? Every man, at his best state,
 “ is altogether vanity! As for me, I am
 “ a worm and no man. So foolish am
 “ I and ignorant, as if I was a beast be-
 “ fore thee. I know and feel, that in
 “ me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no
 “ good thing.”

Such, my brethren, is the language
 of the “ Poor in Spirit;” and such the
 nature of those exercises, which the
 sinner must undergo as preparatory to
 his Reception of the Gospel. To those,
 who are thus Poor in Spirit, the Gospel
 of CHRIST is preached: to those who
 are thus Poor in Spirit, the promises of
 that Gospel belong: “ for thus saith the
 “ High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth
 “ eternity,

“ eternity, I dwell in the high and holy
 “ place ; with him also, that is of a
 “ contrite and humble spirit, to revive
 “ the spirit of the humble, and to re-
 “ vive the heart of the contrite ones.
 “ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for
 “ theirs is the kingdom of heaven !
 “ Whofoever shall humble himself as
 “ a little child, the same is greatest in
 “ the kingdom of heaven. Come unto
 “ me, all ye that labour and are heavy
 “ laden, and I will give you rest.”

Come, thou poor, humble, contrite soul !
 thy SAVIOUR loves thee. Humility is
 the grace, that, above all others, renders
 thee comely in his sight ! It is the fair-
 est ornament thou canst put on, to attract
 the esteem of thy Heavenly Bridegroom !
 Art thou poor, he will make thee rich ?
 Art thou humble, he will exalt thee ?
 Art thou broken-hearted, he will heal,
 strengthen, and comfort thee ? Art thou
 naked, he will clothe thee ? Art thou in
 captivity, he will ransom thee, and set

thee free? His strength will be manifested in thy weakness; his light will shine in thy darkness: and though thou canst do nothing of thyself, thou shalt “do all things through CHRIST
“strengthening thee.”

Permit me now briefly to apply what hath been said, to the two classes of men I have mentioned in this discourse, viz. the Poor in worldly circumstances, and the Poor in spirit.

To you who are poor in worldly circumstances, suffer me to say, in the language of Scripture, that “whom the
“Lord loveth he correcteth, and chast-
“eneth every son that he receiveth; that
“though no chastening for the present is
“joyous, but rather grievous, yet it af-
“terwards yields the peaceable fruits of
“righteousness to them that are exer-
“cised thereby.”—Your lot may appear to you to be an hard one; but if you
improve

improve it, you will find yourselves blessed in the end. You are removed from a thousand temptations, that surround the rich and great. True it is, you have temptations peculiar to your state and circumstances; but perhaps they are much weaker than those to which men are exposed by affluence or grandeur. Of these, however, beware! if they are indulged, they will gain strength, and in time become almost invincible. Beware of envy! beware of malice! A grudging of our neighbour's fortunes or honours, betrays a want of that humility and true resignation which must characterize the sincere Christian. Think not, that because a man is rich, he must necessarily be proud, insolent, and overbearing. The God that giveth riches, may sanctify them to the possessor; and Poverty of Spirit hath been known to dwell in courts and palaces. Thank God, that you have but little of world-

ly wealth, and pray earnestly for the riches of his Grace.

As for you, who are truly “ Poor “ in Spirit,” who experience that humility and self-abasement, which I have shewn to be so necessary a preparative for the reception of the Gospel, I give you joy in the Lord! “ As sorrowful, “ be ye always rejoicing! As poor, be “ ye always rich in CHRIST!” When you are most sensible of this poverty, you are then in the safest state. “ When “ you are weak, then are you strong.” Ye are “ espoused to CHRIST—Ye are “ no more darkness, but now ye are “ Light in the Lord.” Yours is the kingdom of GOD! Yours are the comforts of Grace here, and the sweet hope of Immortality hereafter! Should envious clouds now and then intervene; should a deep sense of your own poverty be so powerfully revived, as to render you dark and disconsolate—do not let go your
your

your hope ! Remember, it is to you the Gospel is preached ! JESUS, your Bridegroom, the light and life of your soul, hath only left you for a season, that, in this widowed state, you might feel your want of him, and long more earnestly for his return, and love him more ardently when he makes his appearance again.

“ Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ! ” — Sweet tidings to the disconsolate Christian ! “ Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.” He will come in peace, dear mourner, to thine heart, and give thee a sweet earnest and anticipation of that Fulness of Joy, which he has prepared for thee, in his own kingdom of everlasting Light and Love !

D I S C O U R S E II.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIMES AND
SEASONS.

ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. iii. VER. I.

DISCOURSE II.

ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. iii. VER. I.

“ TO EVERY THING THERE IS A
“ SEASON, AND A TIME TO EVERY
“ PURPOSE UNDER HEAVEN.”

WAS this celebrated maxim of the sagacious Preacher properly understood and observed by the sons of men, it would doubtless have a considerable tendency to render them more attentive and vigilant, as well as more calm and tranquil, than they generally are, amid the variegated fluctuating scenes of human life. It would lead them to make
the

the best use and improvement of that rapid succession of events and occurrences, with which the present period of their existence is diversified. It would teach them, that betwixt the cradle and the grave, betwixt the birth and death of man, is the grand and awful interval, in which his best interests and highest happiness are to be secured or lost for ever; and that his All depends upon a faithful improvement of those "times and seasons," in which the several purposes of Heaven, with respect to his true felicity, are to be executed.

Though it should seem from the text, as well as from the enumeration of particulars in the succeeding verses, that these "times and seasons," as well as the purposes to which they are adapted, were unalterably fixed, and that nothing could be done on the part of man, to hasten or retard, to prosper or
defeat

defeat them ; yet, if we consider the whole drift of the argument in this book, the connection of this chapter with the preceding and following ones, and particularly what is said at the close of the enumeration, we must be convinced, that all these “ purposes, times, “ and seasons,” are placed before the will of man, and that he hath it in his power to improve or neglect them, to draw forth good or evil from them, and thus to establish his own happiness, or his own misery, for ever.

“ What profit,” says the Preacher,
 “ hath he that worketh in that wherein
 “ he laboureth ?” If all things are fixed
 by an unalterable decree, if this suc-
 cession of events will certainly come
 to pass, independent of any will of mine ;
 what part is left for me to perform ?
 “ I know,” replies the experienced Sage,
 “ I know that there is no good in them,
 “ but for a man to rejoice and to do
 “ good

“good in his life.” I know that all these occurrences, whether they be in the natural or the moral world, are intended to administer, to the wise and good man, so many opportunities of calling forth a delightful train of virtuous joys in his own breast, and of enabling him to communicate them to his brethren.

Was a mere natural philosopher to take up the premises of the Preacher, what conclusion do you imagine he would draw from them? Why truly he would tell you, that there was no real distinction betwixt moral and natural good and evil, that one happened by the same inevitable necessity as the other, that we must take things just as they come, and that with respect both to good and evil, “whatever is, “is best.”

Considering

Considering themselves merely as creatures of this world, born for no higher employments than animal instinct enjoins, such reasoners could form no other conclusion. And yet they talk of virtue—and yet they recommend the practice of it to their deluded pupils—But what is their virtue? What is the idol, to which they would have mankind bow the knee? It is at best but a sort of sullen content, an affectation of Stoical apathy, a mock resignation of they know not what, to they know not whom, without the least tincture of that Divine Sweetness and Composure, which soothes and delights the hearts of those, who “ look
 “ for a better country, even an Heaven-
 “ ly one.”

On the other hand, the spiritually enlightened philosopher considers himself as an heir of glory, as well as an heir of corruption; a child of God, as well

well as a child of the duſt; a citizen of Heaven, and a partaker of the Divine Nature, as well as a citizen of earth, and a partaker of the ſame nature with the beaſts that periſh: and therefore he makes every ſtate and relation, every event and occurrence of his preſent life, read him ſome ſalutary leſſon, or awaken ſome pious thought, ſome good and virtuous ſenſibility, all which help to fit and prepare him for a higher and happier life. He ſuffers no portion of his precious time to be wholly occupied by worldly cares and anxieties, or to ſteal away unnoticed and unimproved.

This being the general doctrine implied in my text, let us endeavour ſeriously to apply it to our own particular practice.

And is there, indeed, “ to every
“ thing a ſeaſon, and a time to every
“ purpoſe

“ purpose under Heaven ? ” Does every moment come to us charged with some important duty ? And are the minutest occurrences of every day, the very seasons, in which some purposes of eternal consequence are to be answered ? — Gracious God ! What are we then about ? Eating, drinking, sleeping—eating, drinking, sleeping, again !—This is certainly the case with the listless and enervated sons of sloth. Times and seasons are nothing to them. At least they think of no other purposes, to which they can be adapted. Give them but a plentiful repast, and a pillow of down—these are their virtue, their Heaven, and their God !

As to men of business, who are perpetually toiling and bustling on the crowded stage of life, who “ rise early, “ and go to bed late, and eat the bread “ of carefulness,” they cannot, indeed, be charged with the neglect of times
and

and seasons. To the compting-house, and the exchange, they know that particular hours are to be devoted. The moment of closing or refusing a contract, the times and seasons of managing their traffick to the greatest advantage, they most seriously and punctually observe and improve.

The sons and daughters of pleasure, too, are far from being unacquainted with, or inattentive to, “times and seasons;” and the man of ambition knows their importance so well, that he most faithfully avails himself of them to aid his aspiring views, and carry his selfish purposes into execution.

But alas! these times and seasons are only such, as have respect to the purposes and interests of the present world. Were they indeed observed and kept, in subordination to the superior interests of a superior world; and would men but turn their thoughts with equal
cheerfulness

cheerfulness to the times and seasons, in which the calls and purposes of Virtue, Goodness, Heaven, are to be answered; they would then act a truly wise and sensible part, even that of immortal spirits, travelling through the vale of mortality, attentive indeed to the common exigencies of their pilgrim state, but infinitely more attentive to the acquisition of those tempers and qualities, that will secure them an happy reception in the world to which they are hastening.

Indeed, my brethren, were we once captivated by the lovely form of Virtue; did we know her origin to be Divine, the offspring of GOD, made manifest in his only begotten Son JESUS CHRIST, and by him, through the Eternal Spirit, communicated to that whole race of fallen beings, which inhabit this globe of earth; did we know, that these communications of Virtue were made

“ at fundry times, and in divers manners ;” that there is not a day, nor an hour, nor even the most seemingly trifling occurrence of a day or an hour, which does not present us with some call from the Author of Goodness, or some opportunity of imitating him in the practice of it ; did we know and feel these truths, we should certainly avail ourselves of these affectionate warnings of Heaven, and endeavour to answer the blessed purposes, for which they were sent.

There is nothing so plain and obvious to a thoughtful mind, as True Religion. It meets us in every thing we hear or see. Times and seasons are never wanting. When we rise from our beds in the morning, the sweet serenity, which nature usually wears, one would think, must necessarily communicate itself to our souls, and by making us feel something of Heaven, prompt us to lift up our hearts to the
King

King of Heaven in some grateful ejaculation, for his preservation of us during the death-like interval of sleep; or some ardent petition for the comfortable assistance of his Holy Spirit, throughout the business and duties of the day.

And yet, alas! how many issue forth from their chambers with hearts equally insensible to the sweet serenity of outward nature, and the sweeter emotions of gratitude and love! Intent solely on the pursuits of a worldly life, they neglect the first time and season, that presents itself to them; and the first grand duty, to which this time and season call them. But surely they can expect nothing of Heaven throughout the day, who rush into the world without Heaven in their hearts. And so indeed it turns out in the event. The man, who keeps his heart shut against the first calls of GOD and Goodness, finds himself more unwilling to

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open

open at the second: and though he meets with many and many a tender invitation to Virtue, in his family, among his friends and neighbours, among the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, yet his worldly spirit follows him where-soever he goes; he lives in a constant habit of inattention to the times and seasons, and suffers every excellent purpose to which they are adapted, to be entirely defeated with respect to himself.

Not so the vigilant disciple of the BLESSED JESUS. He knows the extent and depth of the Preacher's maxim, that "to every thing there is a season; and a time for every purpose under Heaven." Far from neglecting any necessary engagements of his earthly life, he most punctually discharges them all: for even in these, he finds that his soul can enjoy communion with his GOD. From his morning's meditation,
he

he walks forth with meekness and affection in his heart, and sweetness and serenity in his countenance, to mingle in social intercourse with his family, and the friends whom he loves. To these he unfolds every tender feeling of his breast; to these he imparts every innocent endearment, which virtuous love can inspire: delighting and delighted, he gives and receives such joys, as Angels know and feel.

The same amiable tempers and dispositions manifest themselves in his general intercourse with mankind; and illuminate and sweeten every state and condition of life, which he is called to sustain. If some purpose of Heaven is to be answered by prosperity, he receives it with an humble heart, as “a loan lent him from the LORD,” to be applied for the relief and comfort of his brethren: if by adversity, he blesses the hand that strikes, and

suffers not the painful precious season to pass unimproved. The time of spiritual consolation, and the season of spiritual desertion, he is equally thankful for to his Heavenly Father; for he knows they are both alike necessary to his spiritual health and progress. Thus faithfully improving every time and season, as it presents itself, he rises at length out of the vanity of all time, into the riches of eternity.

To conclude. We all know sufficiently well, and are careful enough to improve the times and seasons which bring worldly matters to our view. We are not ignorant, that “there is a time
“to eat, and a time to drink, a time
“to plant, and a time to reap,” a time to be rich, and a time to be great, a time to be busy, and a time to be gay. But, O let us remember, that there is also a time to die—that when this time comes, it will avail us little

tle, “ what we have eat, or what we
 “ have drank, or wherewithal we have
 “ been clothed ;” whether, in our pas-
 sage through this vale of misery, we
 have been clothed in purple, or in rags ;
 whether we have fared sumptuously in
 a palace, or dwelt penuriously in a cot-
 tage. The only consolation that we can
 possibly receive at that dread hour, must
 be derived from a conscioufness of hav-
 ing availed ourselves of the opportunity,
 which the Grace of GOD hath afford-
 ed us, of being and doing good ; and
 from a sensibility of our own nothing-
 ness, and the All-sufficiency of Redeem-
 ing Love.

If we have been so happy as to have
 seen, with spiritual eyes, the Salvation of
 GOD in CHRIST, and to have attend-
 ed to the frequent openings, calls, and
 warnings of Eternal Love, at various
 times and seasons ; if, from a deep sense
 of the poverty of nature, we have lived
 C 4 continually

continually upon the riches of God's Free Grace in CHRIST, and, as we have freely received, freely imparted to all around; if, with Enoch, "we have walked with God," and trod the ground of Heaven, if I may so speak, whilst we have been strangers and pilgrims upon earth—then, indeed, we may depart in peace; and lay down our weary heads to sleep the short sleep of death, in sure and certain hope of waking in the mild regions of Celestial Light and Love.

D I S C O U R S E III.

THE UNIVERSAL SHEPHERD.

ISAIAH, CHAP. xl. VER. 10, 11.

DISCOURSE III.

ISAIAH, CHAP. xl. VER. 10, 11.

“ BEHOLD! THE LORD GOD WILL
“ COME WITH STRONG HAND, AND
“ HIS ARM SHALL RULE FOR HIM :
“ BEHOLD! HIS REWARD IS WITH
“ HIM, AND HIS WORK BEFORE
“ HIM. HE SHALL FEED HIS FLOCK
“ LIKE A SHEPHERD; HE SHALL
“ GATHER THE LAMBS WITH HIS
“ ARM, AND CARRY THEM IN HIS
“ BOSOM; AND SHALL GENTLY
“ LEAD THOSE THAT ARE WITH
“ YOUNG.”

TH E S E words exhibit to our view some of the most lively characteristics of that Illustrious Saviour, by whose blessed incarnation, our fallen race are become again entitled to that
long-lost

long-lost inheritance, which had been forfeited by sin; and by whose Redeeming Process in their souls, they are rendered capable of enjoying it. In the preceding verse, the Prophet calls upon “Zion, to get up into the high
 “mountain; and upon Jerusalem, to lift
 “up her voice with strength, and not to
 “be afraid; and to say unto the cities of
 “Judah, Behold your GOD!” The external sense of this prediction was fully accomplished in the incarnation, nativity, personal appearance and ministration, of the HOLY JESUS, in Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; whilst its internal sense has been fulfilled, and is fulfilling, in the hearts of all those, who spiritually behold this Incarnate GOD; and meekly submit to his saving energy in their souls. As the highest encouragement to such a conduct as this on the part of man, the illuminated Prophet proceeds, in my text, to point out the personal character of this Great Deliverer,
 together

together with the manner in which he opens his powers and virtues in the human heart, triumphs over all opposition, accomplishes the salutary work he has undertaken, and, by a most gentle and condescending process, restores his beloved offspring to their original state of Heavenly Life and Glory.

“ Behold! the LORD GOD shall come
“ with strong Hand, and his Arm shall
“ rule for him.”

The mistaken Israelites, to whom these words were primarily addressed, vainly ascribed to them a temporal interpretation, and looked for a deliverer, whose conquering arm should effectually rescue them from the earthly powers to which they were tributary. But the true children of faithful Abraham, wait for the spiritual accomplishment of this prophecy in their hearts; and see and feel “ the strong Hand ” of their
REDEEMER,

REDEEMER, in that inward opposition which he raises in their breasts, to all the evil desires and corrupt passions of human nature. Light uncreated breaks forth amid the depth of nature's darkness, and reveals to trembling mortals those strong fortresses, which the prince of darkness hath been erecting within them, and which nought can overcome, but "the Hand and Arm" of their Delivering God.

"Behold! his Reward is with him,
"and his work before him!"

This Work is no other than the complete deliverance of man from the captivity of sin and Satan. This Reward is no other than the glorious acquisition of those lost or wandering souls, who were originally his by creation, and are now doubly so by Redemption. You may observe that the Prophet seems to dwell upon the Strength,
the

the Power and Majesty of this Deliverer. He represents him as coming with a strong Hand: and, indeed, such is usually his first appearance in the sinner's heart. David speaks of this first appearance, in the most awful and alarming terms: "the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in me, and his hand presseth me fore."

The first feelings of an awakened and convicted conscience are painful and agonizing indeed; for they are, as hath already been said, the breaking forth of Heaven's Majestic Light upon the benighted soul, which shakes nature to her very center, and discloses every hidden recess to which conscious guilt flies from its approach. But when viewed with steadiness and composure, and received with cheerfulness and thanksgiving, it soon becomes as mild and sweet as the radiance of the risen day after a dark and tempestuous night. Hence it is, that in the next verse we find

find the dignity and majesty of this august Personage sweetly tempered with condescension and love, and melting into heavenly meekness, gentleness, and compassion.

“ He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd : he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom ; and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

Perhaps there is not an image in the whole world, that the Prophet could have chosen, which would have been more beautifully expressive, than this of that ineffable tenderness and care, which the SON OF GOD is perpetually exercising towards his redeemed offspring. I would not chuse to dwell too minutely upon this similitude, but would wish to make a just and not fanciful application of the several parts.

“ The

“The Flock” here mentioned, can be no other than our whole fallen race, who by virtue of that “incorruptible seed,” that was inspoken into the first Adam, are put into a Capacity of regaining Eternal Life, through the Redeeming Power of CHRIST, their second Adam and heavenly progenitor. The free gift of GOD IN CHRIST, is as universal as the fall: and though I am far from asserting, that all men will be saved, yet Scripture sufficiently warrants me to assert, that all men might be saved, if they would; or, in other words, that there is in every man, that is born into this world, a hidden power or capacity of being “born again” into an higher and heavenly world. Sincerely to be pitied is that narrow heart, which cannot receive this large and luminous truth; but would confine the LOVE OF JESUS within the scanty limits of a partial redemption. No, “He feeds his Flock like a Shepherd.” He administers to every hu-

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man foul the nourishment it needs; in such proportion, indeed, as it is capable of receiving it, and in such a way as is best suited to its particular state and circumstances.

Do you think the Savage that roams the howling wilderness, is destitute of his Pastoral Care? Do you imagine, that the cloud of ignorance and error, with which he is enveloped, conceals him from his Father's penetrating eye? No—the Heavenly Ray frequently darts through the obstructing medium: the Celestial Manna drops like silent dew, to cool the fiery soil of nature: the grim visage of the painted warrior is changed into more than female softness; the tear of sympathy starts through the reluctant eye-lids; and the man, yea the Angel, shines through the brute.

O Shep-

O Shepherd of Israel! are not these, then, of thy fold? Are they not also thy children, nourished by thy heavenly food, and sometimes manifesting thy own sweet and heavenly tempers?—Hasten, O hasten the happy time, when these wandering sheep shall be gathered to thy flock; and they, with us, shall know and feel, that we are all but one Fold, belonging to one and the same Heavenly Shepherd!

But though the Shepherd's Love is thus universal, and all men are the objects of his Pastoral Care; though they are all his children by redemption, all supplied with proper food and nourishment from his tender and beneficent hand; yet all do not alike follow the "Shepherd's Voice;" all are not equally willing to be fed with his "Bread of Life." This difference in the conduct of men, does not altogether proceed from any difference in their out-

ward circumstances or their outward modes of religion. The Heathen and the Christian would, in this respect, be upon an equal footing, were it not that the latter is favoured with an external Revelation, acquainting him with what the former can only know by an internal sensibility. The motives of the Christian, therefore, must be more in number, and far more powerful than those of the Pagan, upon whom the Light of an outward Gospel hath not yet shone. But then let it be remembered, that that "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," shines equally in every breast, by whatever various names it may be called; and nought hinders it from being equally efficacious to the salvation of all, but what the Scripture hath so clearly told us: "Light is come into the world; but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Ask

Ask not, therefore, why there are so many different religions in the world, or so many different sects of those that profess the same religion. There never was, there never can be, but One True Religion in the universe, and that eternal and immutable as GOD himself. And what is this, or what can it be, but “the will of the creature fully
 “and implicitly surrendered to the will
 “of the Creator;” knowing, that as all Goodness is centered in him, so no being in the whole compass of universal nature, can be good, but by an Influx from him? A meek, holy, resigned waiting upon their Creator, as so many living forms, empty of themselves, but to be filled out of the Fulness of GOD, is the Religion of Angels. A perpetual adherence to themselves, and not to GOD, hungering after and feeding upon their own dark empty fiery natures, instead of the luminous meek and cheerful element of Heaven, is the state of de-

vils—and, I must needs say, the state of man, when his will is turned from his GOD.

And hence we are furnished with an infallible criterion, by which we may distinguish true from false religion; or, in other words, by which we may know, whether we are or are not receiving Spiritual Nourishment from the SHEPHERD OF SOULS. For it evidently follows, from what hath been said, that we have a two-fold standard of Eternal Truth, viz. the Will of GOD revealed by a Birth of his SON in our hearts; and the same Blessed Will revealed in outward Scripture, as a perpetual uniform testimony to these inward Dictates of Heaven. Here we stand upon firm ground, unshaken by infidelity on the one hand, or the vain pretences of false enthusiasm on the other: we are conscious of a superior nature, and of our connections with a superior

superior world. We are of the Flock of JESUS—he is our true and only Shepherd. He feeds us—with what?—with Himself—with his own “Flesh and Blood,” his own Heavenly Nature; and we can distinguish our growth in him, by our growth in Grace, and by a living conformity to his holy tempers and dispositions.

Deceive not yourselves, ye proud and high-minded visionaries, by resting your hope of salvation upon a few transient animal fervours, or a vain assurance that ye belong to CHRIST, and are born again, because ye have an outward faith in him as an outward Saviour, and have felt some little momentary joy, from a vain opinion, that your sins were instantaneously forgiven. The forgiveness of your sins, is and can be nothing less than the Change of your nature: Meekness, Humility,

D 4 and

and Love, are the first and the last, the sure and infallible marks of this change.

Deceive not yourselves, ye boasting infidels! by glorying in the sufficiency of reason, and what you call the dignity of nature. Reason, with all its efforts, can no more bring one spark of Goodness into your hearts, than it can bring one ray of light into your eyes, or one breath of air into your lungs. It may contemplate them, when there, but they must be born from another source. As to your boasted dignity of nature, Goodness alone is real dignity; and All Goodness is derived from him, who is the only Essential Good. Without this, Satan himself is more dignified than ye are. Your rejection of Divine Revelation is not to be wondered at. Till you have discovered your own natural weakness and insufficiency, and been brought to feel, that this can only be supplied from
Heaven,

Heaven, ye will never be sincerely disposed to make an impartial enquiry, to “ search the Scriptures,” and being convinced of their authority, to satisfy yourselves from them, that the JESUS there revealed, is indeed the Shepherd, by whom alone all your wants can be supplied, who alone can “ lead you into “ green pastures, and feed you by the “ waters of comfort !”

Let the meek and humble-minded Christian “ lift up his head and look up.” He need not, he does not, as the Psalmist expresses it, “ run here and there for “ food; and grudge, because he is not “ satisfied:” the wants he feels, reason, he well knows, cannot supply; the comforts he aspires after, are such as the world cannot give. Wherever his Shepherd leads, he is content to follow: he is sensible of his presence, in darkness as well as in light. The evils by which he is oppressed, he is satisfied to bear, because

cause his deliverer is ever at his side. He leaves it to him, to continue or remove them, when, and in what manner, he pleases; being well assured, that, when “patience hath done its perfect work,” the time of rest and uninterrupted joy will succeed. O how sweet to walk the wilds of nature, with such a Companion and Guide! The thorny paths of adversity, the storms of temptation, the doubts and fears of trembling nature, yea, the rudest assaults of the Prince of Darkness, instead of weakening, do but strengthen his Faith, enliven his Hope, and increase the ardour of his Love. He is nothing, he has nothing, he wants nothing, but CHRIST. His Shepherd is his Love; his life is from him; he dies unto himself, that he may live wholly to him.

D I S C O U R S E I V.

THE UNIVERSAL SHEPHERD.

ISAIAH, CHAP. xl. VER. 10, 11.

PREACHED ON THE EPIPHANY.

DISCOURSE IV.

ISAIAH, CHAP. XI. VER. 10, 11.

“ BEHOLD THE LORD GOD WILL
“ COME WITH STRONG HAND, AND
“ HIS ARM SHALL RULE FOR HIM:
“ BEHOLD! HIS REWARD IS WITH
“ HIM, AND HIS WORK BEFORE
“ HIM. HE SHALL FEED HIS FLOCK
“ LIKE A SHEPHERD: HE SHALL
“ GATHER THE LAMBS WITH HIS
“ ARM, AND CARRY THEM IN HIS
“ BOSOM; AND SHALL GENTLY
“ LEAD THOSE THAT ARE WITH
“ YOUNG.”

THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST
to fallen man, whom he hath
“ redeemed with his own Blood,” and
whom he continues to feed and support,
by unceasing communications of his
own Divine Nature, was the subject of
the

the preceding difcourfe; in which I entered upon that part of the text, which expreffes this Paternal Affection by a moft lively and tender fimilitude: “ He fhall
 “ feed his Flock like a Shepherd.” Before I proceed to the remaining part of this beautiful paffage, I fhall make one or two obfervations, which this day’s feftival hath fuggelted to me, and which may ferve as further proofs or illuftrations of what I have already advanced upon the Univerfality of Chriftian Redemption.

The Epiphany, or manifeftation of the new-born Saviour to thofe Eastern Magi, who were led by a Divine impulfè, operating through an extraordinary appearance in the heaven, to pay him an early vifit at Bethlehem, and honour him with fuch external marks of homage and worfhip, as were fuitèd to, and expreffive of his illuftrious Character and Office; this manifeftation, I fay, was an earnest of that
 approach-

approaching dispensation, under which he was to be proclaimed, felt, and acknowledged to be, what the prophetic Simeon styles him, “A Light to lighten
 “ the Gentiles, and the Glory of his
 “ people Israel.” It was an earnest of that Revelation, which was “to make
 “ known the mystery, which in other
 “ ages was not made known unto
 “ the sons of men; that the Gentiles
 “ should be fellow-heirs, and of the
 “ same body, and partakers of the promise in CHRIST;” by which Revelation also, “the unsearchable Riches of
 “ CHRIST were to be preached among
 “ the Gentiles, and all men made to see, what is the fellowship of the mystery,
 “ which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, who
 “ created all things by JESUS CHRIST.” This is the language of Scripture, and the plain and obvious meaning of these several texts, can be no other than this:

That

That all mankind had been put into a Capacity of regaining that Eternal Life, which had been lost by the fall; that this Capacity was the GIFT OF GOD IN CHRIST; that the DIVINE EMANUEL was the Father of a new and spiritual offspring, which by his own influence and operation, secret, invisible, and outwardly unknown, were to be gradually called forth, under a variety of dispensations, till at length, in the fulness of time, the whole mystery should be amply unfolded, and Jews and Gentiles should alike be informed and convinced, that they were both created and redeemed by the same JESUS; that their Capacity of entering into an heavenly life, or the first seed and principle of that life, was originally imparted to their fallen progenitors, and through them transmitted to their whole race; and that every motion of this Divine Principle within them, was as much the effect of the enlightening ray of the GREAT SUN

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the motion of vegetative life in the plant, is the immediate effect of the beams of the elementary sun.

Wonder not then, my brethren, why this great mystery was not sooner revealed, or why the revelation of it hath not been more universal. The times and seasons are in the hands of an All-wise God, who best knows, at what time, and in what manner, to reveal himself to his creatures. Whilst, therefore, we ought to think ourselves highly favoured, in having this Mystery of Love so fully displayed to us, let us not uncharitably suppose, “ that GOD hath left
 “ himself without a witness,” in any human heart ; but rather let us indulge the sweet and comfortable reflection, which is warranted by Scripture, that
 “ many shall come from the east and
 “ from the west, and shall sit down
 VOL. II. E “ with

“ with Abraham, and Ifaac, and Jacob,
 “ in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Having, then, proved, that CHRIST'S Pastoral Care extends to the whole of his Flock, and that none can be destitute of their proper food and nourishment, who will open their hearts to receive it; let us now enquire, what is to be understood by his “ gathering the Lambs
 “ with his arm, and carrying them in
 “ his bosom.”

The peculiar tendernefs, which he is here said to exprefs towards the Lambs, makes us naturally anxious to know, who those persons are, that are marked by this designation; and a very little attention to the similitude itself, will lead us to this knowledge.

Helpless, meek, and gentle, is the nature of the Lamb; seemingly sensible of its own weakness, it either keeps
 close

close to the side of its parent, or else in plaintive, though inarticulate language, solicits the kind protection of the shepherd's hand. Quiet and harmless itself, it shrinks from the fiercer and more savage nature of its rude companions. It is a stranger to wrath and resentment: it preserves its meekness under the most cruel treatment. Even, when led to the slaughter, it fawns upon the hand that is ready to shed its blood.

Need I tell you, then, that the Lambs mentioned in my text, are all those, who being possessed of this gentleness of nature, and from an inward consciousness of their own weak and helpless state, put themselves under the Protection of CHRIST, their Spiritual Parent and Shepherd; who, with meekness and unwearied patience, sustain every affront and indignity from without, and every rude assault of temptation and distress within; whose wills

are so intimately united with the Will of GOD, that they can receive, without murmur, yea, with chearful resignation, the stroke that is to destroy their earthly life, with all its earthly desires and affections ?

I well know, that the maxims of this world, and the conduct of worldly men, are diametrically opposed to this gentleness of nature : with them it passes for pusillanimity, or want of spirit. Not to resent an injury, or affront, is beneath the character of what they call a man of honour. But alas ! whilst a man hath such an opinion of his own consequence, he will never think that he can stand in need even of the Protection of his GOD ; and the heart that harbours pride, or wrath, or resentment, must be a stranger to all those tender and delicate feelings, which arise from a resignation of the human will to the Divine. Hence it is, that we find so many
wayward

wayward sheep among the Flock of CHRIST, who, resting upon their own strength and sufficiency, brook not the gentle Discipline which he recommends, nor are content with the wholesome Food which he administers; but wander in the wilderness out of the way, restless and uneasy in themselves, and ever contending and at variance with each other. O thou SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, arrest these silly fugitives in their devious paths, lest they stumble and lose themselves in some dark and fathomless pit, or become a prey to the raging wolves of the desert! Convince them of the error of their ways, and cause them to hear thy Blessed Voice, assuring them, that “except they be converted, and
 “become like Lambs, thou canst not
 “gather them with thine Arm, or carry
 “them in thy bosom.”

Suited to the mild affections of the souls thus characterised, is the mild

treatment of the Great Lover of Souls. To “gather them with his Arm, and “carry them in his Bosom,” implies, not only protection from all injuries and insults, but an intimate Union of Hearts, a tender Communication of Love. “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly “in heart, and ye shall find rest to your “souls:”—rest and security from every evil passion, from every spiritual assault within or without. A likeness of spirit, temper, and disposition, brings us into his Arms, and lodges us in his Bosom. A likeness of spirit, temper, and disposition, makes us One with his Father and Himself.

“Behold,” said the inspired Baptist, “the Lamb of God, that taketh away “the sin of the world!” Ah, sinner, deceive not thyself! it is the Lamb of God that is to take away thy sins: it is the meek, gentle, and loving spirit of CHRIST, turned to and embraced in thine heart, that is to deliver thee from
the

the proud, selfish, wrathful nature, in which thou art born, and whose sad effects thou canst not but feel. This is the Atonement, the Satisfaction, the Redemption of CHRIST, even that All-conquering Meekness, which must finally extinguish all that is evil in the whole system of things, and leave not one single enemy to GOD and Goodness unsubdued.

Many, however, there are, who though very sensible of the numberless corruptions of nature, and very desirous of being delivered from them, have not yet reached the state of those, who are here distinguished by the name of Lambs; that is, according to the language of Scripture, in whose hearts "CHRIST is not yet formed." But notwithstanding their weak and imperfect state, they are still the objects of the Shepherd's care; and it is of these the Prophet speaks, when he says, "he shall gently lead those that are with young."

It is delightful to contemplate the various methods, by which a good and gracious God is perpetually seeking to reclaim his wandering creatures. Prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, virtue and vice, good and evil, are all, by his Wisdom, rendered subservient to this grand and salutary purpose. The proud spirit that can brook no controul, but is lifted up by its own vain imagination, so as to admire itself as a little deity, frequently bends to the stroke of Omnipotence, and is taught Humility in the school of affliction. The covetous, the voluptuous, the angry, envious, and malicious spirits, some by one dispensation, some by another, are led to feel the restless misery of nature unredeemed, and with earnestness to seek for deliverance and peace.

The Good Shepherd waits with the most affectionate anxiety for the first appearance of this conflict with nature.

His

His Wisdom and Goodness manifest themselves by such a gentle treatment of the afflicted spirit, as will not obstruct the salutary purpose, by too sudden a removal of the painful sensibility on the one hand, or too long a continuance of it on the other. The former might lead to presumption, the latter to melancholy and despair.

Some little flights of Goodness, some dawnings of the Heavenly Life, may now and then appear in the young and unexperienced Christian : but till the principle is brought forth into a clear manifestation, till the temper and disposition are habitually changed, much care and tenderness are necessary. To emerge at once out of the deep horrors of a dungeon, into the broad blaze of day, would be a shock too great for the strongest organs of vision. The Heavenly Beam must be gradually introduced ; the day must break and dawn
upon

upon the foul, ere the “ SUN OF RIGH-
 “ TEOUSNESS can rife with healing un-
 “ der his wings.” The corruptions of
 nature are permitted to break forth, in
 order to produce humility ; and the fen-
 sibilities of Divine Peace and Joy are
 awakened, in order to excite Comfort
 and Hope. Thus it is, that the Hea-
 venly Shepherd “ gently leads those
 “ that are with young,” watches over
 them with unceasing tendernefs and care,
 till his own mild and gentle nature is
 formed in their hearts, and he can
 “ gather them with his Arms, and carry
 “ them in his Bosom.”

O let us, then, put ourfelves under
 the immediate protection of this true
 “ Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.” Let
 us no longer trust to the deceitful guid-
 ance of unenlightened reason, or the
 more dangerous influence of corrupt
 paffion. Our heads and our hearts will
 confpire in this cafe to deceive and en-
 fnare

snare us. But if we give up ourselves, our souls, and our bodies, into his tender and affectionate hands, we shall have the Light of Heaven to illuminate our paths, the Omnipotence of God to protect us from all dangers, and the mild and refreshing influences of the ETERNAL SPIRIT to change and cheer our fallen spirits, and to “ create them
“ anew, after the Divine Image, in
“ Righteousness and true Holiness.”

D I S C O U R S E V.

ON THE EPISTLE FOR THE FOURTH
SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

ST. JAMES, CHAP. i. from VER. 17,
to 21.

DISCOURSE V.

ST. JAMES, CHAP. i. from VER. 17,
to 21.

“ EVERY GOOD GIFT, AND EVERY
“ PERFECT GIFT, IS FROM ABOVE,
“ AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE
“ FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM
“ IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER
“ SHADOW OF TURNING. OF HIS
“ OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH
“ THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE
“ SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRST
“ FRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.
“ WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRE-
“ THREN, LET EVERY MAN BE
“ SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK,
“ SLOW TO WRATH; FOR THE
“ WRATH OF MAN WORKETH NOT
“ THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.
“ WHEREFORE

“ WHEREFORE LAY APART ALL
“ FILTHINESS AND SUPERFLUITY
“ OF NAUGHTINESS, AND RECEIVE
“ WITH MEEKNESS THE ENGRAFT-
“ ED WORD, WHICH IS ABLE TO
“ SAVE YOUR SOULS.”

AMID the many illustrious evidences with which we are favoured of the Free Grace and Universal Love of GOD, is it not astonishing, that men should ever entertain such narrow and unworthy conceptions of his Divine Administration, as to confine it to a few individuals of the human race, and thus to degrade the Maker and Lord of the universe to the rank of a mere local and tutelar Deity?

The volume of Nature, the volume of the Gospel, and the volume of our
own

own hearts, if we had but eyes to see them, lie equally unfolded to our view. In each of these, we may read, in the fairest and largest characters, these great and glorious truths: that “ the GOD
 “ of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the
 “ GOD of the Israelites, the GOD and
 “ FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST,
 “ is the GOD and FATHER of the spirits
 “ of all flesh:” that “ he hath made
 “ of one blood all nations under Hea-
 “ ven:” that “ his tender mercies are
 “ over all his works: that he causeth
 “ his sun to shine upon the evil and
 “ upon the good, and sendeth rain upon
 “ the just and upon the unjust:” that
 “ he is no respecter of persons; but,
 “ in every nation, he that feareth him,
 “ and worketh righteousness, is accepted
 “ of him:” that, notwithstanding the
 gross darkness which hath prevailed, and
 still prevails, over a very considerable part
 of the habitable world, “ he hath never left
 “ himself without witnesses:” that “ his
 VOL. II. F “ light

“ light hath always shone in the midst
 “ of this darknes,” and its life-giving
 beams have perpetually risen upon the
 earth for “ the healing of the nations :”
 “ that JESUS CHRIST is the same yef-
 “ terday, to-day, and for ever :” that
 as by him GOD originally created man,
 so by him alone man can be redeemed :
 that “ GOD is not willing that any should
 “ perish, but that all should come to re-
 “ pentance,” and receive the fullness of
 redemption from this Universal Saviour.
 These important salutary truths are sum-
 med up in the most concise and expres-
 sive terms by the Blessed Apostle, in the
 words which I have read to you ; the
 full import of which we shall better ap-
 prehend, if we attend to the manner in
 which they are introduced by the pre-
 ceding verses.

“ Let no man say, when he is tempt-
 “ ed, I am tempted of GOD ; for GOD
 “ cannot be tempted with evil, neither
 “ tempteth

“ tempteth he any man; but every man
 “ is tempted, when he is drawn away
 “ of his own lusts and enticed: then
 “ when lust hath conceived, it bringeth
 “ forth sin; and sin, when it is finish-
 “ ed, bringeth forth death. Do not
 “ err, my beloved brethren, every Good
 “ Gift, and every Perfect Gift, is from
 “ above, and cometh down from the
 “ Father of Lights, with whom is no
 “ variableness, neither shadow of turn-
 “ ing.”

Now, without any unnatural force
 put upon these words, is not this their
 plain and obvious meaning?

Think not, Fellow Christians, that
 that evil nature which you bring with
 you into the world, is the nature which
 God originally gave you. It is, in
 itself, earthly and diabolical: it came
 not from the Source of Immaculate Pu-
 rity; it stands in direct contrariety to

it: its own restless desires are its tormenting hunger, and sin is its food. Selfish and sensual, it seeketh only its own. Death is its true nature; darkness its place of abode. Mistake not the matter, then, I beseech you. When you feel the workings of this evil nature; when you feel pride, envy, covetousness and wrath; know and be assured, that none of these can come from GOD: they are all “conceived, and brought forth, and finished,” by the bestial or diabolical passions within you. Nothing but what is good, comes from GOD: every thing that is good and perfect is his gift. Nature is darkness and want; GOD alone, is light and fullness. He ever was, and is, and will be, the same Unchangeable Light, and Life, and Love! Ascribe, therefore, to nature, the things that belong to nature; but, to GOD, the things that be GOD’S. The sun of this temporary system ceaseth not to shine, though the earth daily turns some part or other of its surface from his

his

his beams: the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ceaseth not to shine, though, among the myriads of intelligences that are visited by his Ray, there should be some, who perversely turn away their eyes and hearts, and chuse to abide in their own darkness. Depend upon it, then, that every good thought, desire, and inclination, that rises in your breasts, every inward opposition to evil, every inward hunger after something good, something superior to the gross gratification of your earthly part, depend upon it, that all this is from GOD—It is not your own—it is a Ray of his ever-shining Light, darting into your benighted soul: it is “a Good and Perfect Gift” freely given by him, to which you would do well to take heed, and to receive with grateful eagerness, that so “the day may
 “ begin to dawn, and the Day-Star to
 “ rise in your hearts.”

As a full confirmation of his assertion, that evil is from ourselves, and

that goodnefs is from above, the Apoftle proceeds, in the next verfe, to acquaint us, that, though we are fallen into an earthly and diabolical nature, which every man living muft know and feel, if he ingenuoufly and foberly attends to his own fenfibilities; yet we have in the center of our hearts, a feed of Divine Grace, an Offspring of GOD in CHRIST, a Birth of Eternal Life, “ ingrafted,” as he afterwards expreffes it, into our fouls, which is capable of receiving the fweet influences of the Sun of Righteoufnefs, of opening, fpringing forth, and coming to full maturity, by the efficacy of his beams.

Think not that I have put words into the Apoftle’s mouth, which he never fpake. Hear him in his own plain but ftrong and emphatical language: “ Of his Own Will begat he us with the “ WORD OF TRUTH, that we fhould
“ be

“ be a kind of first-fruits of his crea-
 “ tures.”

“ Begat he us! Whom does he mean by us? Does he speak of himself, and those only to whom he addressed his epistle? No, my brethren—these words relate to you, and me, and all mankind, as much as they did to St. James and his brethren. It would be a very great mistake to imagine, that all the persons indiscriminately, to whom the Apostles direct their epistles, were truly and savingly converted to JESUS CHRIST. Doubtless there were many mere outward professors of Christianity then, as there are now: else why do we find so many apostolical censures and reproofs in these epistles? “ We, us, saints, elect, called of God,” and such like general expressions, certainly refer to the whole visible church: nay, perhaps, in a more enlarged sense, to the whole human race. For there is not one single de-
 F 4 claration,

claration, call, or promise in Scripture, but what every man in the world is in some measure concerned in.

“ Of his Own Will begat he us—”
 surely, then, we must be his Offspring!
 and that we are his Redeemed Offspring, appears from hence, that “ he
 “ begat us with the WORD OF TRUTH.”
 What is this “ WORD OF TRUTH?”
 Is it the outward letter of Scripture, as some have vainly imagined, and ignorantly asserted, making the principal seat and source of Divine Illumination, and of the Residence of the HOLY SPIRIT, to be in the paper and ink of their Bibles? No—“ THE WORD
 “ OF TRUTH,” spoken of in this and other passages of Scripture, is the ETERNAL LOGOS, that “ WORD, that was in
 “ the beginning; that was with GOD;
 “ that was GOD; by whom all things
 “ were created; even JESUS CHRIST
 “ himself the only begotten of the FA-
 “ THER,

“ THER, the Brightness of his Glory,
 “ and the Express Image of his Person.”

By this WORD, who calls himself
 “ the Way, the Truth, and the Life,”
 was man originally created. By this
 WORD inspoken into his fallen nature,
 man was put into a capacity of being
 redeemed: he was “ begotten again of
 “ the will of the FATHER by the WORD
 “ OF TRUTH;” and for this glorious
 purpose, adds the Apostle, “ that we
 “ should be a kind of first-fruits of his
 “ creatures.”

The first-fruits under the law, were
 offered up to GOD. They were sancti-
 fied, set apart as holy. In like manner,
 the Heaven-born Nature, Seed or Prin-
 ciple, which is the Gift of GOD through
 CHRIST, is imparted to us as the means
 of redeeming and purifying our evil na-
 ture, and thus sanctifying the whole
 man in body, soul, and spirit. This
 is,

is, therefore, justly called the “ first-fruits,” which being in itself holy, is to become an Holy Heavenly Life and Tincture, whereby the evils introduced by the fall are to be completely removed, and the creature restored to its first purity and glory.

Having thus pointed out this great and universal truth, that man hath within him a Threefold Life, viz. a bestial, a diabolical, and an heavenly life, known, and to be easily distinguished by their respective sensibilities; the two first desiring, hungering, feeding upon nothing but what is evil; the last desiring, hungering, feeding only upon what is good; the former properly our own, into which we entered by the fall, and in which we naturally desire to continue; the latter, the Free Gift of God, proceeding solely from him, and fed and nourished by his Grace in CHRIST JESUS; let us now see, what kind

kind of Life and Conduct the Apostle builds upon these self-evident principles.

“ Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
 “ let every man be swift to hear, slow
 “ to speak, slow to wrath.”

“ Swift to hear”—to hear what?—
 Why, that WORD OF TRUTH, which
 he had mentioned in the preceding verse.
 But where is this WORD to be heard?
 Where, but in the temple of our hearts?
 It is not a “ Lo here, or Lo there!”
 says our BLESSED LORD; “ but I say
 “ unto you, the Kingdom of GOD is
 “ within you!” The ETERNAL WORD
 delivers his oracles in the inmost recesses
 of our hearts. It is there alone his
 voice is heard—whether the means he
 employs be outward or inward, whether
 he uses the instrumentality of his minis-
 ters, the dispensations of his Providences,
 or

or the secret stirrings of the sinner's conscience.

Where-ever this Blessed Voice is heard, and its dictates implicitly obeyed, whether by Jews, Christians or Pagans, "Barbarians, Scythians, bond or "free," the effects it produces are essentially and invariably the same. The murdering knife drops harmless from the hand of the relenting savage: the angry disciple of the Meek and Lowly JESUS unbends his rigid brow, and suffers the heavenly sensations' of Benevolence and Love to glow in his breast, and illumine his countenance: every boisterous passion of fallen nature is quieted or subdued, and gentleness and humility reign in still and silent triumph over the whole man. He then becomes "swift to hear" indeed: wrapt in solemn attention, he hearkens with all the eagerness of heavenly desire to what "the LORD GOD shall say within
"him;"

“him;” and, in consequence of this, he is “slow to speak”—not like some weak and half-formed Christians, babbling their little experiences from house to house, perpetually talking about their religious concerns, and under the appearance of much anxiety for the salvation of others, manifesting a most odious selfishness, and pharisaical admiration of their own proficiency.

“Slow to wrath” too, says the Apostle; justifying his admonition by this convincing reason: “for the wrath of man worketh not the Righteousness of GOD.”

O what a glorious precept is here! How necessary to be inculcated in all periods of the Christian church! Had this been attended to and observed, we should never have heard of the fires of persecution being kindled to illuminate the soul. Men would never have attempted to propagate the mild and lovely religion

religion of JESUS by fierce contention and dispute. They would never have imagined, that this or that system of notions would excite the life and power of religion in the heart; that mere opinion could communicate sensibility; or that even the orthodoxy of an Apostle could fill the soul with the love of his Master. Zeal for the Truth is right and commendable: but before we begin to be zealous, let us first know, by an inward self-evident experience, what Truth is.

The Truth of all Truths, indispensably necessary to human happiness both here and hereafter, is this: that the evil nature, which we bring with us into the world, must be overcome and destroyed; and that an heavenly nature, temper and disposition, with heavenly desires, inclinations, and affections, must be formed and produced within us, or we never can “see the Kingdom of
“ GOD.”

“GOD.” This truth I can scarcely think will be called in question, by any sect or denomination of Christians; nay, I had almost said, by any Deist, Pagan, or Mahometan. If this great Truth be preached, therefore, and preached from the same spirit, which the Preacher recommends and endeavours to awaken in his hearers, we ought to wish him, GOD speed! whoever he may be, however his notions and opinions may differ from ours, or by whatever names he may think proper to call the Heavenly Life and its operations.

For if we have but this Life within us, powerfully prevailing over all the sinful workings of our fallen nature, redeeming us from the bondage of corruption, and admitting us into the glorious Light and “Liberty of the Sons of GOD;” what does it signify, by what name we call it, or in what manner we conceive it to enter into
us;

us; whether we say, it is imputed, imparted, or inherent; whether we assert, that it is born with us into the world, or that it is communicated to our souls at some future period of life? Let us only be sure that we have it, and are acting under its influences, and then we need not dispute about the name.

Is it paying less reverence and homage to CHRIST, to declare, that I know and feel, that I have his Righteousness, that is, his Righteous Spirit, temper and disposition, in my heart, than to say, I have it by imputation? “CHRIST
 “ is made unto us Wisdom, and Right-
 “ teousness, and Sanctification, and Re-
 “ demption.” If I have CHRIST in me, I have all these: and a man may talk of imputation, or talk of an inherent CHRIST, as much as he pleases; but he must be a stranger to all real Communion with his GOD and SA-
 VIOUR,

VIOUR, till he partakes of the Same Life, and has “the Same Mind in him, that “was also in CHRIST JESUS.” Wherever, therefore, I find “this mind,” temper and disposition, let it be in an Heathen or a Christian, let his notions and opinions be ever so different from mine, I pray GOD, that I may be enabled to revere and love him—and revere and love him I certainly shall, if “CHRIST “is in me of a Truth.”

I conclude, then, with the excellent admonition in the 21st verse, which, after what hath been already said, I need not enlarge upon :

“Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness
 “and superfluity of naughtiness:” that
 is, turn from all the gross imaginations,
 evil desires, and superabundant pollu-
 tions, of your earthly and diabolical na-
 ture; “and receive with Meekness the
 “Ingrafted WORD, which is able to
 VOL. II. G “save

“ save your souls.” This Ingrafted WORD, as I have already observed, is no other, than “ CHRIST in us the Hope of Glory.” Our Salvation depends upon this inward turning to this inward Redeemer; and Meekness is the infallible criterion of the sincerity of our conversion; for it implies a deep sensibility of our own nothingness, and a total and implicit resignation of ourselves, of all that we are, and all that we have, to the POWER OF GOD IN CHRIST.

D I S C O U R S E VI.

ON THE EPISTLE FOR THE FIFTH
SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

St. JAMES, CHAP. i. from VER. 22,
to the End.

D I S C O U R S E VI.

St. JAMES, CHAP. i. from VER. 22,
to the End.

“ BUT BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD,
“ AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DE-
“ CEIVING YOUR OWNSELVES. FOR
“ IF ANY MAN BE A HEARER OF
“ THE WORD, AND NOT A DOER,
“ HE IS LIKE UNTO A MAN BE-
“ HOLDING HIS NATURAL FACE
“ IN A GLASS; FOR HE BEHOLDETH
“ HIMSELF, AND GOETH HIS WAY,
“ AND STRAIGHTWAY FORGET-
“ TETH WHAT MANNER OF MAN
“ HE WAS. BUT WHOSO LOOKETH
“ INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF
“ LIBERTY, AND CONTINUETH
“ THEREIN, HE BEING NOT A FOR-
“ GETFUL HEARER, BUT A DOER
“ OF THE WORK, THIS MAN SHALL

“ BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED. IF
 “ ANY MAN AMONG YOU SEEM TO
 “ BE RELIGIOUS, AND BRIDLETH
 “ NOT HIS TONGUE, BUT DECEIV-
 “ ETH HIS OWN HEART, THIS
 “ MAN’S RELIGION IS VAIN. PURE
 “ RELIGION, AND UNDEFILED BE-
 “ FORE GOD AND THE FATHER, IS
 “ THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHER-
 “ LESS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR
 “ AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP HIM-
 “ SELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE
 “ WORLD.”

IN the concluding verse of the last Sunday’s Epistle, the Apostle, with great propriety, directs us to “ receive
 “ with Meekness the Ingrafted Word ;”
 because Meekness is such a sensibility of our own weak and helpless condition, as alone can lead us to see the necessity, and feel the desire, of “ being filled with
 “ all the Fullness of God.”

In

In order to prevent all error and delusion, and to point out the only method of obtaining a real participation of the blessings, which flow from such a reception of the Ingrafted Word, he proceeds, in the verses now under our consideration, to enumerate some of the most distinguishing marks and characteristics of “ Pure and undefiled Religion.” These, you will find, constitute an unerring standard of Divine Truth, and a never-failing criterion of Christian Faith and Practice.

“ Be ye doers of the Word, and not
 “ hearers only, deceiving your own-
 “ selves. For if any man be a hearer
 “ of the Word, and not a doer, he is
 “ like unto a man beholding his natu-
 “ ral face in a glass; for he beholdeth
 “ himself, and goeth his way, and
 “ straightway forgetteth what manner
 “ of man he was.”

The precept is noble; the similitude by which it is illustrated, just and proper. The Word of GOD is a true and faithful mirror, which gives us a true and faithful representation of our own persons. By looking into this, we not only discover the innumerable spots and blemishes, with which we are sadly deformed; but we have likewise a view of the means, by which alone they can be cleansed and abolished. A transient glance, you may well imagine, will not suffice: a mere contemplation of the disease and its remedy, will avail nothing. We must not only look, but we must act; and whilst our eyes are opened to the view of our deformities, our hands must be stretched forth to receive and apply the remedy.

Naturalists tell us, that our wise and beneficent Creator hath so wonderfully adjusted the whole vegetable system, that in whatever soil the poisonous plant
springs

springs up, its antidote will always be found. Thus, the same mirror that presents us with a view of the spots and blemishes of our fallen state, is likewise graciously appointed to exhibit to us the power and efficacy of that Redeeming Grace, by which we are to be adorned with our primitive beauty and glory. Hear the words of the Apostle: “ But
 “ who so looketh into the Perfect Law of
 “ Liberty, and continueth therein, he
 “ being not a forgetful hearer, but a
 “ doer of the work, this man shall be
 “ blessed in his deed.”

Whenever the Apostles speak of a Law, they do not mean a set of external precepts committed to writing, merely to be externally observed; though this, I believe, is the only idea that people in general have of what is called the moral law: but, when they speak of a Law, they mean a Nature, really and truly living and working in man, consisting of
 a variety

a variety of capacities and fenfibilities, according to the world, or fource, or principle, out of which it came. Thus St, Paul tells us, that “ the Law of the “ Spirit of Life made him free from “ the Law of Sin and Death.” Surely, we cannot imagine, that the Apofle was fo weak, as to think, that one fet of outward words, was his deliverer from another fet of outward words. No—“ the Law of the Spirit of Life,” and “ the Law of Sin and Death,” are two Natures, which in the mirrour of Eternal Wifdom, held up to his mental eye, he plainly faw exifting, and contending in his foul. When he declares, therefore, that one law delivered him from another, what is it elfe, but declaring, that the Redeeming Power of the HOLY JESUS, awakening and cherifhing his own amiable and heavenly nature in his heart, had thereby fet him free from all the deformity, guilt, and corruption of
of

of his earthly nature, which was indeed his death?

“ Looking into the Perfect Law of Liberty, and continuing therein,” evidently means a stedfast persevering attention and obedience to the salutary influences of Divine Grace in our hearts, suffering ourselves to be actuated by, and then acting under them; and thus proceeding from “ strength to strength,” till our Christian Liberty is perfect, or, in other words, till the living and effectual power of CHRIST hath, as our church service very strongly expresses it, “ utterly abolished the whole body of sin,” and admitted us “ into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD.”

We are all of us, my brethren, “ hearers of the Word.” We have been repeatedly told, by voices within and without, what we are by nature, what we may be by Grace. We have been repeatedly

repeatedly told, that we all inherit an earthly and corrupt nature from Adam, and an holy and heavenly nature from CHRIST; that this latter is implanted in us as a Seed of a New Life, to be called forth into a birth, by the vivifying power of the Sun of Righteousness; that this vivifying power is as universal as the light of the sun of this world; that it shines perpetually around us; that our Salvation depends upon our opening our hearts to receive its salutary beams; that if we neglect so to do, we must necessarily continue in our natural darkness; that the hand of Omnipotence cannot deliver us; that our hell is of our own forming, that its flames are kindled by our own malignant spirits, and not by any arbitrary inflictions of Divine Vengeance; that unless we apply in time to “the Blood of Sprinkling,” which is given for the healing of sinners on this side the grave, there “will remain for us no more sacrifice

“ crifice for fin, but a certain fearful
 “ looking for of judgment and fiery in-
 “ dignation.” We may hear fermons
 every day in the week; we may weep
 beneath the pathetic eloquence of the
 preacher; we may admire the orthodoxy
 of his doctrine, and the warmth and
 energy of his address: but unless we see
 our own features, in the picture which
 he draws; unless we attend to the spots
 we may discover in the mirrour, which
 he holds up to our view; unless we look
 at them with earnestness and persever-
 ance, and with the same earnestness and
 perseverance apply the remedy to remove
 them; we are but “ hearers, and not
 “ doers of the Word, deceiving our
 “ ownfelves.”

After having given this general pre-
 cept, which is as a kind of general
 standard or criterion of “ True Religi-
 “ on,” the Blessed Apostle next proceeds
 to enumerate some of the distinguishing
 marks,

marks, by which the Life of God in the Soul is to be known and felt by ourselves, and made manifest to others.

“ If any man among you seem to be
 “ religious, and bridled not his tongue,
 “ but deceiveth his own heart, this
 “ man’s religion is vain.”

He here gives us, in the first place, a kind of negative proof, by which we may know, whether we have “ Pure Religion,” or not. Religious impostures every day occur; an outward garb is easily put on; the zeal and warmth of animal nature is easily kept up; and the very sensations of Divine Peace and Love, may be imitated and counterfeited by the earthly part of man. Yea, a man may sadly deceive himself: by associating with those who are, or think themselves, spiritually minded, hearing them talk, or talking himself of heavenly delights, comfortable frames, inward peace and
 joy,

joy, his imagination may soon be set at work; he may fancy his progress in Divine Knowledge to be very great, and even declare, with assurance, that his sins are pardoned, that Heaven is already his portion. Satan often transforms himself into an Angel of Light, to deceive the unwary in some such manner as this. But let us “try the spirits, whether they be of God, or not.” The Apostle hath furnished us with a sure and infallible touchstone: “If any man seem to be religious;” that is, seem to himself or others, to be so; “and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

Whenever, therefore, O man! thou observest in thyself or others, a disposition to talk and boast much of religious experiences, to censure and calumniate thy neighbours, to indulge thyself in any bitter invectives, any
angry

angry or revengeful expressions, any severe or sarcastical reflections, any high and selfish declarations of thine own importance, or supercilious and contemptuous treatment of others, who may differ from thee in their conception of Divine Things; be thy religious appearances to thyself or the world what they may, depend upon it, “thou art
 “deceiving thine own heart; thy religion is vain.” Though thou mayest do all this under the shew of a most fervent zeal for the cause of GOD and truth, yet it will avail thee nothing. Such an unbridled tongue can only speak from an unbridled spirit. The most righteous cause in the world can never sanctify any unrighteous means: “The wrath of
 “man worketh not the righteousness of
 “GOD:” and Truth itself must lose much of its weight and influence, unless it be “spoken in Love.”

The

The Apostle, having thus mentioned one of the negative signs of “ Pure Religion,” enumerates, in the last verse, some of its most positive and infallible characteristics.

“ Pure Religion and undefiled before
 “ GOD and the FATHER, is this: To
 “ visit the fatherless and widows in their
 “ affliction, and to keep himself un-
 “ spotted from the world.”

There are two texts of Scripture, which are often quoted by unbelievers, and urged also against the authenticity and even necessity of that written Revelation in which they are contained. For my part, says one, all my religion is contained in what one of your prophets says, viz. “ in doing justly, loving
 “ mercy, and walking humbly with my
 “ GOD.” For my part, says another, the Apostle St. James has exactly hit upon my notions of religion, viz. that

it consists in “ visiting the fatherless
 “ and widows in their affliction, and
 “ keeping ourselves unspotted from the
 “ world.”

Doubtless these texts may be said to contain the very sum and substance of “ Pure Religion.” But if these purblind Deists could but see into the depth of those texts, and how much is implied in “ doing justly, loving mercy, and “ walking humbly with God ; in visit-
 “ ing the fatherless and widows in their
 “ affliction, and keeping themselves un-
 “ spotted from the world ;” I cannot but think, they would be ready to make as many new objections to these, as to other Scripture Truths : at least, I am sure, that unregenerate nature in them must recoil from their spiritual tendency.

When St. James speaks of “ visit-
 “ ing the fatherless and widows in
 “ their affliction,” he doubtless includes,
 under

under these, all the tender offices of sympathy and love, which we owe to one another as children of one common Father, as the Redeemed Offspring of one common LORD and SAVIOUR. The fatherless and widows are named, as being generally the greatest objects of distress; but the precept, taken in its true spirit, relates to that charitable, benevolent, God-like Temper of Mind, by which those are governed and directed in all their actions, who are intimately united by Faith to the LORD OF LOVE himself. True Faith is a meek, humble, self-denying resignation of the whole man, from a conviction of his own natural inability and corruption, to the Redeeming Power and Love of JESUS CHRIST. From this Divine Union of Faith and Love, Charity, in its largest and most unlimited sense, is derived; and from hence, in all its fair and beautiful branches, it is perpetually cherished and enlivened.

The very essence of religion is “ the
“ Love of GOD shed abroad in our
“ hearts,” and flowing from thence in
rich and copious streams into the afflicted
breasts of the poor, the fatherless, and
the widow. The omission or neglect of
one of the least of these duties of Love,
is an offence more heinous in the Sight
of Heaven, than ten thousand errors
in doctrine. Let us be as orthodox
as we can, let us hear as many good
sermons and conversations as possible ;
but for Heaven’s sake, for our souls sake,
let us not violate, in the minutest in-
stance, the Eternal Law of Love. Let
us sacrifice every private satisfaction to
the observance of this law ; nor let us
think, that our alms-giving, or preach-
ing, or reading, or praying ever so fer-
vently, will be the least excuse for us,
at the great day, for transgressing, or
even neglecting, one of the most com-
mon precepts of Love.

The

The last characteristic of “ Pure and “ Undeiled Religion” here mentioned, is “ to keep ourselves unspotted from “ the world.”

This is, indeed, a very comprehensive expression ; but not more so, than the nature of the Divine Life in the soul requires it to be. A worldly spirit includes in it every thing that can possibly separate the soul from GOD. To be “ unspotted from the world,” is to be totally disengaged from the dominion of this spirit, and to be totally under the guidance of another spirit from another world. We may talk of “ the man “ of sin,” being confined to the Romish church, and make the Pope in his infallible chair to be the “ scarlet whore,” and modern Rome the Babylon of Christendom : but believe me, my brethren, whilst we are under the dominion of a worldly spirit, we have the “ man of sin, Babylon, and the scarlet
H 3 “ whore,”

“whore,” in our own hearts; and all the judgments threatened in Scripture against these characters, will surely light upon our heads, unless we “keep ourselves unspotted from the world.”

Well, but some will say, “to keep ourselves unspotted from the world,” implies a state of perfection. What if it should? Perfect we must certainly be, or we cannot see the Kingdom of God. The Apostle means not, that we are to be free from the various temptations of the world; he means not, that evil shall cease to dwell in our outward and natural man, or cease to vex us with its stratagems and allurements: no, such conflicts we must expect to bear, to the very end of our pilgrimage; and to bear them is our triumph. To be “unspotted from the world,” means no more, than that the world must not have dominion over us; its temptations must be resisted, its deceitful wiles must be guarded

guarded against. This very state of temptation resisted, is our Christian Perfection here: it was the Perfection of our BLESSED MASTER himself. Let us remember, that “as he was tempted like unto us,” he knows how to succour, and will succour us under temptation. We have his Strength to enable us to contend with, and overcome all our adversaries; and his comfortable promise to encourage us to persevere to the end, in the glorious conflict: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!” Amen.

D I S C O U R S E VII.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE REGENE-
RATE AND UNREGENERATE STATES.

PSALM CIV. VER. 29, 30.

DISCOURSE VII.

PSALM CIV. VER. 29, 30.

“ THOU HIDEST THY FACE, THEY
“ ARE TROUBLED : THOU TAKEST
“ AWAY THEIR BREATH, THEY
“ DIE, AND RETURN TO THEIR
“ DUST : THOU SENDEST FORTH
“ THY SPIRIT, THEY ARE CREA-
“ TED ; AND THOU RENEWEST THE
“ FACE OF THE EARTH.”

THIS Psalm is a most devout and exalted meditation upon the nature and attributes of God, as they are illustriously displayed in his works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. All the peculiar excellencies of the several species of eloquence, the descriptive, the sublime, and the pathetic, are happily exhibited in this finished composition.

It

It opens with a solemn recognition of the Power and Majesty of GOD, which at once sets forth the wisdom and piety of its author: "Bless the LORD, O my
 " soul! O LORD my GOD, thou art
 " exceeding glorious; thou art clothed
 " with majesty and honour!" The noblest objects of the material universe are then selected to form a description of this Majesty: "Who coverest thyself
 " with Light, as with a garment; who
 " stretchest out the heavens like a cur-
 " tain; who layeth the beams of his
 " chambers in the waters; who maketh
 " the clouds his chariot, who walk-
 " eth upon the wings of the wind." He then proceeds to enumerate the wonders of creating power, throughout the vast scale of being, from the highest order of intellectual life, to the lowest part or portion of inanimate matter. He represents all these as originally proceeding from the invisible Source of Being, and perpetually depend-

depending upon the same Source for the support and continuance of their existence.

From the whole tenor of the Psalm, and particularly from the two verses I have selected for my text, we learn this great and instructive lesson : that the life-giving, life-preserving Presence and Energy of the CREATOR, is as necessary to the vegetation of the smallest blade of grass, as to the intellectual growth of the highest Archangel ; that was this Energy withheld a single moment, the fairest flower, in the material, as well as spiritual world, would wither and die ; that the Spirit of the Highest pervades, sustains, and actuates the whole system of being ; that if any of his creatures, who were originally living Images of Himself, formed with his own essential freedom of will, should abuse this liberty, and thereby lose his Divine Image, and forfeit that state of bliss in which he
 created

created them, it is his Spirit alone that can restore them ; that the same Breath of Life, with which they were first animated, must be rekindled, the same power that created must renew their degenerate natures. “ Thou hidest thy
 “ face, they are troubled : thou takest
 “ away their breath, they die, and re-
 “ turn to their dust : thou sendest forth
 “ thy Spirit, they are created ; and thou
 “ renewest the face of the earth !”

Though these words may appear to be more immediately applicable to the present state of the natural world ; yet, if we attend to the scope and design of the illuminated author, we shall find them, as I have already observed of the whole Psalm, beautifully expressive of the Divine Agency in the spiritual world. I shall, therefore, consider them as a lively representation of the death and revival of our spiritual nature, manifested in our fall in Adam, and our Redemption
 in

in JESUS CHRIST. And as this truth will be best illustrated by an exemplification of the two opposite states of nature and grace, I shall attempt to draw the character of man, first, in his unregenerate, and secondly, in his regenerate state. In order to this, I beg leave to premise, that, by the unregenerate, I mean all those, who live and act under the influence of that evil nature, which they inherit from Adam; and by the regenerate, those of every age and nation, of every religion, sect or opinion, who have fought and found a better nature, derived to them from the “Second Adam, the LORD from Heaven,” by virtue of which, they are enabled to relinquish and subdue all the attractions, temptations, and powerful suggestions of their fallen life. From the first of these, as my text expresses it, GOD may be said to “hide his face,” in consequence of which, “they are troubled, they die, and return to their dust.” To the

the laſt, “ he ſendeth forth his Spirit, “ by which they are created anew ;” and through them the “ face of the earth “ is renewed.”

I. A very little acquaintance with mankind is ſufficient to inform us of the falſe happineſs and real miſery of thoſe, who live “ without hope, and “ without GOD in the world ;” that is to ſay, without the ſweet hope of an higher and better life than this, and without that Participation of the Divine Nature, which alone can exalt them to ſuch a life. Fading and deluſive joys, permanent and ſubſtantial woes, are the ſad but ſure ingredients of the finner’s life. He dwells in the depth of darkneſs, and can have no true light, becauſe GOD “ hideth his Face from him.” “ The Light of GOD’s countenance,” is the only true light in the univerſe ; the light in which the finner lives, is a falſe glare, that injures rather than aſſiſts
his

his fight, and clothes the objects around him with deceitful colours.

“ He is troubled ” too. Object after object, pleasure after pleasure, solicit his fond pursuit: satiety and disgust, vexation and disappointment, are sure to succeed. Every earthly joy, of prospect never so fair, withers in the bud; and the cup of pleasure, in the very draught, is changed into a cup of bitterness.

But he is not only “ troubled ” in this life, but “ he must die, and turn “ again to his dust.” These expressions may be considered in a two-fold sense, viz. as relating not only to the temporal, but to the spiritual, death of the unregenerate. With respect to the former, the dissolution of his animal nature puts an end to those earthly joys, in which alone his desires and delight were placed. The lifeless mass is committed to its kindred dust, and the grave

closes the scene of worldly vanity. But the immortal spirit, which no death will ever be able to extinguish, now removed from its temporary mansion of earth, and separated from the transient influences of the sun and air of this world, falls into the first forms of its nature, and being unacquainted with the Light and Love of God, mingles with its congenial element of darkness and fiery wrath. Thus he dies to a bad nature, and lives again to a worse: he exchanges the life of a beast, for that of a devil; and a mixed state of good and evil, for a state of unmingled wretchedness and woe.

The word, death, however, is of a far more extensive signification. It does not merely denote the separation of the soul from this outward body; neither can it be the total extinction of being, but only a change of the mode or state of being. Thus the sinner, as I have already observed, dies to one state, and lives to another.

ther. His temporal death does not, indeed, commence at the dissolution of his body; for the moment he is born, as the Scripture and experience teach us, he begins to die. The seeds of this temporal death are implanted in his earthly part; and,

“ The young disease, that must subdue
 “ at length,
 “ Grows with his growth, and strength-
 “ ens with his strength.”

This is an event, which no human foresight, no human power, can possibly ward off. It is, indiscriminately, the inevitable lot of “ the good and the evil,
 “ of the just and the unjust.”

But the spiritual death of the sinner, by which he dies to an higher life, and returns to his dust, that is, to the inferior life of his earthly nature, may, and ought to be avoided, inasmuch as he car-

ries in his own breast a capacity of obtaining that higher life, and a power to avail himself of it, whenever he chuses to turn for assistance to its Divine Author. For though God is said to “hide his face, and withdraw his breath,” yet the effect is here put for the cause, a mode of expression frequently used in Scripture, and by the sublimest writers.

Thus the sun may be said to hide his face from the blind-man’s eye; but the true cause of his want of light, is a defect in the organs of vision. Could the blind-man, by any exertions of his own, or co-operation with the assistance of others, by applying to a skilful oculist, and implicitly submitting to his counsel and operations, recover the use of these organs, and yet refuse to avail himself of such means of recovery, the sun would still continue to hide his face from him; but the cause would not be in the
sun,

fun, but in the obstinacy of his own will. In like manner, to a person labouring under a grievous asthma, it seems as if the air had withdrawn its vital influence, and would no more breathe into his panting frame; whereas, in truth, the cause is in his own disordered breast. Has he a remedy in his power, and refuses to make use of it? he must continue under the painful effects of the disease, and be a stranger to the sweetness and cheerfulness of the air, though its influence is all around him, and nothing is wanting but his own will to enjoy it.

Thus it is with the CREATOR, and all his intelligent and free creatures. His Light shines perpetually around them; his spirit, like the air, sheds its salutary influence throughout the universe of being. Every creature that is capable of seeing this Light, and breathing this Air of Heaven, may enjoy them

if he will. Man, by original apostasy, was indeed rendered absolutely incapable of this; but, through the Redemption in CHRIST, the capacity is restored. He who is “the Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” hath freely given to every man a power of seeing and rejoicing in this Light: in consequence of which, there is no sinner, but feels, at times, some reproofs of conscience, or some good and virtuous thoughts and desires rising in his soul. Now what are these reproofs of conscience, but the Light of CHRIST shining into him, and discovering the evil and darkness of his fallen nature? Whence can these good thoughts and desires proceed, but from him, who alone is good, and “from whom alone every good and perfect gift cometh?” So that the “hiding of GOD’s Face,” and “withdrawing his Breath,” is not of GOD, but of the sinner himself, who voluntarily

rily and obstinately turns his eyes and heart from the Source of Life and Love.

Thus, for want of the Light and Air of Heaven, these immortal spirits “die, “ and turn to their dust.” A worldly life, with all its pride, emptiness, folly, and evil, becomes their life, and the sin that destroys their soul, “the wages of “ which is this spiritual death,” is no other than the preferring an animal and diabolical Life, to one that is Angelical and Divine.

Strange! that men, who boast of Reason, as the Godlike Faculty that distinguishes them from the brute creation, should form so false a judgment, and pursue such an erroneous conduct! And yet, who are they that most eagerly go forth in quest of forbidden pleasures? Are they not those, who, with

hearts and bodies devoted to the service of the basest passions that can disgrace human nature, will dare to lecture you upon the excellency of human reason, and extol the faint glimmerings of this feeble taper above the meridian blaze of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS? Is there not a seeming inconsistency in their principles and conduct? No, no—Let us unfold the tale, and our wonder will cease.

These advocates of human reason can take their little taper in their hands, and make it subservient to every base and unworthy purpose. If they are men of pleasure, it will light them to midnight revels, and the darkest scenes of lewdness and debauchery. They can employ it in search of specious arguments on the side of vice, and, with the most daring effrontery, flaunt them in the face of Virtue.

If

If they are men of business, earnestly bent upon the acquisition of worldly wealth, this same taper of reason will stand them in good stead. The Light of Revelation is too strong! “Having food
“ and raiment, to be therewith content,” is a maxim they cannot away with. This taper will light them into a thousand little recesses, which, without its assistance, they could not penetrate. It will enable them to comprehend and practice every low dishonest act, which groveling avarice stoops to make use of in vending its own, or bargaining for the goods of others. It will demonstrate to them, that poverty is the greatest curse, and wealth the very perfection of human happiness; or, at least, it will enlarge upon the expediency of providing for their families, the indispensable duty of leaving an handsome fortune to each of their children, and, under the appearance of perfect disinterestedness
with

with respect to themselves, will make them drudge on in the service of sin, to secure riches and honours to their posterity.

If they are men of ambition, their little taper will light them to every avenue that leads to the temple of false honour. It will demonstrate to them the propriety and necessity of rising as fast as they can to the pinnacle of preferment, on the pretence of being thereby more extensively useful, and by their interest and influence, serving those who may stand in need of their assistance.

Thus, whatever the boasting advocates of unenlightened reason may assert, it is evident from daily experience and observation, that reason unrenewed, is but the slave of the human will; and that whatever schemes the will may propose, reason is ready to enlist in her service,
and

and to investigate the speediest, surest methods of carrying them into execution.

Nay, what is it, that reason, unhal-
lowed by Divine Grace, will not do?
What, indeed, has she not done? Hath
she not, in innumerable instances, plead-
ed the cause of vice, speciously defended
the characters of the voluptuary, the am-
bitious, and the miser, and pointed out
to them the paths that would most surely
lead them to the objects of their unlaw-
ful desires? Hath she not, in innumera-
ble instances, arraigned the Justice and
Goodness of the MOST HIGH? Nay,
hath she not frequently enlisted under the
banners of Atheism, and with false wit
and sophistical argument, called in ques-
tion the very Being of GOD?

And is this the idol, to which our
modern unbelievers bow the knee? Is
this the instructor, which they would
fain

fain substitute in the room of that Divine Light and Holy Inspiration, which the GOD OF TRUTH, by his own SON and BLESSED SPIRIT, hath freely offered for our guide? This is, indeed, to hold a candle to the sun; or rather, to prefer a dungeon, a dark cavern of the earth, with its horrors lighted by a glimmering lamp, to the fair face of nature, displaying all its beauties to the noon-time beam. Reason, indeed, like the other faculties of our nature, when sanctified by Grace, becomes subservient to the noblest purposes, and when illuminated from above, may be profitably exercised upon spiritual objects. It is then in the service of the spiritual man, and like himself it becomes spiritual. Our internal senses must first be opened, to view the objects of another world, before we can employ our reason about them. Till this is done, we are in a state of Spiritual Death,

in

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in bondage to the devil, the world, and our own evil lufts.

Such is that ftate of unregenerate nature, in which we are all born of the firft Adam. “ The Face of GOD is hid-
“ den from us, and we are troubled: his
“ Breath is taken away; we die, and
“ return to our duft.”

DISCOURSE

D I S C O U R S E VIII.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE REGENE-
RATE AND UNREGENERATE STATES.

PSALM civ. VER. 29, 30.

DISCOURSE VIII.

PSALM CIV. VER. 29, 30.

“ THOU HIDEST THY FACE, THEY
“ ARE TROUBLED: THOU TAKEST
“ AWAY THEIR BREATH, THEY
“ DIE, AND RETURN TO THEIR
“ DUST. THOU SENDEST FORTH
“ THY SPIRIT, THEY ARE CRE-
“ ATED; AND THOU RENEWEST
“ THE FACE OF THE EARTH!”

IN the preceding discourse I observed, that though this passage of Scripture might seem to relate solely to the present state of the natural world; yet, in a more enlarged and spiritual sense, and without any improper force put

upon it, it may likewise be understood to have respect to the intellectual system, and in this sense exhibit a lively and expressive representation of the Two States of human nature, viz. its Fall in Adam, and its Redemption in JESUS CHRIST. The first of these states, most plainly delineated in the former part of my text, I have already considered; and endeavoured to shew, by arguments drawn from common observation and daily experience, that, in the state of unregenerate nature, GOD may with truth be said to “hide his face” from us, in consequence of which “we are troubled;” and to “take away his breath,” in consequence of which “we die, and return to the dust” of our earthly nature. I shall now proceed to enumerate the true and real characteristics of the Regenerate Nature, to which the latter verse of my text alludes: “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;”

“ ated ; and thou renewest the face of
“ the earth !”

I have already said, that, by the Regenerate, we are to understand all those of every age and nation, of every religious sect and opinion, who, by Divine Grace, have sought and found an higher and better life than their present earthly and fallen one ; in consequence of which “ they are created anew,” as my text expresses it ; that is to say : by the breathing forth again of that Breath of Life, by which man was originally formed in the Divine Image, this Image is happily restored ; he rises out of the ruins of a fallen, into the Glories of a redeemed, state ; and is thereby enabled to relinquish or subdue all the attractions and temptations, all the powerful influences and suggestions of his earthly and inferior part.

From this short description, it is sufficiently evident, that the Regenerate Nature, in its inward tempers, dispositions, and affections, as well as its outward appearance in the conduct of human life, is directly opposed to that which is unregenerate. One is from beneath, the other from above: one is of the earth, earthly; the other is of Heaven, heavenly: one is born of this world, of the will of the flesh; the other is born of God, of the will of his own Eternal Spirit: one is death, spiritual as well as temporal; the other is Life, heavenly and eternal. The contrast is obvious and strong. And as we have already taken a view of the dark side, and contemplated nature in its fallen and degraded state; let us now change the scene, and behold the luminous and reviving prospect of nature redeemed, spiritualized, and exalted.

Not

Not half so beautiful, sweet, and refreshing, are the beams of opening morn, which dissipate the shades of night; as those rays of Uncreated Light, which dispel all doubts and darkness from the Regenerate Heart. In the picture of unrenewed nature, all was shadowy and deceitful: the Light, if any there was, was a false glare; the objects, either visionary or destructive. In the picture now before us, all is real Light, Life, and Bliss: every object is seen in its true colours and proportions. Unclouded skies, mild and gentle breezes, fair and beauteous landscapes, are without—within, sweet peace of mind, desires calm and unruffled, love, harmony, and Seraphic joy!

Follow the truly Regenerate Christian through all the periods and possible conditions of human life, you will find this representation to be strictly just. As to those storms of temptation, adversity,

and affliction, in which the Prince of Darknefs is fometimes permitted to thunder around him, thefe can only affect that outward nature, by which he ftands connected with this outward world. The Inward Man rifes fuperior to this elemental uproar, lives and breathes in the Light and Air of Heaven, and is perpetually converfant and entertained with heavenly objects and delights.

True, indeed, it is, that this moft defirable ferenity is not to be attained at once. The ftuggle betwixt two oppofite natures muft be long continued, before the victory is complete. “ The “ face of the earth,” after a cold and dreary winter, is not inftantaneoufly “ renewed:” the genial warmth of the fun kindles, by degrees, the vegetative life; and days, and weeks, and months, muft pafs, before the plants, and herbs, and flowers, and fruits, arrive at their maturity, and diffufe their beauties, virtues,
and

and fragrance, for the pleasure or nourishment of man.

Thus it is with respect to the growth of our Regenerate Nature. “The Seed of the Incorruptible Word” lies buried in the earthly heart, till God “sends forth his Spirit,” by which we are “created;” that is, by which this Seed is called forth out of its hidden state, into a birth or manifestation. The fruits of this Regeneration are the only marks by which it can be distinguished from the unregenerate state: where they do not appear, charity itself will permit us to think, that “he who liveth” in such a state, “is dead whilst he liveth.”

As the nature of this New Life, therefore, is best known by its fruits or effects, I will attempt to draw the outlines of the Character of a Christian, acting through life under the immediate Influence

fluence and Inspiration of that Spirit, by the sending forth of which he hath been “ created,” and “ the face of his earthly
“ part renewed.”

One of the first realities which the Light of Heaven discovers to his wondering mind, is this: that true religion is not a name, a form, or an opinion, but a Life actuating its proper spirit, and its proper body; that is, consisting of internal powers and principles, and an external conduct conformable to them: these will generally appear to go hand in hand. But should the outward man, in some instances, when viewed with a worldly eye, seem to act inconsistent with the internal principles of Truth, we must nevertheless be very cautious in forming our judgment in such cases. For the principle within is often good and right, when, from some strange concurrence of outward circumstances, such

as

as education, prejudice, national customs and observances, there seems to be a deviation from that principle. The Regenerate Christian, sensible of this, and living, as he does, in the element of Love, has too liberal and extensive views of the secret and salutary influences of the DIVINE SPIRIT, to think of confining them within the scanty limits of any particular religious sect or sects in the world. He believes, that they may be frequently found as operative and effectual amid the noise and hurry of secular life, as within the narrow precincts of a monastery, or the narrower cell of the solitary anchorite.

Wherever the fruits of “ Love, Joy,
 “ Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness,
 “ Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Tempe-
 “ rance,” are visible, there undoubtedly
 the SPIRIT OF GOD hath been sent,
 the “ face of the earth hath been re-
 “ newed.”

“newed.” The truly Regenerate hath, therefore, a religious contempt for all those littleneſſes, which are ſo often ſeen among nominal profeſſors of the Goſpel. He cannot think, that thoſe perſons have made any great proficiency in Chriſtian Knowledge or Chriſtian Practice, who dare to call their neighbours goodneſs in queſtion, if they ſhould happen to differ in ſome particular notions of Truth from themſelves. Theſe external minutiã may ſerve as fuel to the falſe zeal of phariſaical profeſſors, but are beneath the notice of the Heaven-born Chriſtian. He knows that, “to
 “the Pure, all things are pure:” and as, on the one hand, he is careful to avoid every thing that looks like a licentious abuſe of this maxim; ſo, on the other, he would not abridge his Chriſtian Liberty by any formal and needleſs aſterities. In a word, his grand concern is, to live above the world,
 and

and to regard its praises as little as its censures: he is, therefore, in no wise anxious to be thought a spiritual man, but to be so in reality.

O Sinner! couldst thou have the least idea of those sublime joys, which the Regenerate experience; that delightful Intercourse with Heaven, which is opened to them in prayer; that ineffable Vision of celestial objects, that breaks in upon the contemplative eye of Faith; that Glance from the source of Uncreated Light, that Taste of Angel's Food, that Touch of Love—in a word, that high and refined entertainment of every spiritual sense and faculty, which they enjoy in their retired moments; couldst thou, I say, O sinner! have the least idea of such delights as these, shame and confusion would cover thy face, on a retrospect of those false and unprofitable pleasures, to which thou hast hitherto surrendered thine heart. Thou
wouldst

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wouldst be convinced, that thou hast been “ spending thy money for that
 “ which is not bread, and thy labour
 “ for that which satisfieth not.”

This ineffable sweetness, which the Christian enjoys in the hour of calmness and abstraction, leaves such a tincture upon his soul, - as diffuses itself throughout all his actions. The Image of God renewed in his breast, shines forth in his whole manners and deportment. Meekness, Humility, and Love, the surest characteristics of this Image, breathe, speak, and act, in every thing he says or does; and demonstrate his religion to be, not merely in his head, but in his heart and life. It would be needless to enumerate the several duties, in the practice of which he is faithfully engaged. Besides, outward morality is known to most men, and few are so ignorant as to be unacquainted with the common precepts of religion: but the
 power

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power of observing these precepts is known and felt by him alone, who hath been “ created anew ” by the SPIRIT OF GOD. It is the Regenerate alone, who “ can do all things, through CHRIST “ strengthening him.”

To GOD his heart is perpetually turned in prayer, desiring to know no happiness but in him; and to deem every thing good, that comes from him. In churches, in forms, in ordinances, he regularly and decently offers up the tribute of homage due to his CREATOR, REDEEMER, and SANCTIFIER. Out of churches, out of forms, out of ordinances, he ceaseth not to have the same communion with the Adorable TRINITY. His body is the Living Temple of the HOLY SPIRIT; and his renewed heart the flaming altar, upon which the sacrifice of himself, and all that he hath, is offered up to his Maker.

To

To his neighbours and brethren, the same principle of Divine Light and Life manifests itself in all the amiable graces of Meekness, Condescension, and Charity. Cautious of giving offence himself, and ever ready to forgive others, he becomes a stranger to wrath and resentment: resigned and contented with the condition of life, in which Providence hath placed him, he feels neither jealousy nor envy, neither avarice nor ambition.

With respect to his own person, by temperance and chastity, he is careful to preserve, unspotted by sin, that outward Tabernacle, which is dignified by the Residence of FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. Their communion he is anxious to enjoy; their Inspiration he considers as the only source of his Spiritual Life; and, therefore, endeavours to bring all the powers and faculties

ties of his nature in subjection to their Illuminating Influence.

Even reason, which, in his unregenerate state, was but the blind slave of his earthly will, becomes now the amiable and enlightened hand-maid of the Divine Will. That, which was but a little glimmering taper, perverted to the most odious uses in the hands of the natural man, when touched by a Beam from the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, is kindled into a glorious but subordinate luminary, and in the hands of the spiritual man becomes subservient to the best and noblest purposes.

Nor think, that I have been decrying reason, more than any of the other faculties of fallen nature. For, surely, if we believe that all its faculties are in a fallen state, we cannot exclude reason from the number. Doubtless her
powers,

powers, with respect to outward things, are great: she can readily and aptly contemplate the world of nature around us; and, without much difficulty, comprehend all the wonderful discoveries that have been made in natural philosophy. Hitherto she “can go—but no “further:” the phænomena of the material universe, and the laws by which they are governed, are the only objects within the narrow limits of her unenlightened eye: the Heavenly World, and its objects, require a greater lustre to manifest them, and a keener sight to perceive them. This superior lustre, this sharper vision, the Regenerate alone enjoys: he can, therefore, usefully employ his illuminated reason, which is now a part of his spiritual man, upon spiritual objects; and this reason will then be found happily to coincide with his will and affections.

Hence

Hence it appears, that by “God’s sending forth his Spirit,” every part of the fallen system is repaired, and the Divine Image restored to man. He is again “created,” and “the face of the earth is renewed.”

I conclude with one important observation, which, I should think, must prompt every man to wish, that he may partake of this great and glorious change. The conversion of every individual is an earnest, or first-fruits, of that last and most sublime Renovation, when, if my text may be prophetically taken, “the whole face of the earth shall be renewed” by the same ETERNAL TRINITY that originally created it; when the Paradisiacal State shall become universal; when the whole System of Divided Properties, and Disordered Elements, shall be brought into Perfect Harmony; and when no voice shall be heard, through the boundless realms

of being, but the VOICE OF LOVE—
under whose meek, but powerful in-
fluences, all the kingdoms of the earth
shall become the Kingdoms of the LORD
and of his CHRIST.

May GOD of his Infinite Mercy hasten
this glorious period, and gather us all
into his one only true Catholic Church
of LOVE, for the sake, and through the
Merits of the Son of his LOVE, CHRIST
JESUS our Saviour! Amen.

D I S C O U R S E IX.

HOPE IN GOD, THE ONLY REFUGE IN
DISTRESS.

PSALM xlii. VER. II.

D I S C O U R S E IX.

PSALM xlii. VER. II.

“ WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN, O
“ MY SOUL? AND WHY ART THOU
“ DISQUIETED WITHIN ME? HOPE
“ THOU IN GOD, FOR I SHALL
“ YET PRAISE HIM, WHO IS THE
“ HEALTH OF MY COUNTENANCE
“ AND MY GOD.”

IT is a very mistaken notion, which some persons are fond of entertaining, that the Life of a Christian is one continued scene of tranquillity, cheerfulness, and joy; that the path to Heaven is strewed with roses; that there is no-

thing thorny or uneven to annoy the Pilgrim's feet, no storms or tempests to retard his progress, no difficulties or dangers to encounter on the way. Such sentiments as these, have a very pernicious influence on the practice of mankind. Prone to indolence in spiritual things, and averse to religious exercises of every kind, they are apt to catch at the pleasing delusion, and are willing to think, that the victory is obtained, before they have even armed themselves for the combat.

The truth is this: Ever since the unhappy fall of our first parents, good and evil are so mixed and interwoven in the present chequered and imperfect state of things, that we can neither obtain the former, nor avoid the latter, without inexpressible labour, pain, and anxiety. The disorders introduced by sin into the moral world, have darkened and corrupted the natural; so that, in either system,
it

it requires more than human strength to separate the evil from the good, and thereby to obtain temporal or spiritual felicity.

By the glorious scheme of Redemption, indeed, the good Providence of GOD has over-ruled these disorders and irregularities in such a manner, as to render them beautifully subservient to the supreme happiness of his moral creatures. Storms and tempests, pain and labour, are become necessary for the health and preservation of the natural world: sorrows and anxieties, distresses, and afflictions, inward struggles and pangs, are alike expedient for the purity and perfection of the moral.

GOD, therefore, who, at one intuitive glance, beholds all the relations and connections of things, like a wise and provident Father, affectionately anxious for the welfare of his children,

makes use of all these natural means, in various measures and degrees, according to the particular situation and circumstances of men, to restore to them that primitive felicity which had been lost by sin. Or, to express myself in plain scriptural language—"It is through
 " much tribulation we enter into glory:
 " we must mourn, before we can be
 " comforted:—If we would be CHRIST'S
 " disciples, we must deny ourselves, and
 " take up our cross and follow him:—
 " The world must be crucified unto us,
 " and we unto the world:—If we would
 " receive an eternal weight of glory, we
 " must have our share of those light
 " afflictions, which are but for a mo-
 " ment:—If we would taste the peace-
 " able fruits of righteousness, we must
 " be exercised by those chastenings,
 " which for the present are not joyous,
 " but grievous."

But

But if such be the Christian's State, such the difficulties, dangers, and distresses that attend it, surely, he can have little joy or comfort in his progress.— There is something gloomy, melancholy, and forbidding in the prospect.— So speaks the natural man, who is void of all spiritual discernment.— Would such an one, however, deem any toil or danger too great to encounter, for the acquisition of some earthly object? Would he not compass sea and land, and risk his health, yea, his life, to obtain the fleeting enjoyment of honour, riches, or pleasure? And will he wonder, then, that a Christian should be willing to face the darkest scenes, when he knows that through these he shall pass to the enjoyment of everlasting honours; of riches, which will not make themselves wings, and flee away; and of pleasures, inconceivably exalted, unfading, and immortal?

When

When the heavens gather blackness, when thunders roll over his head, and lightnings flash around his frame, the natural man, at the very time that his heart shudders at the awful scene, will tell you, that these convulsions of nature are absolutely necessary for the good of the creation; that the sun is still shining above the tempestuous atmosphere, and that ere long, its rays will dissipate the clouds, and exhibit to your view the happy effects of all this uproar and confusion. With this pleasing hope, he speaks peace to his intruding fears; and, though he trembles, yet he enjoys the storm.

Thus it is with the Faithful Christian. When overtaken in his spiritual progress, by the blackest tempests that the devil, the world, and the flesh, his most formidable adversaries, can raise, he will nevertheless press forward with unremitting eagerness and ardour; and though
 “ his

“ his soul may be cast down, and dis-
“ quieted within him,” though his whole nature may be shocked by the violence of the blast, yet will he still “ hope in “ GOD,” yet will he still speak comfort to his dejected spirit; as he is well assured, that all this could not happen without the Divine Permission; that the Sun of Righteousness still shines in the firmament of his glory; and that the Prince of the Power of the Air, with all the horrors that surround him, must soon vanish before his all-piercing beams, and sink confounded to his infernal abode.

The Psalm from whence my text is taken, presents us with a lively picture of a True Believer struggling under some violent assaults from the enemies of his peace. Whether the distress of David was occasioned by the persecution of Saul, or the straits to which he was reduced by the unnatural rebellion of
his

his son Abfalom; whether it proceeded from a deep fenfibility of thofe remains of corruption, which lurk in the moft regenerate breafts; or from an apprehenfion, that GOD had withdrawn “the Light of his countenance” from his foul; in either of thefe cafes, his affliction muft have been acute indeed, and he might well break forth into this affecting ftrain of religious melancholy: “Why art thou caft down, O my foul? “And why art thou difquieted within “me?” Why doft thou fuffer thefe outward afflictions to bear down thy confancy, or thefe inward ftruggles to weaken thy faith?—“Hope thou in “GOD!”—Hafth thou not heretofore experienced, in innumerable inftances, the Wonders of his Love?—Hath not his Arm fupported thee in the greateft extremities? Hath not his countenance cheered thee in thy darkeft moments?—Why, then, this ftrange dejection now? O where is all thy wonted heroifm fled?—
where

where that lively trust and confidence in thy GOD, that has heretofore steeled thy breast against the arrows of adversity? “Is his arm shortened that it cannot save? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And hath GOD forgotten to be gracious?”—No, my soul!—already do I feel his Animating Presence—Sure I am, that “I shall yet praise him,” for delivering me out of my present distresses—Sure I am, that the sweet Influences of his BLESSED SPIRIT, will yet sooth my deep disquietude, and give health and cheerfulness to my dejected countenance—Yea, sure I am, that he is still “my GOD,” my GOD by Covenant, my Guardian GOD, the GOD of my Life, the GOD of my Love.

Thus spake, thus triumphed, “the man after GOD’s own heart!” Doubtless the conflict was severe and tedious; but Faith was at length victorious. Noble encouragement this to every one,
that

that hath enlisted under the banners of JESUS CHRIST, and commenced his Christian Warfare!—Come then, ye Candidates for Heaven! ye Followers of the LAMB! ye Strangers and Pilgrims upon earth! that have already entered upon your journey, through this valley of tears, to the Heavenly Canaan! Come, let us take a view together of the difficulties and dangers which we are taught to expect upon the road! let us trace the sources of that uneasiness and disquietude, to which the best of Christians are frequently exposed, and as we proceed, apply to them the noble prescription pointed out by the text: “Hope
 “ thou in GOD, for I shall yet praise
 “ him, who is the health of my Coun-
 “ tenance and my GOD.”

The first, and, I believe, the principal sources of the sincere Christian’s heaviness and disquietude, are those remains of sin and corruption, which stain the
 purest

purest and most regenerate breasts. Under the first openings of Grace, the first dawnings of Divine Light and Love upon the soul, the change from death to life is frequently so great and transporting, that the young unpractised convert is lost in admiration.—From the depths of his own misery and corruption, he is raised to such stupendous prospects of Redeeming Love, that, like the disciples on Mount Tabor, he is unwilling to leave the Divine Effulgence that surrounds him, to descend from the height of Gospel Comfort, and to encounter the innumerable obstacles that await his progress in the world below.—But when once the fervours of this first love are abated; when once the young candidate is called forth to testify his affection for his SAVIOUR, by acts of obedience, patience, resignation, fortitude, under temporal as well as spiritual trials and calamities—then it is, that the clouds begin to gather—the day of distress approaches—

proaches—"his sins take such fast hold
 "of him, that he is not able to look
 "up,"—his secret corruptions start forth
 unexpectedly from every corner of his
 heart, and throw his whole soul into
 confusion.—It is an attack for which he
 is unprepared; from a quarter which he
 little expected.—Scarce is he able to re-
 collect his past experience; or, if he
 does, it is not with a view to strengthen
 his faith, but to increase his melan-
 choly. In the full bitterness of his soul
 he is ready to exclaim :

“O that I were as in months past, as
 “in the days when God preserved me!
 “when his candle shined upon my head,
 “and when by his light I walked
 “through darkness.”—Once I thought
 that I had gained a sure refuge in my RE-
 DEEMER’S Arms; I hoped that my peace
 was made, that I was a Child of God,
 and had received the earnest of the
 SPIRIT in my Heart. But alas! I now
 fear,

fear, that this was but a pleasing dream; that Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, to deceive my soul; that my conversion was a visionary thing, not a real change of my corrupted nature.—If this be not the case, whence is it, that the sorrows of my heart are thus enlarged?—If I am indeed a child of GOD, “Why go I thus heavily, “while the enemy oppresses me?”—And yet I hate these corruptions, which I feel so sensibly; and my greatest distress and uneasiness is, that I do feel them. The desire of my soul is towards GOD; and there is nothing in the whole world but what I would cheerfully resign, to be at peace with him.—Yea, I can lay my hand upon my heart, and safely declare, that grievous as the transgressions are, into which my corruptions have hurried me, yet I feel something within me, that bids me hope, that the GOD whom I have offended, is the GOD whom I love.

Such are the sad disquietudes, which the latent remains of sin frequently awaken in the Believer's breast! Many excellent Christians there are, who go thus mourning and disconsolate to their graves; whilst a few, perhaps, after repeated conflicts, and repeated victories, obtain at length that sweet assurance, which enabled the Apostle to declare, that
 “neither death, nor life, nor angels,
 “nor principalities, nor powers, nor
 “things present, nor things to come,
 “nor height, nor depth, nor any other
 “creature, should separate him from
 “the LOVE OF GOD, which is in
 “CHRIST JESUS.”

As for those, who are still mourning, and refuse to be comforted, who are continually expostulating with themselves in the plaintive language of my text—“Why
 “art thou cast down, O my soul! and
 “why art thou disquieted within me;”
 let us only ask them, whether the frame of
 their

their minds is in any respect similar to that of holy David's?—Doth thy soul, poor trembling Christian! “pant after thy GOD, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks? Art thou athirst for GOD, even the living GOD?” Are the desires of thine heart all centered in CHRIST JESUS? Dost thou wish to know him more fully, to serve him more faithfully, to love him more ardently, to receive the sanctifying influences of his Spirit here, in order to be qualified to dwell in everlasting Communion with him hereafter? Is this the real state of thy mind? Take comfort then! “Hope thou in GOD; for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy GOD.”

But are there no other sources of distress and disquietude to the sincere Christian, than the latent corruptions of his own heart? Are not some of his severest trials occasioned by the afflic-

tive dispensations of Divine Providence? Doubtless they are. For good and virtuous men are so far from being exempted from misfortunes and afflictions, that they are taught to expect a double portion—"for whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth; and chasteneth every son that he receiveth."—Under the immediate influence of these severe visitations, the "soul is indeed cast down and disquieted:" it can scarcely penetrate the gloom, with which its sorrows encompass it, or discover the Potent Arm that struck the blow, and robbed it of its peace. Or if it should see the Will of God in the infliction—how hard to resign!—to kiss the rod, and bless the correcting hand!

When dire disease spreads its fatal venom through the human frame, and robs us of the bloom of youth, and the joys of health—when prosperity withdraws her smile, and poverty, with
her

her attendant woes, succeeds — when death snatches a bosom friend or dear relative from our embraces—how difficult to adopt the language of the good old Priest? “It is the Lord’s will—let him do what seemeth him good.”

The recollection of former prosperity, and of all the spiritual and temporal blessings which an Indulgent Heaven had with profusion showered on our heads, serves only to give additional weight to the present load of grief, and deepen the melancholy that clouds and oppresses the soul. The eye of Sorrow is perpetually looking back, and lamenting the loss of objects, in which the mistaken mind had fondly centered all its felicity. It rarely ventures to send forth one eager look into the region of Hope. It deems it impossible to turn a present distress into a present blessing: and can never conceive, that darkness itself should be the very substance through which the

Light of Heaven must again be rendered visible to the benighted heart.

In the moment of Job's despondency, under the severe trials with which he was visited, he would have reasoned and spoke far otherwise than he did, had it suited the purposes of Heaven to unveil at that moment the secret design of his present affliction. Had he discerned the Angel that was "riding in the whirlwind,"—had he beheld "the hand that directed the storm," he would doubtless have changed the language of his exclamation:—O my soul, he would then have said, though thou art not "as in months past, as in the days when God preserved thee;" yet have I a secret hope, that thou wilt soon feel again his Reviving Presence, and praise him for greater blessings than thou hast heretofore received.

Indeed,

Indeed, my brethren, the most seemingly severe dispensations, if we could raise our thoughts, for a few moments, above the considerations of flesh and blood, would appear to be dispensations of mercy. Medicines, you know, are seldom sweet or palatable :—and yet, would you not thank your physician for administering them, when he knows they are necessary for the recovery of your health ?—And canst thou then, O Christian, repine, or be dissatisfied with thy SAVIOUR, for mingling the bitter draught of affliction, when he foresees, that thine everlasting salvation, perhaps, depends upon the remedy ? Every thing that ties thee to the world, keeps thee at a distance from CHRIST. Can thy SAVIOUR more effectually testify his affection for thee, than by breaking these cords, and thus lessening thine attachment to the world ?—Cease, therefore, to repine at thy loss !—Be not cast down or disquiet-

ted!—Thy GOD hath not forsaken thee—he is only preparing thee for better times—“ Hope thou therefore in him,
 “ for thou shalt yet praise him, who is
 “ the health of thy countenance and
 “ thy GOD.”

Lastly, The world in which he lives, and the men with whom he is obliged to converse, administer new causes of sorrow and disquietude to the sincere Christian. The secret treachery of pretended friends, or the open malice of avowed enemies, the general disrespect and contempt with which virtue is treated, and the honours and encouragement which are given to vice, all conspire to wound his breast, and even to render him less pleased than he wishes to be, with the society of his fellow-creatures. For who that has the least spark of zeal for the honour of his GOD, can bear to hear his Name blasphemed,

phemed, and his religion ridiculed; to see his precepts violated with impunity, and his ordinances neglected and despised?—And yet to oppose these prevailing enormities, to testify an abhorrence of them by private reproofs, or public censures, is sometimes deemed rudeness and impertinence. Yea, such is the sad degeneracy of mankind, that if we would be truly religious, now-a-days, we must dare to be singular.

But be not thou discouraged, thou Child of God! Though thou art placed in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and hast reason to say, with David, “Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!—O that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest!”—though integrity, uprightness, and the fear of God should
be

be even banished from the abodes of men—though the Church of GOD should be laid level with the dust, and the disciples of a CRUCIFIED JESUS be ridiculed and reviled—yet fear thou not, neither be dismayed!—GOD sits at the helm of the universe—CHRIST JESUS will take care of “his own:”—and as for thyself, if, with Job, thou art determined “to hold fast thy righte-
 “ousness, and not to let it go, nor suf-
 “fer thine heart to reproach thee, so
 “long as thou livest”—if thou hopest in GOD, and trustest in the LORD thy SAVIOUR—if the Righteousness of CHRIST is thy cloathing, and Faith in him thine impenetrable shield—be thine outward circumstances in life what they will, believe me, thou art still
 “under the defence of the Most High,
 “and safe under the Shadow of his
 “Wings.” The stormy wind may blow, the billows of adversity may rise and
 rage—

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rage—but whilst thou hast fast hold of the ROCK OF AGES, thou canst no more be moved by their blackest, rudest efforts, than are the strong foundations of some stately edifice, by the light breezes of a summer sky!

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE X.

A NOMINAL OR PARTIAL BELIEF IN
THE GOSPEL, UNPROFITABLE.

St. JOHN, CHAP. ii. VER. 23, 24, 25.

DISCOURSE X.

St. JOHN, CHAP. ii. VER. 23, 24, 25.

“ NOW WHEN HE WAS AT JERUSA-
“ LEM AT THE PASSOVER, IN THE
“ FEAST-DAY, MANY BELIEVED
“ IN HIS NAME, WHEN THEY SAW
“ THE MIRACLES WHICH HE DID.
“ BUT JESUS DID NOT COMMIT
“ HIMSELF UNTO THEM, BECAUSE
“ HE KNEW ALL MEN : AND NEED-
“ ED NOT THAT ANY SHOULD
“ TESTIFY OF MAN ; FOR HE
“ KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN.”

NO sooner had the SON OF GOD,
with infinite condescension, sub-
mitted to the baptism of his illustrious
Fore-runner, and had thereby been in-
augurated,

augurated, as it were, into his prophetic office; no sooner had he received the Testimony of his Father, by a Voice from Heaven, declaring, that “this
 “ was his BELOVED SON, in whom he
 “ was well pleased;” than he entered upon his Public Ministry, and, by an unexampled series of signs and wonders, made it abundantly manifest, that the Arm of Omnipotence was engaged in the support of those awful interesting truths, which he delivered.

The Evangelist tells us, in the 11th verse of this chapter, that this “beginning of miracles JESUS did in
 “ Cana of Galilee, and manifested
 “ forth his Glory, and his disciples believed on him.” From whence we may conclude, that the first public miracle which he wrought, was at the marriage in Cana; that the design of his miracles was to manifest his Glory, to declare and prove the truth of his
 Messiahship;

Messiahship, the glorious errand on which he came into this world; and that the accomplishment of this began to appear in the conviction of his disciples who believed on him.

In order, therefore, to accomplish “the work which his Heavenly Father had given him to do,” he soon afterwards hastened up to Jerusalem, to attend the first passover that was celebrated after he had made his public appearance. His design herein, was doubtless to testify his veneration for his Father’s ordinances; and as at this great solemnity, the whole nation of the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem, it afforded him a glorious opportunity of opening his Heavenly Commission, by some display of the powers with which he was invested.

Accordingly, we read, that he no sooner entered into the Temple, and be-

held one of its sacred courts prostituted to base and mercenary purposes, than, by an act of zeal, which alarmed and confounded the surrounding multitude, he authoritatively chastised and turned out the impious wretches, who were guilty of the prophanation. And when the Jews asked him for some sign, whereby they might be convinced of his authority to act as he had done, he gave them no other than a parabolical prediction of his future and glorious resurrection from the dead; for he knew they asked from no other motive, than to satisfy an idle curiosity, and without any design to accept of his doctrine, even though they might be convinced of the Divinity of his Mission. That this was really the case, we may conclude from the conduct of our BLESSED LORD, mentioned in my text: “ Now when
 “ he was at Jerufalem at the passover,
 “ in the feast-day, many believed in his
 “ name, when they saw the miracles
 “ which

“ which he did. But JESUS did not
 “ commit himself unto them, because
 “ he knew all men; and needed not that
 “ any should testify of man, for he
 “ knew what was in man.

In speaking from which words, I shall, in the first place, point out the reasons of our SAVIOUR'S conduct towards those persons, of whom it is said here, that they “ believed on his name:” and secondly, I shall shew in what sense they may be applicable to many of those who now live under the Light of the Gospel.

And First, It is said, that “ JESUS
 “ did not commit himself unto them;” that is to say, he did not chuse to trust himself to them, to put himself in their power. He did not chuse to associate with them, to enroll them in the number of his disciples, to make them his bosom companions; and for this reason,

says the Evangelist, because “ he knew
 “ all men; and needed not that any
 “ should testify of man, for he knew
 “ what was in man.”

Here we have an ample proof of the DIVINITY of CHRIST; for, surely, the Evangelist would not have dared to have ascribed the attribute of Omniscience to any created being. We may cease to wonder, then, that our LORD did not unbofom himself to these believers: for as he knew the hearts of all men, he must have discovered some latent corruptions, unfavourable to himself and his doctrine, which disqualified them from receiving any further notices of the nature and design of his Mission. What these corruptions were, may be gathered from Scripture without much difficulty.

The long cessation of miracles, doubtless, contributed to engage the attention
 of

of the Jews to those which were wrought by JESUS CHRIST; especially, as they excelled the miracles of the Prophets, which they read of in their sacred books, in many distinguishing particulars; for our LORD wrought them in his own name: they were more in number than the prophetic, and altogether of the benevolent kind, adapted to the want and exigences of human nature; whereas those of the prophets were generally alarming, and frequently distressing. All these circumstances conspired to convince them, that JESUS CHRIST must be, indeed, the promised MESSIAH. On the other hand, their false, but high raised expectations of a temporal kingdom, of worldly power, affluence, and grandeur, rendered their present belief vain and unprofitable. They fondly imagined, perhaps, that poor and humble as the BLESSED JESUS now appeared, he would ere long, by signs and wonders, make his way to the throne of David. Every

aspiring politician among them began to flatter himself, that he should soon behold Cæsar suppliant at his feet. The Pharisees and doctors of the law hoped to see the time, when the wisest and proudest of the Pagan priests and philosophers should deem it their highest honour to receive instructions from Moses's chair, and become the pupils of some learned Gamaliel.

Possessed with such notions, filled with such carnal expectations as these, they were altogether unqualified to become Disciples of JESUS. His omniscient eye penetrated the inmost recesses of their hearts, and discovered those secret springs of corruption, which would ere long be set at work to oppose the spirituality of his kingdom.

Had he given out, indeed, that he came to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and make all the nations of the
world

world their tributaries, the air would have resounded with “Hofannas to the “Son of David;” his steps, wherever he came, would have been strewed with palms, and triumphal arches erected in honour of his appearance. But let him once declare, that he comes to rescue them from the grievous yoke of sin, to fight against and overcome all their spiritual enemies, and to establish his kingdom in their hearts; you will soon find their Hofannas changed into dire imprecations, and “Away with him, away “with him—crucify him!” the best wishes that their hearts can frame, the most respectful language that their tongues can utter.

Had he been a blind zealot for the law; had he yielded an implicit obedience to the traditions of the elders; had he encouraged the populace to pay a greater regard to the decisions of the Rabbies, than to the writings of Moses

and the prophets; had he propagated that popular doctrine of the Jews, that their Descent from Abraham, according to the flesh, was sufficient for their justification before GOD, and that not one of that holy nation should finally perish; had he refused to give a single crumb of the children's bread to dogs, to extend the blessings of Israel to the poor benighted Gentiles; then, indeed, every tongue, every pen, every arm, would have been employed in his defence, and nothing but dire anathemas would have been thundered forth against his adversaries. But let him once bear his testimony against the unlawful impositions of the pharisees and scribes; let him call them the commandments of men, and encourage his hearers to throw off the cumbrous load of human traditions; let him declare, that he himself came to write the law in their hearts, and by his own redeeming power, to enable them to fulfil it, according to its true
and

and spiritual meaning; let him open his hand and his heart to publicans and sinners, and tell the Gentile world, that they have an equal share in the Covenant of Grace with the seed of Abraham, provided they do but comply with the condition of that covenant; let him tell them, that “mercy is better than sacrifice,” and that “love is the fulfilling of the law;” that “except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God;” that though all Israel should refuse the offers of the Gospel, yet “God is able to raise up children to Abraham,” even a spiritual seed, “out of the stones,” the hardened and idolatrous Gentiles—“that the hour was coming, when men should neither in mount Gerizim, nor yet at Jerufalem, worship the Father—but when every true worshipper should worship God in Spirit and in truth;”
let

let the BLESSED JESUS thus speak, and preach, and act, and he will soon find, that men cannot easily away with doctrines so unpopular, so contradictory to favourite prejudices, temporal interests, and carnal inclinations. He will soon find the malice of men leagued in dreadful confederacy with the powers of darkness, to insult his person, vilify his actions, and frustrate his benevolent intentions.

Such was, in all probability, the conduct and character of those partial believers on his name, mentioned in my text, unto whom our BLESSED LORD “ did not commit himself, because he “ knew what was in them.” Yea, it is no unreasonable thing to suppose, that these very persons, when they found how egregiously they were disappointed in their expectations, joined themselves at last with that abandoned multitude,
 who

who were clamorous for his condemnation, and assisting at his crucifixion.

II. I now proceed to shew, that such a conduct or character may be found, even among those, who now live under the Light of the Gospel.

How can this be? perhaps some are ready to say—Surely, there are none among us, that have any such carnal views or expectations as those Jews manifested, whose characters you have been describing. Why should you want to trace a likeness, where there is not one single feature that agrees? It is true, the features may be different, the complexion different, but the Nature is the same: they are men, and human nature, in its unregenerate state, is the same in every age. Time, circumstances, customs, prejudices, education, may change;
but

but the spirit and temper of the natural man will discover itself in Jews and Gentiles, Pagans, Mahometans, and those that call themselves Christians.

Wherever the Gospel, indeed, hath shed its enlightening beams, idolatry, ignorance, superstition, and cruelty, have, more or less, been dissipated by its Lustre. The outward man has been polished and civilized; the absurdities in the Pagan theology exposed and exploded; and the errors or deficiencies of their morality, have either been corrected or supplied. Such has been the astonishing influence of CHRIST'S Religion, wherever it hath been promulgated. But alas! little does it avail to cleanse the stream, while the fountain remains impure: little does it avail to reform the outward man, whilst deep corruption, and unconquered enmity against GOD, rankles at the heart. Let the first blow then be struck at the
 root

root of the tree; let the first arrow be aimed at the human heart.

And here it is, that the nominal or partial believer in the name of JESUS, trembles. Ask him, whether he is really convinced of the Truth of the Gospel—he will wonder at the question—it is as clear as the sun at noon-day—the evidence flashes irresistible conviction upon the understanding—So doubtless said the Jews, who saw the miracles which JESUS wrought. But proceed further—ask him whether this belief has had any influence on his heart; whether it has destroyed the enmity that subsisted there betwixt him and his GOD; whether it has led him to detest himself, and his sinful state, and to hunger and thirst after CHRIST and his Righteousness; whether his heart is changed; whether his will is turned from seeking happiness in himself, and the world, to seek it in CHRIST alone: ask him
this,

this, and he will be at a loss for an answer—He knows of no other faith, than such an assent of the mind to the truth of the Gospel, as those persons in my text gave to CHRIST, upon seeing his miracles.

Alas! how many Christians are there, that are starving upon this barren and unprofitable faith? how many, who live in open violation of the plainest precepts of the Gospel? who cry, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” with their lips, but crucify him in their conduct; who would fain be enrolled in the number of his disciples, but are loth to part with their favourite lusts to obtain this honour: who would have their ministers preach soft things, and prophesy deceit, rather than break in upon their sinful repose, by any salutary alarms and reproofs? How many are there too, who content themselves with a cold formal round of outward observances;

servances; who, instead of worshipping GOD, make a god of their worship; who are so careful to preserve every punctilio of outward devotion in their behaviour and deportment, that they never once think of any reigning depravity of heart; who are so well satisfied with the praises of men, that they forget to seek for the applause of GOD? How many are there, that do indeed believe in the Name of CHRIST, but at the same time avail themselves of their profession, as a cloak for the basest and most horrid designs; who under the solemn guise of extraordinary sanctity, conceal the most selfish, proud, and malicious hearts?

These are some of the characters among professing Christians, that bear a strong resemblance to those mentioned in my text. If any of you, my brethren, should think, that you discover some of your own features in the picture, I pray

GOD

GOD that you may be enabled to correct them. Strike not the hand that probes your wound;—blame not your ministers for speaking the truth! Better is it for them to expose themselves to your censures by their boldness, than by their silence to win your praises, at the expence of your eternal salvation, and their own. We know not your hearts; we can only judge by appearances—and wherever these are favourable, Christian candour and charity will give them chearful credit. You may, indeed, deceive us; and I believe religious deceits are as frequent, if not more so, than any other—but remember, you cannot deceive or elude our Master's all-seeing eye. Naked and stript of every artful guise, your thoughts, your secret principles and motives of action, lay open to his view. He “knows what “is in man:” he knows the deep deceit and desperate wickedness of the human heart.

heart. He knows by what amazing ways the hypocrite is led to deceive others, and in the end himself. His intimate knowledge of your hearts should make you tremble then, lest he should refuse to commit himself to you, as he did to the Jews in my text. And are you aware of the dreadful consequences of such a refusal? Do you know, that you are lost and undone, if JESUS does not commit himself to your souls? If JESUS is not your friend, who is to be your advocate at the bar of GOD? If JESUS does not interpose, what arm can shield you from the Vengeance of Heaven?

But are there any among you, who have not only their understandings convinced of the "Truth as it is in JESUS," but their hearts engaged in the practice of his religion; who not only "believe in his name, because of the miracles which he did," but live

and delight in the doctrines which he preached, and the life which he led; who not only assent to Christianity as true, but embrace it as good; who not only desire CHRIST for their SAVIOUR, but own him for their Sovereign? To such persons, I may venture to declare, he will commit himself, with all the Riches of his Grace, with all the Wonders of his Love: to such souls, he is united by the tenderest ties: they are “sheltered under his wings, they
 “are safe beneath his feathers, his faith-
 “fulness and truth is their shield and
 “buckler;” they repose all their confidence in him; to him they unbosom all their cares; from him they look for all their comforts—And this is the language of their love—“The Lord is my
 “Strength and my Salvation—whom
 “then shall I fear? The Lord is the
 “Strength of my Life, of whom then
 “shall I be afraid? The LORD is my
 “Shepherd, therefore shall I lack no-
 “thing:

“ thing: he maketh me to lie down in
“ green pastures, he leadeth me beside
“ the still waters—My beloved is mine,
“ and I am his—He is fairest among ten
“ thousand—This is my beloved, and
“ this is my friend, O daughter of
“ Jerufalem!”

D I S C O U R S E XI.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE
RIGHTEOUS.

PSALM xxxvii. VER. 37.

DISCOURSE XI.

PSALM xxxvii. VER. 37.

“ MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND
“ BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT; FOR
“ THE END OF THAT MAN IS
“ PEACE.”

“ **D**UST thou art, and unto dust
“ thou shalt return,” was the
awful sentence denounced against rebel-
lious man by his infinitely just Cre-
ator. No sooner had Adam fallen from
that state of innocence, perfection, and
intimate communion with God, in
which his light, and life, and happi-
ness supreme consisted, than he became
O 4 subject

subject to the power and dominion of Sin and Satan. By this first man's transgression sin entered into the world, and became the prolific parent of an innumerable offspring, that set themselves continually in array against the peace and happiness of our whole species. The last, the most hideous and implacable of these adversaries, is Death, the king of terrors, to whose iron sway we must all inevitably submit. Neither age, nor sex, nor rank, nor fortune, nor merit, can exempt us. Thick, fast, and fatal, his arrows fly abroad. Every one of us, within his own little sphere, is almost daily presented with instances of his unlimited power. Could we be placed in a situation, that would enable us to take in the whole race of mankind at one view, the world would appear to us like a vast theatre, overspread with scenes of blood, where this grim ghastly tyrant, and his infernal messengers and attendants, were continually

continually stalking from place to place, increasing and exulting in the carnage.

On one part, we should behold fields covered with the carcases of thousands slain in battle; on another, whole cities unpeopled by a destroying pestilence: here, we should see a monarch laid in the dust, who was the comfort and darling of his subjects; there an infamous oppressor tumbled from his throne, and constrained himself to submit to a fate, which he had frequently and unjustly hastened upon others. On this side, a disconsolate widow bewailing the loss of an affectionate husband; on the other, a “ Rachel weeping for her children, “ and will not be comforted, because “ they are not.” Here the long-loved partner of his heart is torn from the embraces of an afflicted spouse; there, a pious, tender and indulgent father resigns, without reluctance, to the
stroke,

stroke, and leaves to his lamenting children the rich legacy of an exemplary life and death.

Amid this general devastation, whilst “thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand,” one would think, we should stand in need of no other motive to awaken us to a sense of our danger, and excite us to make use of such methods, as will most effectually support us under it. One would think, that so melancholy a prospect would naturally lead us to some such reflections as these :

Every day almost informs me of the death of one or other of my friends or acquaintance. Many younger, and seemingly more healthy than myself, have I followed to the grave. Surely I am mortal, as well as they. Surely I am not exempt from the common lot of human nature, but sooner or

or later must obey the summons of death. To-day he knocks at the door of my neighbour; to-morrow, perhaps, he may knock at mine—and should this be the case, am I prepared for such a visit?

The misfortune is, my brethren, that men choose to keep this prospect at a distance; and whenever these reflections come across their minds, as frequently, and in spite of all their endeavours to resist them, they will obtrude, they immediately seek to banish them, by engaging in a round of worldly cares and pleasures.

But why, vain man! why dost thou so industriously seek to drive from thy heart the thought of death?—Is it that it embitters thy cup of delights, and casts a deadly damp upon thy sprightliest enjoyments? Does his grim visage, and envenomed shaft, affright thee? Does horror freeze thy blood, when
thy

thy imagination presents to thee the shroud, the coffin, the cold dark grave, and all the dismal scenery of death? Doubtless these objects cannot but alarm thee greatly. But if thou art ingenuous and sincere, thou canst not but acknowledge, that thy terror and uneasiness proceed not so much from the apprehensions of death itself, as of the subsequent state, into which it instantaneously hurries thee.

Fear is one of the most disagreeable sensations that human nature is subject to; and the fear of death is the greatest of all fears. To overcome it, or even to allay it, requires more than human fortitude. Our natural strength will stand us in poor stead in this dire encounter. There is, however, a remedy, and a never-failing one too, which the God of Infinite Love hath provided for us. The fear of death is a spiritual malady: the great physician of
souls

souls hath, therefore, furnished us with a noble prescription. It is at hand. You have it in my text: and, if you are humble and patient of instruction, you cannot but derive considerable advantages from it. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the End of that man is Peace.”

The words are elegantly expressive of the way and means, by which alone we can obtain an undisturbed peace and serenity of mind through life, and an unshaken firmness and consolation in death. This being the great and important lesson which they inculcate, I shall naturally be led from them to set before you the LIFE and DEATH of the RIGHTEOUS MAN; only making this previous observation, that by the words “perfect” and “upright” here made use of, we are to understand, that degree of holiness and perfection, which
it

it is poffible for every one of us to attain on this fide the grave.

I am fpeaking to a Christian audience; and, as a Christian minifter, I am bound to give you the Life and Character of the Righteous Man, agreeable to that glorious fyftem of Divine Truth, which GOD hath been graciously pleafed to reveal to mankind, by his own Well-beloved SON.

According to this Word of Truth, the Righteous Man is he, whofe actions are conformable to the WILL OF GOD, have an immediate tendency to promote the GLORY OF GOD, and flow from no other motive than the LOVE OF GOD. But, if thefe things are fo, if it requires all this to be righteous, who is he that fhall be faved? Does not this far furpafs the natural ftrength of man? Ask the experienced
Christian,

Christian, and you will find him at no loss for an answer.

Born in sin, and laden with actual transgression, poor guilty man cannot advance one single step in the paths of righteousness, till he lays hold by Faith on the hand of a Redeemer. Secure of this, with humble confidence he approaches the Throne of Grace, and asks of his Heavenly Father, that sanctifying SPIRIT, which he hath promised to bestow liberally upon all those, that believe on his SON. Here then is a rich fountain opened to the house of David: here is the pure and inexhaustible Source, from whence alone true Holiness can flow. “ He that is
 “ born of GOD overcometh the world.”
 “ The love of GOD is shed abroad in
 “ our hearts, by the SPIRIT which he
 “ hath given us.” Till we are born of this Spirit, all our righteousness is but unrighteousness: till we have this
 principle

principle of Love in our souls, all our doings are nothing worth. That Image of GOD, which man lost by his first disobedience, can only be renewed by the same creating energy, that “breathed
 “into his nostrils the breath of life.”
 “It is the SPIRIT alone, who beareth
 “witness to our spirit, that we are the
 “children of GOD.”

Actuated by this Divine Principle,
 “the good man, out of the good treasure
 “of his heart, bringeth forth good
 “things.” His actions must be conformable to the Will of GOD, they must have a tendency to promote the Glory of GOD, they must flow from a Love and Veneration for GOD, because they are immediately inspired by the Spirit of GOD, even by that Spirit which “work-
 “eth in us to will and to do, according
 “to his good pleasure.”

“Except

“ Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,” says our BLESSED LORD, “ ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” These Scribes and Pharisees were extremely rigid and exact in their observance of the ceremonial law, and so very minute as to “ pay tithes of mint, and annise, and cummin.” Whence is it, then, that our SAVIOUR so repeatedly condemns them? Why, because their sole motive to this practice was sinful and worldly: they “ did it, that they might be seen of men;” that they might be distinguished by greetings in all public places, and honoured with the venerable appellation of “ Rabbi, Rabbi!”

I would fain hope, that, among Christian societies, there are few, who are actuated by this Pharisaical principle. But I fear, that there are too many,

who build their hopes of Salvation upon fundry external performances, which are indeed right, and their bounden duty, but which are of no avail in the fight of GOD, unless they flow from that Spirit of Love, which I have just mentioned. All the outward ordinances of religion are to be considered as channels of Divine Grace, by which it is conveyed to those who have it not, and strengthened and increased in those who have already received it. The Children of GOD alone, even such as have received this Spirit of Adoption and Love, are they that profit by these outward ordinances. It is to them alone, that they are “the favour of
“ life unto life.”

Having thus seen the grand principle and source, from whence alone all Righteousness can flow; let us now attend to the influence, which it hath upon the life and conversation of him,
to

to whom GOD hath vouchsafed to communicate it. “ Mark the perfect man,
 “ and behold the upright ; for the End
 “ of that man is Peace.”

Observe him, first, in the devout exercises of religion : his very countenance glows with the flame that is kindled in his heart. By the Spirit of Prayer, he is raised far above this scene of vanity : the world, with all its empires, and kingdoms, and riches, and pomps, and pleasures, sinks beneath his feet. He is borne upon the wings of Love to the Heaven of Heavens : he mixes with that immortal Choir of Angels and Seraphs, that surround the Throne of God : nay, he enjoys, in some degree, the Beatific Presence of GOD himself. His soul is possessed of that “ Peace of GOD, which passeth all
 “ understanding ;” of that transcendently great and glorious joy, which is beyond the power of words to express.

In the course of his meditations, the wonders of REDEEMING LOVE pass in order before his view, and make deeper and deeper impressions upon his yielding heart. His eyes are fixed to the top of trembling Calvary—to a CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR--groaning--bleeding—dying for his sins! At this instance of unexampled tenderness and affection, his love blazes afresh; his heart is melted beneath the flame; and his whole soul rushes forth, as it were, to embrace so Compassionate a REDEEMER. He has no rest, till he finds himself in the Arms of his BELOVED, where, shielded from the temptations of the world, and the assaults of Satan, he enjoys an Heavenly Peace and Repose, which nothing here below can rob him of.

View him, secondly, in the practice of those social duties which he stands engaged to perform to his brethren,
 considered

considered either as the Workmanship of the same Almighty Creator, or as fellow-members with himself of “ the “ Mystical Body of CHRIST.” In conformity to the excellent precept of the Apostle, he finds himself constantly disposed to “ do good unto all men ; but “ especially unto those that are of the “ household of Faith.”—“ He is a companion of all those that fear GOD, and “ keep his commandments.” His love to his brethren is always proportioned to the degree of love, which they exercise towards GOD : consequently, none can be his intimates, but those, whose hearts are animated by the same warmth of affection which he continually feels. To others, however, he is always ready to minister in temporal as well as spiritual things : “ He is eyes to the blind, “ and feet to the lame :” his presence brightens the gloom of poverty, and cheers the retreats of distress : at his approach, the languishing sick revive,

and the difconfolate mourner fmiles ; the tears of the orphan ceafe to flow, and the hopelefs widow fings for joy. The fame Spirit of Love diffufes itfelf throughout his whole conduct in every relation, which Providence calls him to fuftain : the fame Divine Principle, working in his foul, renders him a dutiful child, an affectionate husband, a tender father, a kind mafter, an obedient fubject, a juft magiftrate, a fincere friend. Thus is his whole life a ferief of benevolent actions, every one of which is attended with that fweet Peace of Mind, which flows from an approving confcience.

Confider him, in the next place, either as bleffed by the hand of Providence with a flow of profperity, or vifited with the rigours of adverfity. In the former cafe, his affluence is fanctified by pious and charitable ufes : he expends none of it upon the luxuries

uries and vanities of this world; but considers himself only as a steward entrusted with it by his LORD and MASTER, for the good of his brethren, to be employed in the relief of those poor famished souls, for whom as well as for him his Compassionate SAVIOUR died. Is adversity his portion? he submits to it with patience and resignation: nay, he deems it a blessing, and kisses the rod wherewith he is chastised. His Faith and Love are always at hand, and administer to him an unfailing consolation and support. His peace of mind remains inviolate; since he is taught by the Spirit of Truth, that abideth in his breast, to receive every dispensation of his Heavenly Father with submission, yea, with thanksgiving.

Lastly, To finish the character of “the perfect, upright man,” let us attend to the firmness, peace, and serene-

nity of soul, with which he meets the approaches of death.

Come then, my Fellow-Christians, accompany me for once to a scene, which I could wish was more frequently the object of your attention and serious reflection—accompany me to the Death-bed of the RIGHTEOUS! Nor be alarmed at the invitation, or imagine that I intend to depress your spirits, and make you melancholy. It is his last conflict with reluctant nature, and the Powers of darkness—but the HERO is victorious and triumphant.

To him, who has obtained an interest by Faith in the All-atoning Blood of a REDEEMER; who hath experienced the Birth of the SON OF GOD in his soul; whose heart and affections are sanctified by the Indwelling of the SPIRIT OF LOVE; who, by the powerful aid of the Same Spirit, hath been
enabled

enabled to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; whose “conversion is in Heaven,” and whose hopes are fixed on a better country beyond the grave—to such an one, death is so far from being a rude, unwelcome, guest, that he is embraced with all the eagerness and satisfaction with which we receive a long-expected friend. Ghastly and terrific as he is, the reflection, that he is come to rescue him from this scene of temptation, and transport him to the bosom of his FATHER and his GOD, strips the monster of his native horrors, and irradiates the gloom in which he makes his appearance.

Stretched upon a bed of sickness, languishing beneath the successive shocks of some inveterate disease; surrounded, perhaps, by an afflicted wife, with her lovely train of weeping innocents—behold! the good, perfect, upright man
 lies

lies calm, peaceful, and unruffled, amid so many rude assaults. His Faith hath fixed him to the ROCK OF AGES; and the storms of adversity can never beat him off—

“ I know that my REDEEMER liveth,” says the expiring Hero; I know, that “ he that speaketh in righteousness, is mighty to save.” “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:” though the region I am about to travel through, is dreary, covered with midnight darkness, and invested with foul fiends and legions of devils—yet I know, that the Rays of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS will enlighten my path. I have his buckler to repel the fiery darts of my adversaries; I have his “ rod and staff” to comfort and support me. The struggle betwixt life and death, is a painful one, it is true—but it is a very short one. Shall I shrink at the agony
of

of a moment ; when that agony is to open the glories of Paradise upon my soul ?—Shall I recoil from the embraces of death, when I know that he is my friend and deliverer, who alone can unfetter my soul, and release me from this prison of clay ?—Weep not, then, thou dear afflicted partner of my heart ! weep not, ye sweet innocent pledges of our chaste affection !—I have learned not to weep even for you—Surely, ye would not keep me back from my REDEEMER, when his Arms are stretched forth to receive me !—It is he alone that gives me confidence in this hour of danger ; and the same that I feel for myself, he teaches me likewise to feel for you—He will be an Husband to my disconsolate widow ;—he will be a Father to my orphan babes ! I have not a wish to continue one moment longer here—“ my desire is to depart, and to be with “ CHRIST.” An holy impatience hath taken possession of my soul. I can brook

no delay. “ O why are his chariot
 “ wheels so long in coming? why tarry
 “ the wheels of his chariot?” Come
 “ LORD JESUS! come quickly!”—

Such, my brethren, is the character of the RIGHTEOUS MAN, and such the peace and serenity of mind which accompanies him through life, though more fully and eminently displayed at the approaches of death. Cheerfully composed, he takes his farewell of mortality; and flies, on the Wings of Love, to that Paradise of bliss, which his REDEEMER hath prepared for his reception, where Joys Immortal cluster round the Throne of the HIGHEST, and Saints sing everlasting Hallelujahs to GOD and the LAMB!

D I S C O U R S E XII.

JESUS SLEEPING IN THE SHIP.

St. MATTHEW, CHAP. viii. latter Part
of VER. 24.

D I S C O U R S E XII.

St. MATTHEW, CHAP. viii. latter Part
of VER. 24.

“ BUT HE WAS ASLEEP.”

VARIOUS were the methods, by which the SON OF GOD, during his pilgrimage on earth, sought to convince his disciples of their own natural weakness and inability to extricate themselves from the least of those evils, to which they were continually exposed; and of the necessity of applying to him for those supernatural powers, with which his Heavenly Father had invested him for their benefit,

benefit, as well as for that of the whole human race. By the plainest and most familiar instructions; by the most easy and obvious allusions; by displays of power, far superior to aught their eyes had seen, or their ears had heard; and, above all, by his own Illustrious Example, he laboured, with affectionate anxiety and unwearied perseverance, to awaken in them those Heavenly Sensibilities, on the perception and exertion of which, their present as well as future happiness wholly depended.

Sometimes he availed himself of a providential display of the Divine Bounty and Goodness; sometimes, of a providential deliverance from imminent and alarming difficulties:—nay, sometimes, he permitted them to fall into the extremity of danger, that he might give them an immediate and most sensible demonstration of his ability to save them. In the passage, from whence my text is
 taken,

taken, we have a very remarkable instance of the latter kind.

Fatigued and oppressed with those Labours of Love, in which he was perpetually employed, his human nature required a little repose. During his engagements with the multitude, his disciples, agreeable to his direction, had prepared a ship, into which he afterwards entered with them: “ And there arose a
 “ great tempest in the sea, insomuch
 “ that the ship was covered with the
 “ waves—But he was asleep.”

Every circumstance of our REDEEMER'S Life had a manifest reference to that Great Work, which his Heavenly Father had given him to do. The common refreshments of nature were sanctified to this salutary purpose: and even his sleep was made subservient to the benefit and improvement of his disciples.

Peaceful and serene, amid the war of nature's elements, the Lord of Nature lay, unhurt by their conflicts, and superior to their fiercest rage! Nor could aught have roused him from this sweet composure, but that Divine Sympathetic Feeling of Love, which ever awakes at the cry of human distress.

At the prospect of approaching death, the fears of his disciples were instantly alarmed; and, together with these, an inward conviction of their own impotence prompted them to exclaim, in the language of despondency and hope, "Lord, save us! we perish." Recollecting the various instances, in which they had seen their Master's Power manifested to others, they eagerly applied to him in their present distress, in hopes that he would exercise the same power in their favour. "Knowing whereof they were made, remembering that they were but
"dust,"

“ dust,” he made the most affectionate allowances for their timidity; and removed their terrors by this mild and gentle rebuke: “ Why are ye fearful? O ye of little faith!” Were ye once possessed of that firm Reliance on my Heavenly Father, and that entire Submission to his Blessed Will which I feel in my heart, and which I have been so long labouring to communicate to your’s, you would have turned to that Divine Power, which now lies dormant in your breasts, and it would have restored as effectual a calm to the fears and agitations of your earthly part, as I now do, by the sole motion of my will, to these contending elements of nature.

Every individual of our fallen race may justly be compared to that frail bark, which the disciples had prepared for their Master. The earthly nature,

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is

is properly represented by the weak and wayward disciples themselves. In every human heart there is lodged an Heavenly Power and Virtue, which may be said to sleep, till it is awakened and called forth by some inward or outward tempest, alarming the fears of the earthly man, and pressing him to seek for refuge to a source, of which he had been heretofore ignorant or regardless. For the truth of this, let us appeal to the common sense and experience of mankind.

In every unconverted person, whether he be a philosopher, or a man of the world; whether the idol he worships be a system of abstract ideas, without sense or feeling; or whether it be merely the sense and feelings of corrupt nature, voluptuousness, pride, or covetousness; certain it is, that the Powers of Heaven are in a state of Inactivity in his breast. These Powers
might,

might, indeed, gradually open and operate with the gradual growth of the body: but such is the strange corruption of our nature, that they are soon checked, either by the pride of human reason, or the prevalence of human passion. These shut up the spiritual senses of the Inward Man, and, according to the expression of the Apostle, “ blind the minds of those that believe “ not.”

The philosopher, who is determined not to believe the existence of God, or even his own existence and that of the world around him, till he can convince himself by a chain of reasoning, may with truth be said, to lull his internal powers and senses to sleep. For if he would suffer them to see, and judge, and could attend to their motions and dictates, every primary and fundamental truth of religion would strike these senses

with the same fulness of conviction, that the outward light, striking upon the organs of vision, impresses upon the mind.

In like manner, the man who rolls in worldly affluence, and basks in the sunshine of temporal prosperity, is too apt to suffer this Offspring of Heaven to remain inactive in his breast. But when clouds arise, when tempests gather, and obscure the light of this elementary sun, he is then prompted to explore a new sun, a new firmament, a new heaven, and a new earth, corresponding to the spiritual senses of that Inward Man, who is hereby awakened, and taught where to look for, and how to receive, influences and impressions of solid and permanent tranquillity and delight.

Amid the greatest carnal security, and whilst sinful man is endeavouring
to

to silence this heavenly guest for ever, it will frequently start from its slumbers, claim its native rights, and seek its native objects and employments. Hence proceed what are called strong convictions and rebukes of conscience, of which the most obdurate offenders are very sensible, till by repeated resistance, they become callous and dead to their salutary influence, fall under the power of “strong delusion, and “believe a lie.” In this case, indeed, the Powers of CHRIST within them cannot appear, or be active for their deliverance: for they will not suffer them to be awakened; “they will not “come to CHRIST, that they may have “life.”

But sleeps not the BLESSED JESUS in other hearts than these, even in such as have been already called out of their natural darkness “into his mar-

Q 4 “vellous

“vellous light,” to whom he hath already manifested his awakened powers, who have been “renewed in the spirit
 “of their minds,” “and created after
 “the Image of GOD in Righteousness
 “and true Holiness?” He sleeps indeed, at times, in a spiritual sense, even in the most virtuous and regenerate breasts; and sleeps, that they may awaken to a greater sensibility of their want of his Presence, and cry more earnestly to him for the Aids and Comforts of his Spirit.

He sleeps in the bosom of his afflicted children, whilst they are visited with losses and calamities of various kinds, whilst the world frowns upon them, whilst its good things are snatched out of their possession, and their dearest friends are torn from their bleeding hearts. These visitations are sent in Love—The great Lover of Souls seems to retire from his beloved Offspring,

spring, and to withdraw his cheering Influence for the most benevolent purposes, that out of judgment may spring forth mercy, out of momentary distress pure and permanent delight, and that, by feeling the parent's absence, the child may long more ardently for his return.

A black cloud, says a pious writer, makes the traveller mend his pace, and be more eager to get home; whereas a fair day, and a pleasant road, steal away at once his time and his affections. Take it, then, as a mercy, thou afflicted soul! that, now and then, a few clouds intercept thy sun; that, now and then, some troubles eclipse thy comforts. Too many satisfactions at an inn, or upon thy journey, will be too apt to make thee “forget thy Father's House.”

Take it as a mercy too, that thy SAVIOUR sleeps within thee; that thou
art

art thereby left for a while to feel the wretchedness of thy nature. Think not, that he is absent; think not that thy heavenly powers are extinguished: they live, and can live, amid the furious tempests of affliction; and when nature is driven to the last extremity, they will awaken with new vigour, and accomplish for thee an happy deliverance.

All this may yield some consolation to a soul oppressed with calamity and sorrow: but, alas! what is to be done in the hour of temptation? When corruption, and evil passions, demand an immediate indulgence; when “the law in the members wars against the law of the mind,” and brings the soul into captivity; when the power of the temptation is so great, that it seems to carry the will, the desires, and affections along with it—under such

such circumstances, where are we to look for Support and Consolation ?

Knowest thou not, O Christian ! that every nature has its will ? that the earthly part, which the Apostle calls “ the law in the members,” and the Heavenly Nature, or the “ law of the “ mind,” have each their respective wills, strong and powerful ?—When the former, therefore, would hurry thee into sin, and thou feelest thyself carried headlong towards the object of thy unlawful desires, as an horse rusheth to the battle—arrest thy passion, for one moment—and examine the state of thy mind. Art thou uneasy and distressed under this sinful impetuosity ? and even when thy natural will seems to go along with it, dost thou not feel a deeper will, that secretly wishes it were otherwise, and prays for deliverance from the temptation ? Believe me, thy JESUS is then present, though
he

he seems “to sleep” within thee. This conflict with nature, will make thee cry aloud to him that “is mighty to save.” Thy spiritual powers will be roused from their repose; the tempest will be quelled; a calm will be restored; and thou wilt then wonder at thine own fearfulness and want of faith.

When Julius Cæsar, in disguise, was crossing the sea in a little bark, it was suddenly overtaken by a storm, and well nigh swallowed up in the waves. Observing the pilot’s courage begin to fail, he proudly called out—Why art thou afraid? Know, timid man! that Cæsar is thy passenger.

With infinitely greater propriety may the Christian, in his darkest moments, address this language to his soul: Fear not, O my soul! JESUS CHRIST is embarked with thee upon the tempestuous ocean. What though the windows of heaven

ven be opened for a storm; what though the fountains of the deep be broken up for a flood; what though thou art oppressed with desertions from above, and afflictions from beneath; yet that GOD, who “sitteth in heaven, and ruleth over all,” will not cast away “his own offspring;” “CHRIST in thee, the hope of GLORY,” will not suffer thee to sink. The waves of ocean swell, only to set thee nearer to Heaven; the tempest roars, only to alarm thy fears, and to make thee awaken thy Master. Have confidence, then, in JESUS! Embarked with him, thou shalt escape all the perils of the Voyage of Life, and be landed safe on the shore of Eternal Bliss.

D I S C O U R S E XIII.

ON REGENERATION.

PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS-DAY.

ISAIAH, CHAP. xl. VER. 9.

DISCOURSE XIII.

ISAIAH, CHAP. xl. VER. 9.

“ O ZION, THAT BRINGEST GOOD
“ TIDINGS, GET THEE UP INTO
“ THE HIGH MOUNTAIN ! O JERU-
“ SALEM, THAT BRINGEST GOOD
“ TIDINGS, LIFT UP THY VOICE
“ WITH STRENGTH ; LIFT IT UP,
“ BE NOT AFRAID ! SAY UNTO THE
“ CITIES OF JUDAH, BEHOLD YOUR
“ GOD ! ”

NO person of true taste and discernment can attentively peruse the writings of the Prophets, and particularly those of the Sublime Ifaiah, without being charmed with that peculiar dignity of sentiment, and elegance of
VOL. II. R expression,

expression, by which they are so eminently distinguished from all human compositions. Compared with these, what are the most towering flights of Attic or of Roman genius? They are as the feeble flutterings of some little feathered songster, that can scarcely reach the topmost branch of the grove, to the soaring pinion of the king of birds, that hides himself aloft amid the blaze of day. That taste and discernment, however, which enables us to feel and admire any masterly strokes of human elocution, being a natural talent, though capable of considerable improvement by art and education, is by no means sufficient to lead us into the true Spirit of the Prophetic Writings: their majesty of sentiment, their elegance of expression, are not derived from the sources of nature or education, nor from the grandeur of the subjects upon which they speak, but rather from the immediate Illumination of an Inspiring DEITY.

“ They

“ They ſpoke what they knew, and teſtified what they had ſeen.” Heaven opened itſelf upon their inward ſenſes. By the light of a ſuperior world, they diſtinctly diſcerned the paſt, preſent, and future ſtate of things, in this lower orb : and what they ſaw, under ſuch an irradiating influence, they immediately expreſſed, in ſuch ſtrength and beauty of language, as muſt indeed excite the admiration of all, but can be underſtood and felt by thoſe only, who are ſo happy as to enjoy, in ſome degree, the ſame Heavenly Light with themſelves.

My text affords us an illuſtrious inſtance of the truth of theſe obſervations. Some of the moſt admired figures of rhetoric are here introduced, in an eaſy, natural, and yet exalted manner. The Prophet, enraptured with a view of the wonders and bleſſings to be opened in the approaching Kingdom of the MESSIAH, and which were to be outwardly vi-

fible in the territory of Judea, calls upon the favoured land to proclaim the happy tidings to its utmost borders: “ O Zion,
 “ that bringest good tidings, get thee up
 “ into the high mountain ! O Jerufalem,
 “ that bringest good tidings, lift up thy
 “ voice with strength : lift it up, be not
 “ afraid ! fay unto the cities of Judah,
 “ Behold your God !”

In the marginal translation, which is preferred by many commentators, we find the expreffion fomewhat varied. Inſtead of “ O Zion, &c.” we read, “ O
 “ thou, that telleſt good tidings to Zion,
 “ &c. O thou, that telleſt good tidings
 “ to Jerufalem,” &c. But notwithstanding this variation in the reading, the Inward Senſe and Spirit of the words is exactly the ſame.

According to the marginal interpretation, the Prophet calls upon ſome herald or meſſenger, ſome Apoſtle or Evangeliſt,
 to

to declare the glad tidings to Zion, to Jerufalem, and the cities of Judah. According to the text he addreffes himfelf, in a moft noble Profopopoeia, to Zion, or Jerufalem itfelf, as the capital of Judea, and bids her publifh, from her higheft mountain, to all the cities of her territory, the glad approach of her Delivering God.

Taking the words as they ftand in the text, I fhall confider them in that two-fold fenfe, which may be eafily difcovered by thofe who are the leaft converfant in the prophetic writings: by which I mean,

First, Their external accomplifhment in the incarnation, nativity, perfonal appearance, and miniftration, of the SON OF GOD, in Jerufalem and the cities of Judah:

And fecondly, Their internal accom-

have spiritually received the Tidings of his Gospel.

I. With respect to the first or external sense of this prediction, we find it literally accomplished in the transaction of this memorable day. Zion, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, heard the joyful tidings. The voice of prophecy was fulfilled—the expectations of a Deliverer were answered—“ The seed of “ the woman” appeared to “ bruise the “ serpent’s head.” The “ Shiloh” of the patriarchs presented himself to their offspring.—“ The Prophet, like unto “ Moses,” came to demand audience of his “ brethren”—“ The Desire of nations” took possession of his own Temple—The King MESSIAH established his Spiritual Throne in the house of Israel—“ A Child was born—A Son “ was given—His Name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, “ the Everlasting Father, the Prince of
“ Peace”

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“ Peace”—In David’s city was this Son of David born—“ A Virgin did conceive—A Virgin bare the Spotless Babe—Emanuel, GOD with us”—GOD and man personally united in one Universal Redeemer—CHRIST, the Anointed of the Father—“ JESUS,” the Common Saviour, delivering his people, not merely from a temporal bondage, but from the despotic dominion of sin, vice, and error—rescuing the captive Israelites, not from the light burden of a Roman yoke, but from the more grievous tyranny of “ powers and principalities, and the rulers of the darkness of this world.”

By his Blessed Incarnation, this SON OF GOD became so intimately united to human nature, as to be a “ Second Adam,” a second Father, a regenerator of our lapsed race. He entered into that “ body, which was prepared for him,” that, in it, he might personally

deftroy the evil of our fallen nature ; conduct it fafe through all the difficulties, fnares, and temptations, of an evil world ; purify and exalt it ; and, at length, “ feat
 “ it with Himfelf in his own Heavenly
 “ Places.”

As GOD in Man, he was GOD to men. During his refidence in our form, his Heavenly Powers were exercifed in the relief of all their bodily, as well as fpiritual complaints. His miracles were all miracles of Love. They were all fweet and falutary communications of thofe Heavenly Powers to our weak and helpiefs race. Well, therefore, might the Prophet call upon “ Zion, to get
 “ up into the high mountain ; and to
 “ Jerufalem, to lift up her voice, to lift
 “ it up with ftrength, and not to be
 “ afraid” of any oppofition from her adverfaries, whilft ſhe publifhed the glad tidings of Peace and Deliverance to all
 her

her inhabitants, and called upon them to “ Behold their God.”

They saw—they saw, indeed, their GOD AND SAVIOUR with their bodily eyes, walking in their streets, conversing with them in public and in private, instructing them in the great mysteries of Divine Truth and Goodness; healing their sick, cleansing their lepers, raising their dead, comforting their afflicted, and administering pardon to their wounded consciences. They saw the unexampled Meekness and Humility of his deportment; the Universal Benevolence that breathed in every thing he said, and did. Their outward eyes were open to these Wonders of Love; but, “ the veil was not yet taken from their hearts.” The Babe was born in Bethlehem—The GOD appeared in the cities of Judah—But he was not yet born in their souls—He had not yet appeared to
perform

perform his “ Works of Wonder” in their darkened spirits. Thus it was, as the Evangelist tells us, that “ he came “ to his own, and his own received “ him not.”

This leads me to consider the second sense, in which the words of the Prophet, in my text, are to be understood ; viz. as internally accomplished in the Hearts of those, who spiritually receive the good Tidings of the Gospel.

II. “ O Zion, that bringest good “ tidings ! O Jerufalem, that bringest “ good tidings !”—Whence, but from Zion, and from Jerufalem, can any good tidings come ? From spiritual Zion, from the Heavenly Jerufalem ; the “ Je- “ rufalem that is above, and is the mo- “ ther of us all ;” the source, from which our heavenly natures are derived ; the world, out of which we were originally

ginally created, and into which we are now, through CHRIST, redeemed?

Fallen, deeply fallen, the child of Heaven, the Son or Daughter of Zion, is shut up in a strange nature, and a strange world, the disconsolate captive of an infernal prince, without any consciousness of her original dignity and illustrious birth! Like the conquered and captivated cities of Judah, she has lost her Liberty, lost her Birth-right, lost her Happiness, lost her GOD. But, behold! from yonder blessed Mount, Zion breaks forth in all the Majesty of her Glory!—Hark! from yonder blessed Mount, “Jerusalem lifts up her voice, lifts it up with strength, and says unto the cities of Judah, Behold your GOD!”—Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST THE LORD.”

Unto

Unto thee, thou poor imprisoned Child of Light! is born a Deliverer, by whose Redeeming Influence, if thou wilt but open thine inward eye to behold him, thou thyself shalt be born again, rescued from thine oppressor, and reinstated in the possession of thy Primeval Bliss and Beauty! Bounds not thy bosom, hapless, happy mortal! at the transporting message? Art thou not sensible of something more than nature stirring within thee? And art thou not ready to call aloud to this hidden Child of Heaven in thy heart,

O spring to Light! Auspicious Babe,
be born!

And here, let not the patrons of infidelity be offended at a Name—Let not the idle scoffers of the age pour forth their unhallowed wit against such deep and awful truths, as they will not be
at

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at leisure to consider and comprehend ! Let not the doctrine of a NEW AND HEAVENLY BIRTH, though so egregiously mistaken by some, and so grossly corrupted by others, be looked upon as the dream of a visionary, or the imagination of an enthusiast ! It is founded in the very nature of things, in the very nature of man : and what Divine Revelation teaches concerning it, true Philosophy, and a real knowledge of the human heart, will abundantly confirm.

I call the conversion of a sinner to God, a New Birth—The Scriptures call it the same : and I see no reason, why Christians should not prefer scriptural modes of expression to any other. The word, it is true, has been sadly perverted or abused by fanatics ; but let us not, for this reason, reject the true and sober use of it. Words signify but little : he who hath experienced a Spiritual Change
of

of heart and life, may use what name he pleases; the reality is all that is contended for. That we should have an inward, self-evident sensibility of such a change, is absolutely necessary to our peace and happiness, here and hereafter: and that we can obtain this in no other way, than that which the Prophet mentions, namely, by “ beholding our GOD,” is as certain, as this universally acknowledged truth, that All Goodness comes from GOD alone. The only question, therefore, is, How, or in what manner, can I “ behold my GOD,” so as to produce this blessed effect in my soul? How am I to be born again? Or how is the Babe of Bethlehem to be born in my heart?—Nothing can be easier, nothing plainer and more obvious, than the answer to this important question, where it is asked with a sincere desire of spiritual information and improvement.

The

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The New Birth, is neither more nor less than the Birth of Goodness within. Tell me, O mortal, whoever thou art! whether learned or illiterate, heathen or Christian! dost thou not, at times, feel a secret dissatisfaction with thyself? Dost thou not feel thyself proud, envious, fretful, angry, malicious, covetous, jealous, and implacable? There is not one amongst us, that can presume to say, he is at all times free from these odious passions. We need not call in our reason to convince us of their existence and influence: we know them by a self-evident sensibility. We know too, that they are accompanied with pain and anguish; that the more we indulge them, the more torment we feel; that they make us wretched here, and if not removed, must make us wretched hereafter. Now all this is what is called, in Scripture, “the old Adam, the man of sin;” the child of wrath; the Cain, that murders
 righteous

righteous Abel ; the Esau, that hates and persecutes the spiritual Jacob ; the reprobate nature, that is perpetually at war with the Elect of GOD within us.

On the other hand, do we not sometimes feel a desire of being delivered from these evil passions, accompanied with a sweet sensation of Meekness, Humility, and Love ? Alas ! if we would but cherish this desire, and these sensations, and resist the former, which are unlovely and dangerous, we should soon experience a real Birth and Life of GOODNESS in our souls. For when we feel those gentle tempers and dispositions prevailing, then we may depend upon it, we feel the Present DEITY, the GOD, whom the Prophet calls upon us “ to behold.”

'Tis

'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out what
is good,
And wakes each latent virtue in our
breasts !

Let us, therefore, “ Behold our GOD,” and behold him, till we look ourselves, if I may so speak, into his “ Image and Likeness.” For GOD can manifest himself in no other way to his creatures, than by awakening in them an inward sensibility of his own Essential Goodness, Truth, and Love. The Pagan, or the Mahometan, who thus “ beholds his GOD,” and faithfully attends to the improvement of these Heavenly Tempers in his soul, wants but the name of a Christian ; wants but to be told, that these Lovely Tempers are a Birth of Heaven, the Blessed Fruits called forth and brought to perfection by “ the Sun of Righteousness, the Universal Saviour,

VOL. II. S “ the

“ the Light that lighteth every man that
 “ cometh into the world.”

How truly benevolent and sublime does the great Gospel System appear, when viewed upon this universal plan! How worthy of GOD! How suited to the real wants and exigencies of Man! And how contracted and illiberal, on the other hand, that sectarian spirit, which hath so long divided the Christian world, by which Faith hath been exalted at the expence of Love, and mere opinions of the head have triumphed over the finest feelings of the heart!

Receive it, therefore, my brethren, as a truth of the highest importance, that the NEW-BIRTH, or the Birth of Goodness and Heaven in the human soul, can only be effected by the Power of Him, from whom alone “ every good
 “ and every perfect gift cometh;” that it is the Process of CHRIST, from his
 incarnation

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incarnation to his ascension, spiritually repeated within us; and that our salvation entirely depends upon our “be-
“ holding this GOD and SAVIOUR,” manifesting himself in all his amiable attributes within us, and inclining our wills cheerfully to co-operate with him in his GREAT WORK OF LOVE.

D I S C O U R S E X I V .

O N S T . P E T E R ' S D E N I A L O F C H R I S T .

S T . L U K E , C H A P . x x i i . V E R . 6 1 , 6 2 .

The plan of the following discourse is partly taken from a sermon of Monf. SAURIN, on the same subject; to whom the author is likewise indebted for many excellent observations, under each of the heads into which it is divided.

DISCOURSE XIV.

St. LUKE, CHAP. xxii. VER. 61, 62.

“ AND THE LORD TURNED, AND
“ LOOKED UPON PETER; AND PE-
“ TER REMEMBERED THE WORD
“ OF THE LORD, HOW HE HAD
“ SAID UNTO HIM, BEFORE THE
“ COCK CROW, THOU SHALT DE-
“ NY ME THRICE. AND PETER
“ WENT OUT, AND WEPT BIT-
“ TERLY.”

TO be equally capable of forming and executing great and elevated designs, is the distinguishing characteristic of worldly heroism. It is unmoved at the prospect of difficulties or dangers, and always prepared to en-

counter them with spirit and address. Such likewise is the Heroism of the Christian. The love of Virtue in its Eternal Source leading to Supreme Beatitude, is the object to which his affections aspire. With fortitude and firmness he braves the assaults of his adversaries, and celebrates his victories with this song of triumph: “ Who
 “ shall separate us from the LOVE OF
 “ CHRIST? Shall tribulation, or distress,
 “ or persecution, or famine, or nakedness,
 “ or peril, or the sword?—Nay, in all
 “ these things, we are more than Con-
 “ querors, THROUGH HIM THAT LOV-
 “ ED US.”

Generous, sublime, and Godlike, as this disposition undoubtedly is, we must be careful, in the cultivation of it, not to suffer it to degenerate into rashness or presumption. Too many there are, who rush into danger, without weighing the consequences, or proportioning

tioning their courage to their strength; so that when the alarming crisis comes, they either meanly retreat, or ingloriously sink beneath its pressure.

A remarkable instance of the truth of this observation, we meet with in the character and conduct of St. Peter. His bosom glowed with the warmest affection for his Master; and he was, upon several occasions, the most forward in his expressions of zeal for his service. When “he saw JESUS walking upon the water,” he could not rest till he had obtained permission to come to him: but no sooner did he find his feet sinking beneath the waves, than his fortitude forsook him; and had it not been for that compassionate arm, that was instantly stretched forth to his relief, he must have shipwrecked his faith and his life together. In like manner, when his LORD was dragged to the palace of the high-priest,

he

he followed without hesitation, determined to bear him company, even to the Cross: but no sooner did he fix his eyes upon the wrathful Jews, the armed soldiery, and all the solemn preparations for judgment and death; than his constancy was overthrown; he endeavoured to screen himself from the eye of vengeance by an ungenerous and impious falsehood; and had it not been for that Look of his SAVIOUR, which at once reprov'd and supported him, he would have broken every tender tie of the Disciple and the Friend. “ And the LORD turned, and
 “ looked upon Peter; and Peter remem-
 “ bered the word of the LORD, how he
 “ had said unto him, Before the cock
 “ crow, thou shalt deny me thrice:
 “ and Peter went out, and wept bit-
 “ terly.”

In this passage of Scripture history, there are three things worthy our serious consideration.

In the first place, We behold the most zealous of our LORD's disciples, overcome by timidity, and yielding to the power of temptation.

Secondly, We see the BLESSED JESUS, manifesting the meek and all-conquering power of Divine Love, by a single glance of his eye.

Thirdly, We behold the repentant disciple recovering from his lapse, and answering with tears to the expressive Looks of his Master.

I. Many circumstances conspire to heighten the guilt of the Apostle's conduct upon this occasion.

The

The Evangelist tells us, that his resolution was shaken, by the impertinence of an inquisitive maid-servant. Had he been cited to appear before the Jewish Sanhedrim; had he been formally and legally called upon by his superiors, to give an account of the new doctrines he had embraced; or had that dreadful Cross, to which he had promised to follow his Master, been erected at once before his eyes, and all the implements of death appeared in the hands of the executioners; one might have supposed, that such an immediate view of inevitable danger would have disturbed his senses, and for a moment made him lose sight of his duty to his LORD, and of the support and comfort he had been taught to expect from him. But not one of all these circumstances appeared. The judges, wholly taken up with a vengeful process against the Master, never once thought of the disciple. A maid-servant first
accosts

accosts him. Her words intimidate him: and all the terrors of the Sanhedrim and the Cross are drawn up in dread array before his affrighted soul.

“ Ah! where was now that gallant Faith, which made so glorious a confession of this JESUS being the Son of the LIVING GOD? Where that bold promise, that though all should be offended, and leave their dear LORD in distress, yet would he never be offended? Where that becoming resolution, “ Though I should die with thee, yet “ will I not deny thee in any wise.” Where all that fire and intrepidity, which, but a little while ago, had singly engaged a whole band of armed men, in hope of rescuing the LORD he now abjures? All lost and forgotten, upon the silly surmises of a servant, without any formal accusation brought, without a single hand laid upon him!”

Another

Another circumstance, that seems to aggravate his offence, is, that he was forewarned of his frailty; and ought, therefore, to have been constantly upon his guard. His Blessed Master had told him, in general terms, that “Satan desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat.” He had also very particularly assured him, that “that same night, he should deny him thrice.” Such a solemn and salutary warning should have engaged him to double his vigilance, that he might avoid a danger he had been so affectionately apprized of. When a temptation takes us by surprize, and we fall from a precipice, of which we were intirely ignorant, we may perhaps be worthy of compassion, rather than censure; but this appears not, from what hath been said, to have been the Apostle’s case.

Again: the extraordinary degree of light and knowledge, with which he had
had

had been favoured, is no small aggravation of his guilt. For he had been, in a particular manner, prepared and strengthened against the abasement and ignominy which his Master was to endure. He had been a witness of his transfiguration on the mount; he had heard the heavenly voice, that spake from the cloud of glory; and well knew, that the great plan of human redemption could not be accomplished without the bloody process of sufferings and death. Besides, his Master had cloathed him with the most distinguished character: he had commissioned him to go and preach the Kingdom of GOD, adding this singular expression of his esteem and love: "Thou art Peter, and upon
" this Rock I will build my church." And yet this honoured disciple, honoured among the first with a commission to publish the Gospel of JESUS, was the very first to declare, that "he
" knew not JESUS." "Nor was it enough
to

to dissemble; he disowned, and denied him: not content with a single denial, he repeated it thrice; repeated it, after sufficient space for recollection; and at last bound the lie upon his soul, by solemn oaths and dreadful imprecations."

But the last, and blackest circumstance of this whole transaction, was the time, at which St. Peter was guilty of this denial. The Blessed JESUS was, at that instant, manifesting the tenderest marks of affection for him and the whole human race. The catastrophe of the awful tragedy was at hand; the victim was bound; the Innocent for the guilty was prepared for slaughter. Every other disciple was fled—no comforter at hand, but Peter, who had heretofore appeared the most zealous disciple and friend. And yet, at this tender trying moment, his fidelity forsakes him! He ungratefully, unfeelingly, denies his LORD!—Thus weak and unstable are
all

all human virtues, when the mind of man rests upon them alone, and seeks not for Superior Strength to support it in the hour of temptation! “ Let him, “ that thinketh he standeth, take heed “ lest he fall.” If the “ cedars of Libanus” have been shaken, what have we not to fear for the “ hyssop on our walls?”

Let us not, however, leave the poor Apostle in this disconsolate situation, but behold, in the second place, the Blessed JESUS, manifesting the all-conquering power of Divine Love, at once chiding Peter for his crime, and rescuing him from the influence of the temptation, by a single glance of his eye.

II. “ And the LORD turned, and “ looked upon Peter.” O what unutterable things were spoken by that Look! what Eloquence beamed from those Eyes! Never was language so piercing and pathetic! never did orator deliver

liver himself with such address and efficacy!

It was a look of anguish, and tender complaint: for we cannot doubt, that the denial of Peter embittered the Sufferings of his Master. The dearer the hand that strikes, the more sensibly we feel the blow. The unkindness, the malice of an enemy, we are prepared to expect: but when we discover treachery, where we looked for fidelity; when, instead of an enemy, it is a bosom friend that wounds and betrays, nature can scarcely support the anguish of the reflection. That the Jewish rabble should appear in arms against the Innocent JESUS, was not strange; they were ignorant of his person and character: that the Pharisees should be clamorous for his crucifixion, was no more than what might be expected; for he had constantly borne his faithful testimony against their hypocritical practices: that the Roman soldiery

foldiery should enter into confederacy with the Jews against him, was easily accounted for; for they considered him as the enemy of Cæsar. But that Peter, who ought to have endeavoured to lighten the burden of his Master's Woe, should contribute to increase it; that he, whose part it ought to have been to vindicate his LORD, should thus cowardly deny him; that, instead of holding forth his hands to receive his tears, he should lend them to assist his murderers; that every good purpose, every Heavenly sensibility, which had heretofore been awakened and cherished, by a course of Divine admonition and instruction, should at once disappear, and leave the fallen soul in the hands of its spiritual adversary—all this it was that pierced the tender loving heart of JESUS, and produced that look of affectionate reproof, with which he sought to alarm his apostate disciple and friend.

The look of JESUS was also a look of compassion and love. It is very observable, and worthy of our highest admiration, that in the midst of his sufferings, our Blessed REDEEMER'S concern seems to have been, not for himself, but for the salvation of those, for whom he endured them. He employed several days before his death in strengthening his disciples against the ignominy of the Cross. In his address to his Heavenly Father, he forgets himself, and prays only for them. Even during his conflict in the garden, he turns aside to exhort his disciples to watch and pray, and arm themselves against the assaults of the tempter: nay, even upon the Cross, he prays for his murderers, charitably ascribes their guilt to their ignorance, and most fervently wishes them the joys of pardon and forgiveness.

Thus, in the instance before us, he is more affected by the stroke which
the

DISCOURSE XIV. 293

the tempter had aimed at his disciple, than with the severe torments that awaited himself. His look must have expressed some such compassionate sentiments as these: Simon, son of Jonas, I offer myself up a willing chearful victim for the Salvation of thy lapsed race. I pass, with delight, through every narrow gate of torture and of woe, that by my Suffering Process, I may extinguish the wrath of nature, and bring every fallen spirit into a state of heavenly Peace and Reconciliation with my FATHER. But when, at the very last stage of this process, I behold one of my beloved disciples rejecting these overtures of mercy, and refusing to be cleansed by that blood of the Covenant, which I am about to shed, my Passion becomes more embittered, and I am doubly crucified by thee.

Again, the “crowing of the cock” had been fixed upon as a signal, to ve-

rify the prediction of CHRIST, as well as to remind Peter of his promise. No sooner did our LORD hear this harbinger of dawn, than he immediately “ turned, and looked upon “ Peter,” as if to remind him of his fidelity, his protestations and oaths, to challenge his promise, or at least to call forth his sorrow for having failed. The desired effect soon appeared. The Look, like the Word of JESUS, was “ a two-edged sword, “ piercing even to the dividing asunder “ the soul and spirit.” It opened the eyes of Peter; made him see and acknowledge his own weakness; and constrained him to give the glory to him, who had calmed and dissipated his fears, revived his drooping courage, and rekindled his expiring zeal. “ The LORD “ looked upon Peter.” Peter answered with his tears.

III. In these expressions of penitential sorrow, we may discover many particulars worthy of our attention and imitation. The Evangelist relates, that he not only “ wept, but wept bitterly.” We are too apt to form very inadequate ideas of the deformity of sin: it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that we deceive ourselves by thinking some superficial exercises of piety sufficient to cover or remove it. But when we come to reflect upon the infinite distance at which it sets us from the Source of Immaculate Purity; upon the destructive influence which it has upon our neighbours; and the deplorable state of darkness and insensibility, into which we ourselves are frequently plunged by it; we soon find, that our sorrow cannot be too great, our contrition too deep and severe.

The readinefs of Peter's tears, is a circumftance alfo, to which we fhould do well to attend. His offence was fudden: he was furprized into the fnare. His recovery was as fudden: it was instantaneous and effectual. The moment his Saviour looked upon him, " he wept." We juftly fufpect the nobleft refolutions, when they regard not prefent, but future time. We cannot but tremble for the man, who puts off his repentance to a diftant day. We tremble, left fome unforefeen accident fhould intervene; left ficknefs, or diftraction, or force of habit, fhould render him incapable of performing his refolution of amendment.

Further, the precaution, which accompanied thefe penitential tears, deferves alfo our notice. The Evangelift tells us, that " he went out." Not that he was afhamed to confefs his LORD in the very place wherein he had
had

had been so weak as to deny him: but he had now learned to distrust his own strength; his presumption had already cost him too dear.

If we would enquire why our devotions have hitherto been so unprofitable, why so many of our vows have been neglected or forgotten, so many resolutions, promises, and protestations, vanished into air, we should find that it was owing to a neglect of this precaution. The true Christian is industrious to fortify those weak parts of his frame, with which a sad experience hath made him acquainted. His very mistakes and weaknesses, in this respect, are made subservient to his improvement in virtue and goodness. It was my intimacy with such or such a person, he will say, that proved fatal to my innocence; I will therefore break off all connection with him. It was such a scene of worldly pleasure and
dissipation,

dissipation, that first drew off my mind from serious things; I will, therefore, indulge myself with its follies no more. It was in the “court of Caiaphas, that I denied my Master;” I will, therefore, instantly “go out.”

Lastly, In order to do justice to the sincerity of Peter’s repentance, we ought to consider the salutary and permanent effects which it produced. And here I could wish, that custom would permit me to add another text to what I have already enlarged upon: it is in the 21st Chap. of St. John’s Gospel, and the 15th Verse. Our Blessed LORD, at his third appearance to his disciples after his resurrection, “saith unto Simon Peter: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, LORD, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.”

It

DISCOURSE XIV. 299

It is observable, that Peter answers not the whole of our LORD's question. Had his Master, on any former occasion, only said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He would, doubtless, have replied with his usual warmth, "Yea, LORD, thou knowest that I love thee more than these." But his answer now is only, "Yea, LORD, thou knowest that I love thee!" As if he had said:

Ah! my LORD, I feel most sensibly the import and allusion of thy words. I well know, that thou wouldst humble the haughtiness of my spirit, by recalling to my mind the sad remembrance of that promise, which I presumptuously made, and basely violated—that "though all men should deny thee, yet would not I deny thee." I am now conscious, that I am less than the least of all my brethren—I dare not promise any thing
for

for myself. The effects of my past presumption make me tremble for the future. I am not only humbled by a sense of my own grievous fall, but by recollecting the examples of many illustrious saints, who have gone before me. Perhaps, like Job, I may “curse
“ the day of my birth:” perhaps, like David, I may be guilty of adultery and murder: yea, perhaps I may again be tempted to deny my Master: and if thou shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, LORD, how can I abide the pain of thy displeasure? And yet, amid all my frailties and offences, I am perfectly convinced, that I love thee; I am convinced, that the most violent assaults of temptation can never extinguish an affection, which is in a manner incorporated with my very essence. My heart is deeply touched and inflamed, when I hear or reflect upon thy adorable virtues and perfections. I am charmed and transported with a view
of

of that sublime and benevolent System of Redemption, which thou hast published to our fallen race; and even amid the depth and darknefs of apoftafy, I feel I know not what of uneafinefs, and inward confufion, which convinces me, poor frail creature that I am, that “ the LORD whom I have offended, is the LORD whom I love.”

Nor think, my brethren, that this humble acknowledgment of his weaknefs and guilt, rendered the affection of the difciple of lefs value in the eyes of his Mafter. When we are intimately acquainted with the heart of a friend, and have experienced his fincerity and devotion to us in a thoufand inftances, we fhould not, we could not ceafe to love him, if by fome unexpected temptation he was led to commit fome offence againft us, which he afterwards atoned for by the moft poignant sorrow and affliction. “ GOD knows
“ whereof

“ whereof we are made.” His nature is unchangeable; and his nature is Love! “ GOD is Love!” Our sins alone separate us from this Love; but they change not its nature, nor limit its duration. The moment we return to our GOD, he returns to us. No sooner did Peter make this reply to his Master, “ LORD, thou knowest that I love thee,” than he immediately reinstated him in his favour, and commissioned him to “ feed his sheep.”

And O! what a noble compensation did he make, by his future labours of love to the Church, for the reproach which he had brought upon it by his fall. Methinks I see him, on the day of Pentecost, bringing into the fold of CHRIST, those sheep, which his example might have led astray! His powerful and pathetic discourse, like thunder and lightning, bears down all before him, working a stupendous change
in

in those very souls, who had beheld, perhaps, unmoved, a SAVIOUR bleeding on the Cross; and forcing from them these strong and expressive proofs of their conviction—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Methinks I see him flying from Pontus to Galatia, from Galatia to Bythinia, Cappadocia, and the provinces of Asia, and from thence to Rome, marking his footsteps with the ruins of Satan's kingdom, demolishing the temples of false gods, and converting their idolatrous votaries to the "Truth, as it is in JESUS:" exploits, highly worthy of that Christian Heroism, whose first Labour of Love had been the conversion of eight hundred souls! Methinks I see him dragged from tribunal to tribunal, from province to province; at one time, summoned to appear before the incensed Sanhedrim; at another, before a Roman judicatory; always reproached with the Ignominy of the Cross, yet always confessing and preaching the Name of JESUS, and at
last

last nailed to a Cross himself, and expiring with this Language of Love upon his lips: "LORD! thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee!"

Let us now learn from this melancholy instance of Christian Frailty, how weak and unguarded the best of men at times may be, and how little masters of their own passions; how vain all confidence in human virtue, and how indispensably necessary it must be, to depend wholly upon the strengthening communications of Divine Grace. Let us beware of the very first suggestions of evil in our hearts; or, if we should, through frailty, fall in the first instance, let us be extremely careful not to persist and strengthen ourselves in iniquity. A taper suddenly extinguished, if applied as suddenly to the flame, soon recovers its former light; but if suffered to cool and harden by delay, cannot be rekindled without more time and trouble. One Internal Glance from the LORD of Light and

and Life, will be sufficient to disperse the momentary cloud, which the first vapours of sin form round the soul: but if we are not careful to catch this Precious Glance, the gloom will thicken, and we may wander so far out of our way, as to be in danger of losing the Light for ever.

“ How powerful is the Internal Look “ of CHRIST!” says the excellent Quessel. “ Without it, nothing external can convert; with it, even the hardest hearts melt into tears. The cock had crowed—and yet Peter did not recollect himself, because JESUS had not yet LOOKED UPON him. He casts one Look upon his offending children, and the Work of Penitence commences, and is soon succeeded by the Work of Love! LORD, evermore turn and look upon us with those Eyes of Tendernefs and Mercy, on which our salvation and eternal happiness depend!”

D I S C O U R S E XV.

ON GOOD-FRIDAY.

ISAIAH, CHAP. liii. Part of VER. 12.

DISCOURSE XV.

ISAIAH, CHAP. liii. Part of VER. 12.

“ HE HATH Poured OUT HIS SOUL
“ UNTO DEATH.”

WELL might the noble Ethiopian, upon reading this remarkable chapter of Ifaiah, apply to Philip the Evangelist, whom Heaven had directed to meet him on a journey, to explain to him its mysterious import. “ I pray thee,” said he, “ of whom speaketh the Prophet this; of himself, or of some other man?” The question shews him to have been possessed of a good natural understanding, though utterly un-

acquainted with the great Truths of Revealed Religion. Certain it is, that the Prophet hath entered so minutely into the character and conduct of the person whom he describes, that the Ethiopian could not but suppose him speaking of himself, or at least of a man whom he had actually seen, and was intimately acquainted with. Philip soon resolved his doubts; and his honest, though untutored heart, was cheerfully opened to the salutary communications of Evangelical Truth.

Indeed, there is something so lovely and luminous in the appearance of Truth, that nought but the mists of passion and prejudice can intercept its rays, or obstruct its efficacy on the human mind. Hence it was, that one of the most celebrated wits of the last century, after a life spent in the most ignoble pursuits, after having prostituted his heart, his tongue, and his pen, to the most
profligate

profligate and iniquitous purposes; was at last, when the hour of solemn reflection came, convinced of the error of his ways, the deformity and vanity of vice, the beauty of virtue, and the truth and reality of the Gospel system, by reading this very chapter, from whence my text is taken. Every part of the prediction it contains, was so circumstantially verified in the person and sufferings of the BLESSED JESUS, that he no sooner felt the want of salvation in his heart, than he found the SAVIOUR, to whom alone he was to apply, and by whom alone it could be imparted.

The concluding verse of the chapter contains a summary of the whole. The former part of this verse refers to the glorious issue of the MESSIAH's sufferings: the latter part, and particularly the words which I have made choice of, evidently point to the occasion of this day's solemnity, and express the nature

and efficacy of those sufferings: “ He
“ hath poured out his soul unto death.”

When we realize to our minds the awful tragedy, that was this day exhibited on the trembling top of CALVARY; when we behold the Meek and Innocent JESUS nailed to a cross, and attend to all the aggravating circumstances that conspired to heighten his distress, and to render his agony of the most complicated kind—we are ready to cry out, in the language of the lamenting Prophet, “ All ye that pass by, behold and
“ see, whether there be any sorrow
“ like unto his sorrow!” Our hearts are entended at the scene. The common sympathy of human nature leads us to compassionate the Blessed Sufferer. We begin then to think, that our feelings are more than human; and that the love of CHRIST, and a genuine spirit of devotion, is the source from whence our tenderness proceeds. But let not passion
fion

sion usurp the throne of Truth. Let not the Instincts of Nature be mistaken for the Operations of Grace; or a mere attention to the sufferings of humanity, conceal from our view the mysterious depths of REDEEMING LOVE.

Let us not imagine, that the “Death, unto which he poured out his soul,” was merely the dissolution of his earthly body, and no more than such a temporal death as you and I must ere long experience: millions of our species have suffered, and millions more must still suffer, the same expiring agonies.—No—The death into which he entered, was the agonizing sensation, the horror unutterable, the blackness of darkness, which surrounds a spirit, that is shut out from the Light and Love of God. This is death, in the true sense of the word. Nought but such a death could have made him cry out, in the moment of insupportable distress, “My God,
“ my

“ my GOD! why haft thou forfaken
 “ me?”

To the grand ſcheme of Redemption by JESUS CHRIST, this ſeemingly powerful objection hath frequently been made: Granting, that human nature is in a fallen and degraded ſtate, and that mankind, as univerſal experience abundantly teſtifies, are the ſlaves of evil and diſorderly paſſions, yet why could not all be ſet right by ſome inward and ſpiritual communications of Divine Light and Strength? Why was it neceſſary for the SON OF GOD to take upon him an human body, with all its weakneſſes, deſires, and temptations, continue for years in a ſuffering ſtate, and at length finiſh the melancholy proceſs by an agonizing death?

The anſwer is plain and obvious. It was neceſſary, in the firſt place, that “ a body
 “ ſhould be prepared for him,” by which
 alone

alone he could become acquainted and connected with our nature in its present state, and in and through which alone he could discover and overcome all its evils and disorders. It was necessary, in the second place, that such a body should be prepared for him, that he might therein exhibit to the view of all mankind, the mode and process, by which each individual should be enabled, through him, to overcome those evils and disorders in his own particular body.

Without such a lively pattern and exemplar before our eyes, of what was to be done and suffered by us, in order to partake of the benefits of Redemption, as well as of the power and strength of him, who was to enable us thus to do and suffer; we must still have remained under the same ignorance and darkness, with respect to the nature of our malady, and the means of our deliverance, as the Heathen were of old.

By

By all that is said, therefore, of CHRIST's suffering for us in the flesh; of his sacrifice upon the cross; and the atonement, the redemption, and justification we derive from thence; we are to understand, that the ETERNAL WORD united himself with a fallen soul and body, that he might sacrifice it to his HEAVENLY FATHER, that is, make it sacred or holy, which he effectually did, by overcoming all the opposition that he met with from its fallen life, and at last suffering his enemies to shed the Blood of that Life, that the Heavenly and Divine Nature, which was within, might be rescued from its bondage, and ascend triumphant to its native element; hereby giving to men and angels a most convincing testimony of his uncontrollable power and dominion over all nature, as well as a most gracious assurance, that he will, in like manner, sacrifice, redeem, or make holy, every son and daughter of fallen Adam, who will accept

cept of his gracious overtures of spiritual light and strength.

Such seems to have been the nature and design of CHRIST'S Incarnation, Sufferings, and Death. No angry GOD—no vindictive justice—no wrath in heaven, that refused to be appeased without the blood of JESUS, shed instead of the blood of sinners—no arbitrary imputation of Adams's sin, nor of CHRIST'S Righteousness—the wrath is in man alone, who refuses to be at peace with his Maker—All is life and love on the part of GOD, and in the atonement of CHRIST—Heaven triumphing over hell—the powers of light over the powers of darkness—the good principle in man, over the evil principle—inward rectitude over inward depravity—“ Christ in us the Hope of “ Glory,” destroying in us the works of the devil !

From

From the manger to the cross, this was the great Labour of Love which he was anxious to accomplish. The awful transaction we this day commemorate, was but the last scene; the winding up and catastrophe of the dismal tragedy—Or rather it was—fallen nature, though in league with all the powers of hell, vanquished—nailed to the cross—giving up the ghost—that out of that death it might rise into a new life, and be readmitted into its long-lost Paradise!

Is this, then, a true picture of Christianity? Look into your Bibles! Look into your hearts, and compare the features! If it be so, what becomes of the empty and insignificant volumes of modern infidelity? Have not their authors been fighting with shadows; and taking that for Christianity, which exists not in the Bible; but is only to be found in systems and comments of human invention? A Socrates, or a Plato, would have embraced,

embraced, with rapturous gratitude, such a Revelation as we are favoured with.

We mistake the matter exceedingly, if we imagine, that True Religion is any thing less, than the communication of the Divine Nature to our souls. It is Heaven brought down to earth. It is the beauty of angels beaming through the veil of mortality. It is that sweet intercourse of Love, that subsists betwixt beatified spirits and their Maker, commenced in our hearts, whilst we are pilgrims upon earth.

Look up to the Cross—and drop a tear! It will be no more than the tribute of human sympathy to exquisite distress. It will not entitle thee to the Name of Christian. It will give thee no interest, no fellowship, in the virtues of the BLESSED SUFFERER.

Look

Look up to the Crofs again—look into it—penetrate the darkfome veil!—It is all black and horrible without—perfect humanity bleeding beneath the ftroke—life iffuing at every pore—and the fpirit longing to burft its tormenting prifon! Could angels weep, thou wouldft behold angels weeping there; and waiting in dread and filent expectation of the awful iffue. Could devils prefume to “hope againft hope,” the infernal hofts, that gather round the Crofs, might begin to flatter themfelves with the fecurity of their kingdom, from the feemingly abandoned circumftances of their moft powerful oppofer.

If, however, thou couldft rife for a few moments above the mere feelings of nature, and contemplate what is paffing in the breaft of this fpotlefs victim, thou wouldft behold the unerring Wifdom, the unbounded Power, and effential Goodnefs of the Divinity, in folemn
 filence,

filence, working amid the storm which men and devils raise, and with irresistible energy penetrating to the very centre of a fallen world. Thus wouldst thou be raised above the common prospects of mortality. Thy tears would cease to flow. The seeming sufferer thou wouldst find to be a real conqueror: and instead of “ My GOD, my GOD ! why hast thou forsaken me ? ” thou wouldst hear that voice which shakes the foundations of nature, and makes the pillars of heaven tremble, crying out, in the Power of his Majesty, and from the Centre of his Glory, “ I will ransom them from death : I will redeem them from the power of the grave. O death ! I will be thy plague—O grave ! I will be thy destruction ! ”

And do you think, my brethren, that all this is a visionary scene ? Heaven forbid that it should appear so to you or me ! O that it might be realized, this

day, to every unexperienced heart !
 “ Daughters of Jerufalem ! weep not for
 “ me, but weep for yourselves.”

We generally come to the houfe of GOD on this day, expecting to have all the foft fenfations of our nature excited, by a circumftantial detail of the affecting tranfaction, which we are now called to commemorate. There is a chord of tendernefs in our hearts, which ever vibrates at a tale of woe, and gives us a fenfation, which we love to indulge, becaufe it is mournfully pleafing. But this is not Divine Grace—this is not genuine devotion—the moft vicious and abandoned have been known to feel it, as intimately as the moft fober and virtuous. How then are we to improve the prefent folemnity ? Let us hear the bleffed Apoftle—“ The grace of GOD
 “ hath appeared unto all men”—for what purpose ?—to teach us, “ that, de-
 “ nying ungodlinefs and worldly lufts,
 “ we fhould live foberly, righteoufly,
 “ and

“ and godly, in this present world :” or, as he speaks in another place, that “ the world should be crucified unto us, and we unto the world.”

Nothing can enable us to comprehend the mystery of a Crucified REDEEMER, but a previous knowledge of our fallen state, and a sensible conviction of the evil and disorder, which sin hath introduced into our nature. When we look up to the Cross, therefore, let us, instead of indulging the sensations, which such a scene commonly raises in the breast, “ weep rather for ourselves.” Let us lament the miserable depravity of our hearts, which requires such an awful atonement : and let us never rest, till we experience its blessed efficacy in our souls ; till all pride, envy, covetousness, and wrath, be totally extinguished ; and the meekness, humility, condescension, and love of this Suffering LAMB OF GOD, be brought forth and exemplified in our life and conversation !

D I S C O U R S E XVI.

ON THE FIRST OR SPIRITUAL RE-
SURRECTION.

ROMANS, CHAP. vi. Part of VER. 4.

DISCOURSE XVI.

ROMANS, CHAP. vi. Part of VER. 4.

“ LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP
“ FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY
“ OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE
“ ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEW-
“ NESS OF LIFE.”

TO those that have experienced the power of religion in their hearts, it frequently appears so plain and simple a thing, that they cannot but wonder, how it should escape the attention and regard of the generality of men, and how they themselves should have continued so long strangers to its nature

and influence. It requires no extraordinary acuteness of understanding, no painful or laborious researches, to penetrate into its adorable mysteries. It opens and manifests itself to the inward senses of the human soul, in as real, distinct, and lively a manner, as the surrounding objects of the material universe do to the outward senses of the human body. Nothing is wanting to evidence this reality of religion, but the calling forth into exercise, and directing the inward senses to those inward objects, to which they correspond.

Every object of the world around, cannot equally and at all times engage our attention. Sometimes we are driven by the impetuosity of passion to the pursuit of one object, sometimes to that of another. The will, which is a free self-moving faculty of our nature, turns itself with the whole tide of its affections,

affections, sometimes into one channel, sometimes into another. The present favourite object engrosses the whole of its strength, and leaves the rest of its desires idle and unsatisfied.

But let not vain man, naturally prompt to take up his rest in outward things, and ever ready to plead, in excuse for his folly, the urgent calls of bodily appetite, let him not pretend, that the God who made him, hath left himself without a witness; that he is not perpetually speaking to him within and without, testifying, as well by the appearances and revolutions of outward nature, as by the inward operations of his own mind, that his supreme happiness, the state for which he was originally intended, can only be obtained by dying to that whole body of sin, into which he is fallen, and rising to that new and heavenly Life, into which he is redeemed by JESUS CHRIST.

The

The sun sets, and leaves the world in midnight darkness, that he may rise with new splendour, and impart fresh life and vigour to the natural world. The spring rises with all her beauty, health, and fragrance, from the death of winter. The germe, or principle of vegetative life, breaks forth from the dead corrupted mass that is sown in the earth, and rises into a beautiful plant. The insect, that died to all outward appearance, and was shut up in its pendant grave, comes forth into a new life, and clothed with its resurrection body, takes its flight into regions, to which in its former groveling state it could never have soared.

The most superficial observer of outward nature, can readily discover and acknowledge this wonderful analogy that manifests itself through all her works. Every thing teems with life: and yet life, in the present state of things, can only
 proceed

proceed from death. Every object around us, therefore, continually preaches the same great doctrine, in which we are fully instructed by the transaction of this day. CHRIST'S Resurrection is represented throughout Scripture as an earnest of our own. The only way to secure to ourselves an happy resurrection, is by "dying to sin, and living unto righteousness." "Like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Our spiritual resurrection to a new life, is therefore necessarily preparative to our future resurrection to Glory. And my text assures us, that they are both brought about by the same means, even by the "Glory of the Father." I shall not take up your time at present, in enumerating the several remarkable circumstances, in which our

LORD'S

LORD'S Resurrection is figuratively expressive of that great spiritual change, which is called, in my text, "Newness of Life." I think it will be more profitable to endeavour to explain to you the nature of this important change, and to give you such a description of its salutary effects upon the soul, as will enable you to judge, upon enquiry, whether this "Glory of the Father" hath yet been revealed to your inward senses.

A mere historical Christian will satisfy himself with poring over the Scripture account of CHRIST'S Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection; and provided he has a clear idea of the outward transactions in his head, he is little anxious about any thing further. He reads them over as any other piece of entertaining history, without feeling himself much interested in their consequences. But as we never can be saved, but by passing through the
 same

same suffering process with our BLESSED REDEEMER, we should never read any part of the history of his Life, Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection, without making an immediate application of it to our own souls, that so we may be able to judge, whether “the same mind be in us, that “was also in CHRIST JESUS;” or in the words of my text, whether, “as “CHRIST was raised up from the Dead, “by the Glory of GOD the FATHER, “we also walk in Newness of Life.”

O Christian! the Resurrection of thy SAVIOUR will stand thee in no stead, unless it be realized in thy heart! Indulge me, then, with thy closest attention, whilst I attempt to mark out some of the glorious steps, by which this salutary process is carried on in our natures.

Those, who deny the great doctrine of original sin, betray a manifest ignorance

norance of the Holy Scriptures, and of their own nature. The language of the former we find to be continually this, that “ in Adam all have died ;
 “ that by one man’s transgression sin
 “ entered into the world ; that the
 “ thoughts of men’s hearts are only
 “ evil continually ; that we were con-
 “ ceived in sin, and born in iniquity ;
 “ that in our flesh dwelleth no good
 “ thing ; that the carnal mind is en-
 “ mity against God ; that our iniquities
 “ are more in number than the hairs of
 “ our head ; that there is none of us
 “ that doth good, no not one.”

The language of nature corresponds with these declarations of Scripture. The voice of all our earthly passions confirms these revealed Truths. Even those, who were destitute of an outward revelation, felt and lamented the prevalence and dominion of their corruptions. And our own experience, if we would be
 ingenuous,

ingenuous, must lead us to confess, that we are naturally prone to evil, and averse to goodness.

Pure and spotless we came into this world, say some superficial enquirers into human nature; and all the evil we learn or practise, is from the power of example. But when did this example begin? What mortal first introduced it into the world? Where did he learn it himself? Surely it must have proceeded from his own evil heart. So that after all our doubts, we must go back to the same source that the Scripture points out to us, and fix the origin of evil in man, in the disobedience of the first father of the human race, from whom the fatal infection has spread through all his hapless posterity. For the history of past ages informs us, that the world was ever wicked as it is now; and that the violence of human passions hath ever been the spring of all the disorders

orders and confusions, in which kingdoms, families, and individuals, have been involved.

Vain and specious reasonings will always be overborne by facts. Look at the innocent and immaculate babe, as some would call it, in the arms of its mother. Where is the meekness, gentleness, and heavenly serenity of unfallen nature? Is not its visage marked with the fire of indignation, pride, envy, jealousy, covetousness, and all those other furious and unlovely passions, which manifest themselves upon every little provocation through life? Whence can this proceed? Not from the force of example—for it cannot yet discern betwixt good and evil, so as to make its choice. It springs, therefore, from that root of evil, which it brings with it into the world. As the little stranger becomes acquainted with the world, he finds objects enough to gratify every
corrupt

corrupt passion. These passions too often “grow with his growth, and “strengthen with his strength.” Pleasure prepares her bait for the early season of his life; Ambition follows to entice his riper years; and Avarice spreads her snares to captivate the weakness of his old age. Yea, it sometimes happens, that the human soul is enslaved, at one and the same period, by the united influence of these earthly passions.

Is not all this matter of fact, and daily experience? A corrupt nature, meeting with a corrupt world, yielding readily to its sollicitations, and greedily swallowing its envenomed baits! The disease, how powerful!—the contagion, how universal! O for a remedy as powerful, as universal, to counteract its baleful influence, and restore life and health to the disordered system!—Surely, there is “Balm enough in Gi-

“lead,” to accomplish the cure! Surely, there is efficacy enough in the Blood of JESUS, to wash out the crimson stain! Surely, there is power enough in his Resurrection, to raise the dying sinner to “Newness of Life.” And if there be power and ability to extricate miserable man from the bondage of an evil nature; surely, there cannot be want of will in HIM, whose Name is Love, whose Essence is Love, who dwelleth in Love, and whose Grace, far more universal than the Light of the sun, penetrates the center of the most hardened heart; so that nought can hinder its healing influences from having their effect, but the human will obstinately turned against and rejecting them. This is a truth, which, as a minister of the Gospel of Peace, I am bound to publish, whilst the Word of Truth assures me, that “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

I solemnly

I solemnly appeal to the conscience of every person in this assembly, whether he has not, more than once, yea frequently and continually, felt the strivings of Divine Grace in his soul. Hast thou not, O sinner, frequently experienced within thy soul a secret opposition to favourite sinful inclinations and pursuits? Hath not something whispered to thine heart, in a retired moment, some such truths as these—Why dost thou spend, in vain and unprofitable pleasures and engagements, a life, that should be employed in securing the future welfare of thine immortal part? Knowest thou not, that this body, which thou art so anxious to pamper and indulge, must ere long be laid breathless in the grave? Why then so proud, so fond of being honoured and admired by beings frail and perishing as thyself? Why art thou so envious of another's beauty, fame, or wealth? Why is thine anger kindled at every trifling accident? Why rankles in thy breast that mali-

cious dislike of thy neighbour, because he hath, or thou thinkest that he hath, offended thee? Why art thou so greedy of gain? Why dost thou grind the face of the poor, withhold the wages of the hireling, and extort more than is just from those with whom thou hast dealings? Why art thou so anxious to become great, or rich; to leave an immense estate behind thee, purchased by iniquity, at the expence of thy soul, and the sufferings of many helpless brethren, whom thy bounty might have relieved? Why burns thy breast with an unlawful flame, which nought, perhaps, but the apprehension of worldly shame and censure, restrains thee from indulging? In a word, why do “the
 “lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye,
 “and the pride of life,” engross thy whole time and attention?

None of you can deny, but that you have frequently felt such remonstrances

frances as these; that the Blessed Monitor within hath often thus shewn you to yourselves; and that if you have persisted in an ungodly course of life, it hath not been for want of repeated warnings. This Blessed Monitor is no other than the “Glory of the “Father” shining into the darkness of nature, and discovering to you your corruptions, to engage you to overcome or forsake them. Your turning to, and acceptance of this Glory, is your spiritual resurrection to Newness of Life. Your resisting it, is your condemnation here; and, if you persist in such resistance, must be your perdition hereafter.

The first appearance of Divine Grace upon the soul, is like the early dawn of morn, just opening to us a faint imperfect view of our inward state. If we embrace this cheering light, and walk therein, it will “shine more and

“ more unto the perfect day.” It is the peculiar property of the Fire of Heaven, to purify as well as enlighten; so that a sinner need not be discouraged by a view of his own corruption, but rather bless GOD for the discovery. Sin is a most dangerous rock, on which we should inevitably be shipwrecked, if Divine Light did not point it out, and Divine Love assist us to escape it.

On the other hand, this spiritual resurrection is checked or prevented by those, who shut their hearts against the first Beams of Grace, and fly from the Light, because it renders them uneasy and dissatisfied with themselves—Their minds are so far enlightened by it, as to see, that their present mode of life, their idle conversation, their amusements and diversions, their secret sins of pride, envy, and love of pleasure, are quite inconsistent with that still, retired,

retired, meek, humble, self-denying life, which the Religion of JESUS demands. Loth, therefore, to abandon their favourite pursuits, they shun the light that shews them their folly, and rush into darkness; that, by hiding themselves from themselves, they may sin in peace. Thus, by chusing darkness rather than light, they keep themselves in a state of death, and suffer not the power of CHRIST'S Resurrection to "raise them up to Newness of Life." They prefer the vanity of time, to the riches of eternity; the pleasures of sense, to the most pure and perfect spiritual delights; the life of brutes, to the life of Angels.

But I hope better things of you, my brethren—The Light still shines around you, if you will but open your eyes to see it; if you will but forsake the darkness to enjoy it. Remember, these two principles are incompatible; there is no communion betwixt them—no reconcil-

ing Heaven and earth, CHRIST and Be-
 lial. Worldly Pleasure and Devotion
 cannot subsist together. Diversions have
 no connection with the Two Sacraments:
 they are a breach of Baptifmal engage-
 ments, and repugnant to that Spiritual
 Communion, which we profess to recog-
 nize and renew in the LORD'S SUPPER--
 May GOD deliver us, therefore, from the
 dominion of a worldly spirit, and render
 us conformable to his dear SON, that so
 “ the same mind may be in us, that was
 “ also in CHRIST JESUS; and that, as
 “ he was raised up from the dead by the
 “ Glory of the Father, even so we also
 “ may walk in Newness of Life!”

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XVII.

ON A FUTURE RESURRECTION.

PREACHED ON EASTER DAY.

EZEKIEL, CHAP. xxxvii. VER. 3.

DISCOURSE XVII.

EZEKIEL, CHAP. xxxvii. VER. 3.

“ AND HE SAID UNTO ME, SON OF
“ MAN, CAN THESE BONES LIVE?
“ AND I ANSWERED, O LORD GOD,
“ THOU KNOWEST !”

BUT a very few weeks ago, the whole vegetable world, wrapt in the cold embraces of winter, laid to all appearance motionless and dead. The beautiful verdure that adorned the meadows and fields, was dried up and withered away. Plants, fruits and flowers disappeared; and every tree of the forest, stript of its leafy honours, stood like
a life-

a lifeless trunk! Had any of us, at that season, put this question to a skilful naturalist--Son of man, can all this dry and withered herbage, these leafless trees and plants, shoot forth again and live?--From experience and observation, he would doubtless have answered, without the least hesitation, in the affirmative; but not with the same humility and modest reference to the Knowledge and Goodness of the Most High, which distinguishes the Prophet's answer in my text. According to the course of nature, he might say, all the powers of vegetation will begin to operate upon the approach of spring: and a warm sun, gentle breezes, and refreshing rains, will call forth the latent principle of life from every tree and plant, and herb and seed: the fields, and meadows, and gardens, and forests, will smile with a beautiful resurrection, and all the senses will be regaled with an infinite variety of colours, forms, and odours.

But

But whence doth this reviving change in nature proceed? whence, but from the GOD of nature? The Source of Life, and Beauty, and Perfection, is hidden from the naturalist of this world: he can only speak from his observations of the workings of outward nature. But the Divine Naturalist, whose inward eye is opened and illuminated by the Light of another world, can see, and contemplate, and adore that Universal Principle of Life, which is perpetually manifesting himself to every object of universal nature, according to its capacity or aptitude to receive his enlivening beams: and therefore, the answer of such a Divine Philosopher to every question, that is put to him relative to the world of nature or of Grace, will be invariably the same—
 “ O LORD GOD, thou knowest!”—that is to say—All things are in thy hand, and at thy sovereign disposal, thou Maker and Governor of the universe! Separated

rated from thee, and thy life-giving, life-preserving energy, the whole creation of beings, material as well as intelligent, must remain in a state of death—and nought but the sending forth of thy genial ray and animating breath, can call them forth into a new life, and make them rise from their beds of darkness arrayed in robes of beauty, and aspiring to perfection.

Wrapt into prophetic vision, Ezekiel tells us, in the beginning of this chapter, that “ the hand of the LORD was
 “ upon him, and carried him out in
 “ the Spirit of the LORD, and set him
 “ down in a valley which was full of
 “ bones—and caused him to pass by
 “ them round about; and behold, says
 “ he, there were very many in the open
 “ valley; and lo, they were very dry—
 “ And he said unto me, Son of man,
 “ can these bones live? And I answered,
 “ O LORD GOD, thou knowest!—
 “ est!—

“ est!—Again he said unto me, Prophecy
 “ upon these bones, and say unto them,
 “ O ye dry bones! hear the word of the
 “ LORD—Thus saith the LORD GOD
 “ unto these bones—Behold, I will cause
 “ breath to enter into you, and ye shall
 “ live!”

Though this remarkable vision was exhibited to the inward eye of the Prophet, and its comfortable import communicated to him, and declared to relate primarily to a merciful visitation of the house of Israel, and their approaching deliverance from the distresses of captivity—yet, as no prophecy is of private interpretation, but every individual of the human race is alike concerned in its important contents; so it is with much truth and propriety, that spiritual men of every denomination have considered the vision before us, as a most awful and instructive representation of the two-fold resurrection of human nature,

ture, exprefsly revealed in Scripture : namely, its firft and fpiritual refurrection from the death of fin ; and its fecond refurrection, or the final releafe of the body from the bands of death and the imprifonment of the grave, and its reunion with the foul for ever.

The firft, or fpiritual refurrection, was the fubject of the preceding difcourfe. To the fecond, or the refurrection of the body, my text feems more particularly to refer ; even to that grand and awful period, when, as the Apoftle fublimely expreffes it, “ the trumpet fhall
 “ found, and the dead fhall be raifed
 “ incorruptible, and we fhall be changed ;
 “ when this corruptible fhall put on
 “ incorruption, and this mortal fhall put
 “ on immortality ;” when “ the dry
 “ bones” fhall once more be cloathed with finews and flefh ; when the breath of the Almighty fhall reanimate the
 lifelefs

lifeless dust, and every risen body shall be joined in an indissoluble union with its respective and immortal partner.

The process of the sufferings and death of the BLESSED JESUS, in the body that was prepared for him, we have already attended to, and seen the indispensable necessity of a like process in our own body. It is as necessary to the purification of our souls, and final resurrection of our bodies, as the decay of the husk or shell is to the springing forth of the small germe or life of the seed; or as fire is to the consumption of the gross compacted dark parts of the substance upon which it preys, that its pure and more spiritual parts may unite with their kindred element.

The resurrection of our LORD's body is a sufficient proof, without any other, of the necessity of our resurrection: we must pass through the same grave and

gate of death that he did, before we can enter into eternal life; with this only difference, that our material part must see corruption, which his did not.

And here let no one call in question the truth of our bodily resurrection, or attempt to argue, that if this be the case, our happiness will be delayed to the great day of judgment—No—the heavenly nature of the adorable JESUS, was in Paradise at the very time that his earthly body lay in the sepulchre—But we read not of his ascension into the Heaven of Heavens, and his session at the right hand of his Father, till forty days after the resurrection of his outward body. Hence it is, that our Church has been careful, particularly to express her belief of these important points, in that excellent service which we use at the burial of the dead.

“ We

“ We commit the body of our bro-
 “ ther, or sister, to the ground; earth
 “ to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
 “ in sure and certain hope of the resur-
 “ rection to eternal life, through our
 “ LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall
 “ change our vile body, that it may be
 “ like unto his glorious body, according
 “ to the mighty working, whereby he
 “ is able to subdue all things unto him-
 “ self.”

And, indeed, it is but reasonable to
 conclude, that, when the whole system
 of outward temporal nature shall undergo
 its last and final change, by the purify-
 ing fire of the Most High, our earthly
 bodies, which will still form part of that
 system, should partake of the glorious
 change, and be brought back with the
 rest of nature, to their primitive splen-
 dour and purity.

Again, in one of the collects of the same service, we pray in this manner: "Almighty GOD, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the LORD, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother, or sister, out of the miseries of this sinful world, beseeching thee, that it may please thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine Elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed hence in the true faith of thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in thine Eternal and Everlasting Glory, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

Now

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Now in this collect, though it is plainly implied, that the souls of the Righteous are in the hand of GOD, and “drinking of those rivers of pleasure” that surround his Throne, yet it is as plainly asserted, that till the general resurrection there will be no consummation or completion of bliss, both in body and soul.

“To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,” said our BLESSED LORD to the penitent thief—We need not doubt but the gracious promise was punctually fulfilled; and the very moment the Heaven-born Spirit had escaped from its tortured body, the whole Paradisiacal world was opened upon its senses, and it sat down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in as ample and glorious a manifestation of the kingdom of GOD, as its present nature and capacity would admit.

Away, then, with that idle and unscriptural notion of the quiescent state of the human soul, betwixt death and resurrection.—No sooner was the rich man summoned by the king of terrors to leave his voluptuous and polluted body, than in a moment “ he lifts
 “ up his eyes in torments.” No sooner was poor Lazarus released from his crazy, tottering, and distempered earthly frame, than he was transported in an instant to Abraham’s bosom—“ My desire is to
 “ depart, and to be with CHRIST,” said the Blessed Paul—“ Whilst I am pre-
 “ sent in the body, I am absent from
 “ the LORD—I would fain be absent
 “ from the body, that I may be pre-
 “ sent with the LORD.”—The full measure of retribution is doubtless reserved for the judgment of the Great Day—the final separation of the wheat from the chaff, of the righteous from the wicked, will not be accomplished till that awful hour, when all “ that
 “ are

“ are in the graves shall hear the voice
 “ of the SON OF GOD, and shall come
 “ forth; those that have done good to
 “ the Resurrection of Eternal Life, and
 “ those that have done evil to the resur-
 “ rection of damnation.” The identity
 of their persons will doubtless be ascer-
 tained; and men and angels will be
 witnesses to the equity of the Divine de-
 terminations.—

And does it seem strange to thee, O
 man! that GOD should raise the dead?
 Who raises the corn in thy fields? Who
 bids the fair flower spring up in thy gar-
 den from a seed that corrupts and dies?
 Nay, who called thyself from the dust,
 breathed into thy nostrils the breath of
 life, and made thee to become a living
 soul?

Call in reason to thine aid—poor,
 blind, benighted fallen reason, will
 be as much at a loss to account for

one, as for the other of these wonders of the Most High. Not a single object in the world around thee can thy reason fully unfold—the minutest insect, the worm on which thou tramplest, contains a mystery too deep for thine understanding to comprehend — wilt thou, then, call in question the Omnipotence of thy Creator? Humble thyself rather in the dust before him—acknowledge thy own blindness and presumption—and, if thy reason should ask thee, “Can these bones live?” answer with the meekness and modesty of the Prophet, “O LORD GOD! thou knowest:” alas! I cannot solve the difficulty—my LORD and GOD alone can tell me.—Impose silence upon thy pride and prejudices; hearken with simplicity to what thy GOD will answer thee concerning this matter—and thou wilt soon hear his voice in his outward revelation, corresponding to his voice within thy breast, and saying to thy soul—

“ Behold,

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“ Behold, I will cause breath to enter
“ into these dry bones, and they shall
“ live”—live for ever!

O joy unutterable! glad tidings to the friends and followers of the conquering JESUS! The earth quakes—the stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre—and humanity rises triumphant in the person of its REDEEMER. For us, and for our Salvation, hath this God-man burst the strong barriers of the grave, passed through the gates of death, and opened the chrystal portals of the World of Light. None of human kind are excepted—all are invited to follow this great Captain of their Salvation—to none is an entrance refused, but to those who wilfully and ungratefully flight the invitation, and prefer the short, fleeting, and unsatisfying pleasures of their earthly and fallen life, to the solid permanent joys of their Redeemed nature.

Alas!

Alas! we are all, by nature, in as bad a state as “the dry bones of the valley”—Nothing can deliver us from this state, or reanimate our lifeless forms, but the breath of the Almighty—the same power that created, can alone redeem—and this redemption can be accomplished in no other way, than the BLESSED JESUS hath exhibited to our view in his own awful process. We must “die unto sin, before we can live unto righteousness.” A deep conviction of the folly, vanity, and guilt of our fallen nature, and a full confidence in the All-sufficiency of Redeeming Love to rescue and deliver us, are the two indispensable requisites for this great work. The holy Heavenly Life and Spirit of the Immaculate Lamb of GOD must be revealed in our hearts: an intimate union and communion must be formed betwixt us and our Life-giving Saviour: we must dwell in CHRIST, and CHRIST in us: we

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we must be one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us—and then, and then only, will these “dry bones live,” and rise, and reign with their Deliverer for ever.

The food of this spiritual life, the real and only nourishment of this new-risen, heaven-born nature within us, is the Body and Blood of our dear Saviour, verily and indeed taken and received by the real Christian at all times, and in all places, but particularly, and above all, in the Blessed Sacrament of his own institution.

To this heavenly banquet, therefore, let us draw nigh with faith, not trusting in our own righteousness, but in the manifold and great mercies of GOD in CHRIST—A sensibility of our own weakness and unworthiness, is our best preparative for a worthy participation. The Holy, Heavenly, Healing Blood
of

of CHRIST, is the richest balfam for our wounded hearts! The Master of the feaft is even now waiting to bid us welcome to his table. “ The Meek
“ fhall eat, and be fatisfied”—they fhall feek, and find, and difcern the LORD’S Body there; and their fouls, revived and ftrengthened by fresh fupplies of Divine Light, and Life, and Love, fhall flourish, and bloffom, and bring forth fruits unto Life Eternal!

D I S C O U R S E XVIII.

ON THE EPISTLE FOR THE SUNDAY
AFTER ASCENSION-DAY.

I St. PETER, CHAP. iv. VER. 7, 8,
9, 10, 11.

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I St. PETER, CHAP. iv. VER. 7, 8,
9, 10, 11.

“ THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT
“ HAND: BE YE THEREFORE SO-
“ BER, AND WATCH UNTO PRAY-
“ ER. AND ABOVE ALL THINGS
“ HAVE FERVENT CHARITY AMONG
“ YOURSELVES; FOR CHARITY
“ SHALL COVER THE MULTITUDE
“ OF SINS. USE HOSPITALITY ONE
“ TO ANOTHER WITHOUT GRUD-
“ GING. AS EVERY MAN HATH
“ RECEIVED THE GIFT, EVEN SO
“ MINISTER THE SAME ONE TO
“ ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS
“ OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF
“ GOD.

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“ GOD. IF ANY MAN SPEAK, LET
“ HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES
“ OF GOD; IF ANY MAN MINI-
“ STER, LET HIM DO IT AS OF THE
“ ABILITY WHICH GOD GIVETH;
“ THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY
“ BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS
“ CHRIST; TO WHOM BE PRAISE
“ AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND
“ EVER! AMEN.”

THE Ascension of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, which we have lately commemorated, was the last step of that Redeeming Process, by which he triumphed over all the evil of fallen nature, opened the gates of everlasting life, and took his seat at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high. “ The heavens, therefore,” as the Apostle speaks, “ have received him till the time of the restitution of all things;” that
is

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is to say, till his mediatorial office is completed, and till all things are brought into that situation, which had been determined between him and his Father, in the councils of Eternal Wisdom.

Our church, in the whole course of her excellent service, seems to have been mindful of every part and circumstance of this great and glorious process. The collect for this day, at the same time that it reminds us of our LORD's exaltation, calls upon us to pray for those gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, the extraordinary manifestation of which we are taught to commemorate at the approaching festival.

The epistle for the day, which I have just read to you, seems to have been wisely selected to point out this admirable lesson of instruction, that as our BLESSED REDEEMER had finished "the work" in his own person, which his "Heavenly

“ Father had given him to do,” nothing now remained, but that every one of that fallen race, whom he came to redeem, should, in their own persons, lovingly co-operate with this Universal SAVIOUR, in their own particular redemption. This exhortation is comprised in several precepts, which are introduced and enforced by one of the most awful and alarming motives, that could possibly have entered into the mind of the Apostle. “ The end of all things is “ at hand,” says he. Surely the blessed Apostle could not have been deceived ; and yet, 1700 years have passed, since these words were written, and the end is not come. Nevertheless, the words were literally true at that time ; they have been so ever since ; and they are so now.

“ The end of all things is” indeed “ at hand”—We need not pore over the comments of ancient or modern Divines,
to

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to discover when these words will be fulfilled. We need not look into the vain calculations of those, who have endeavoured to ascertain the exact period of time, when the kingdom of anti-christ shall be overthrown, and CHRIST himself shall come to receive his own children into a new heaven and a new earth. With respect to every one of us that are here assembled, “ the end of all things “ is at hand.”—Some of us, within a very few years, and some, perhaps, within a very few days, may behold the curtain drop, and shut out every scene of temporal nature from our view.—“ The heavens and the earth will then “ pass away with a mighty noise; the “ sun will be darkened, and the moon “ turned into blood; the stars fall from “ their orbits, and the powers of heaven “ will be shaken.”—Death, judgment, heaven, or hell, will then be realized to our souls—“ He that is holy will then “ be holy still, and he that is filthy will

“ be filthy still.” The mortal life of man will terminate the season of Divine Grace ; and his hopes or his fears, his happiness or his misery, will be confirmed by his last expiring breath.

And is this awful period, indeed, so near at hand ? Doubtless it is—and its arrival is frequently sudden and instantaneous. The king of terrors often knocks at the door, when the master of the house is by no means prepared for the awful visit. Nay, he frequently passes by the habitations of age, infirmity, and distress, and thunders forth his tremendous summons in the ears of the young, the gay, and the robust. Even piety and virtue cannot screen their votaries from his unerring shafts, but he sometimes snatches away the most amiable patterns and examples of both, to awaken the attention, and chastise the carelessness and security of their friends and neighbours.

If these things are so, tremble, thou thoughtless sinner, that art unprepared to die! With respect to thee, “ the end of all things is at hand”—“ To-day, if thou wilt hear the voice of Truth, O harden not thine heart!” Hear it from the mouth of his own blessed Apostle! and learn from hence the only true prescription that can render thee unappalled at the approaches of death—“ Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

Sober? says the decent, delicate moralist—an excellent injunction, and worthy the pen of an Apostle!—Intemperance is, in every respect, unbecoming a rational creature; and of all kinds of intemperance, drunkenness certainly degrades him most, and reduces him below the level of his fellow-brutes. So far, thou sayest well—But the sobriety here spoken of by the Apostle, has a deeper root than this, and far more

branches than thou hast enumerated. Poor superficial observer ! didst thou but see into the depth of thine own heart, thou wouldst find thyself subjected to far more than one species of intoxication.—Thou lookest with contempt upon the drunkard ; and art ready to cry out, in all the pride of philosophic abstinence, “ Stand off from me, for I am holier than thou !” But thou perceivest not, that thou thyself art under the power of a more dangerous kind of intemperance—that thou art intoxicated with pride, ambition, envy, covetousness, lust, or wrath. Know then, that the sobriety here recommended to thee, as a preparation for thine approaching end, includes every grace and virtue that stands opposed to these odious vices. To be sober, is not only to be temperate with respect to eating and drinking, and other bodily gratifications ; but it is to be meek, humble, benevolent, and charitable. The good Apostle, therefore, proceeds

ceeds to tell thee, in what manner reluctant nature may be subdued, and Grace and Goodness ingrafted, and made to flourish within thee.

“ Watch unto prayer,” says he : that is, pray, and watch over thy prayer—But who does not pray ? Every man and woman in the world, strange as it may seem, are perpetually at their prayers. They do not all pray to the same God ; and too few, I fear, pray to the true God. Whatever object our wills and affections are centered upon, this is our God, and to this we offer up our most hearty devotions. Every passion of fallen nature has its numerous votaries, and their desire of gratifying it is their constant prayer. But let us once be convinced, that these passions are in themselves evil, and that the gratification of them must terminate in our misery ; and, in consequence of this, let us once be led to look up, with a longing restless

desire, to a Superior Power, to aid us in the conquest of these passions, and to call forth holy, pure, and heavenly affections in their stead : this desire, thus operating, will form a true and most effectual prayer. Our utmost vigilance will be exercised to have it accomplished. We shall not only watch against the sly insidious attacks of the enemies of our peace ; but we shall also watch for the blessed increase and improvement of those Divine Powers and Virtues, by which alone we can be enabled to subdue them.

Sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer, if I may use the moralist's distinction, comprehend the duties we owe to ourselves. But, to speak in the language of a Christian, they are the evidences of that internal conviction which the Grace of God hath wrought in our hearts, by which we have discovered our own indwelling corruption, and earnestly desire
and

and strive, under the same Grace, to obtain an effectual deliverance from it.

The Apostle next recommends the practice of certain duties to our brethren, as the surest and most infallible criterion of the sincerity of our Christian profession. “ And above all things,” says he, “ have fervent charity among yourselves ; “ for charity shall cover the multitude “ of sins.”

How wretchedly hath this text been misapplied, and how frequently hath the apostle been made, from thence, to inculcate a doctrine diametrically opposite to the very genius and spirit of the Gospel ? Many a poor mortal hath, in his last moments, sung a requiem to his soul, and vainly anticipated an imaginary paradise, because, in the course of his life, or by his last will and testament, he hath bestowed considerable charities upon the poor ; falsely and unhappily concluding,
that

that fuch charities as thefe will cover, or abolifh, the multitude of his fins.

We are told by another of the Inspired Apoftles, that “ we may give all our “ goods to feed the poor, and yet not “ have true charity.” The charity therefore mentioned in both thefe places, muft be very different from alms-giving, which is only one of its fhoots or branches. It is no other than the Love of GOD fhed abroad in our hearts by his Bleffed Spirit, infpiring us with an Heavenly Principle of Love to our brethren ; a love that is fervent, univerfal, impartial, like the Source from whence it flows, dealing its fmiles and favours all around !

Confidered with refpect to the objects upon whom it is exercifed, it may be truly faid to “ cover a multitude of fins,” becaufe it looks, not to their vices, but to their real wants and neceffities. It throws
a mantle

a mantle over every human weakness and corruption, and suffers no part of our nature to be exposed, but its indigence and distress.

If this interpretation be not approved, and it should still be thought, that it is our own sins, and not those of our neighbours, which are thus covered by charity; I could agree even to this construction. For wherever Divine Love enters the breast, it excludes every false and sinful love: it consumes, in its own heavenly flame, every thing that is earthly, sensual, devilish; and thus covers and extinguishes corruption for ever.—Not that alms-giving is by any means to be neglected—it cannot be so, where there is true Love, which will ever operate in this way, when objects present themselves; for the very next precept of the Apostle, grounded upon this, includes alms-giving.

“ Use

“ Use hospitality one to another,” says he, “ without grudging.” The most perfect pattern of Divine Philanthropy extended his universal beneficence to the bodies, as well as the souls, of those whom he came to redeem: and though he had neither silver nor gold, yet such as he had, he freely and generously imparted. His heart was open to receive every repentant sinner, and his hands were stretched forth to relieve their infirmities. Hospitality implies in it every office of tenderness, sympathy, and benevolence, which man can shew to man. But be it remembered, my brethren, that none but the real Christian can exercise this virtue without grudging; that is to say, without some selfish feeling, some avaricious reluctance, or some proud and ungenerous self-applause. To do good for Goodness sake, for the love of Goodness, without the least view to any selfish gratification, is the sure and only evidence of pure
Charity—

Charity—And to shew how unreasonable, as well as unchristian it is, to act from any other motive or principle; the Apostle reminds us in the next verse, that all the Goodness we have, and all the power of doing good, is not our own, but is the free and gracious gift of God himself.

“ As every man hath received the gift,
 “ even so minister the same one to ano-
 “ ther, as good stewards of the manifold
 “ Grace of God. If any man speak,
 “ let him speak as the oracles of God.
 “ If any man minister, let him do it as
 “ of the ability which God giveth.”

The pride of man, in his unregenerate state, cannot brook to be told this Evangelical Truth. He claims every thing as his own, and is not willing to give his Maker credit for a single blessing which he enjoys. Hence the rich man glories in his riches, and the mighty man in his strength :

strength : the philosopher prides himself upon the depth of his understanding, and the discoveries he has made by the power of his own penetrating genius : and, shall I say it ? even the Divine himself, improperly indeed so called, is desirous that his hearers should applaud his discourses, as the fruits of his own spiritual discernment. Whereas, in truth, my brethren, all spiritual, as well as temporal blessings, all inward as well as outward advantages, are no other than so many different manifestations of the Manifold Grace of GOD ; they are freely dispensed to us from his munificent hands ; they are not ours—we are but stewards, bound to distribute them according to the ability we have received from GOD.

Those, therefore, who are favoured with outward gifts, and called to the ministration of the temporal blessings of GOD, should never fail to reason in this manner—

manner—What have I, that I have not received? The good providence of GOD hath loaded my coffers with worldly treasure—for what?—not surely to consume it in the gratification of those evil desires, which I brought with me into the world, and which, if not subdued, must plunge my soul into exquisite misery. No—the GOD of LOVE hath thus blessed me, that I might be the means of distributing his bounty to others. My bosom glows with the very thought! As a steward of the Most High, I am determined, by his Grace, to deal out his own treasures with a liberal, not a grudging hand; to seek the melancholy retreats of indigence and woe, to revive the fainting spirits of the hungry, and raise a smile of chearful gratitude upon the countenance of the sick and afflicted. My hospitable door shall be open to the stranger, and my face shall never be turned from the cries of the poor!

In

In like manner, those, who are favoured with spiritual gifts, should consider themselves merely as stewards, entrusted with them for the edification of the family of CHRIST. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” The same sun and air impart their sweet and salutary influences to the various flowers and herbs with which your gardens are stored. Each has its particular virtues, colours, and odours. Each contributes its share to your pleasure or profit. But there is no grudging, no envying of each others gifts. The sweet, but humble violet, envies not the superior height and fragrance of the lilly. The richly variegated tulip looks not down with contempt on the pale and modest hyacinth. Each pours the gifts it has received with undistinguishing liberality all around. And if there is no passing pilgrim to enjoy those gifts, they return them to the sun and
and

and air, from whence they received them.

O what lessons of wisdom may the devout Christian learn from every plant in his garden! “Go, and do thou likewise,” is the language in which they silently address him. Thou minister of JESUS! freely give what thou hast freely received. “If thou speakest, speak as the oracles of GOD”—speak according to the Revelation with which thou hast been favoured. The Oracle of GOD must first declare his will in thy heart, or thou canst not declare it with truth to thy brethren. “If thou dost minister, do it as of the ability which GOD giveth.”—Not a single good thought hast thou of thine own! Art thou blessed with any communications of Divine Truth, dispense them cheerfully as coming from GOD, through thee. Envy not the superior gifts of thy brethren. Thy smaller humbler graces are as necessary

to the perfection of the mystical body, as those of an higher and more illustrious kind. Bless GOD for the gifts of others, as readily and ardently as for thine own. It is thus that "GOD will, in
 " all things, be glorified through JESUS
 " CHRIST."

The Glory of GOD, in its fullest and highest manifestation, is in the Person of " his own Eternal Son, GOD OF GOD, " LIGHT OF LIGHT." But he is glorified in us and by us, when the Image of his Son is born and formed in our hearts; when the reality of this New-Birth, this living principle of goodness and truth is manifested to ourselves as well as others, by such an inward unfolding of heavenly sensibilities, and such an outward practice of heavenly virtues, as hath been recommended to you, from the words of the Apostle in my text.

" Glory,

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“ Glory, Praise, and Dominion,” therefore, we ascribe to GOD in the only true and proper sense of these expressions, when we suffer his glory to be displayed, his praise to be proclaimed, and his dominion acknowledged, in the temple of our hearts. In this only true and proper sense, may we all be enabled to ascribe “ this glory, praise, and dominion, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ONE GOD, blessed for evermore.” Amen!

DISCOURSE XIX.

PREACHED ON WHITSUNDAY.

GALATIANS, CHAP. iv. VER. 6.

DISCOURSE XIX.

GALATIANS, CHAP. iv. VER. 6.

“ AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, GOD
“ HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT
“ OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS,
“ CRYING, ABBA, FATHER!”

“ **T**HE natural man receiveth
“ not the things of the Spi-
“ rit of GOD, for they are foolishness
“ unto him; neither can he know
“ them, because they are spiritually
“ discerned.” Scripture is best inter-
“ preted by Scripture; and were it cus-
“ tomary to make use of two separate
“ texts for the subject of a discourse, I

should not hesitate, on the present occasion, to fix upon those which I have just read to you, as they so evidently explain and illustrate each other. They doubtless refer to two different natures, lives, or principles, which man brings with him into the world. The Apostle could never have told his Galatian brethren indiscriminately, that they were “Sons,” and that for this reason “GOD
 “had sent forth the Spirit of his SON
 “into their hearts;” if they had not been possessed of an heavenly nature or principle, through the Redeeming Grace of CHRIST, by virtue of whose mediation alone they could properly be called “Sons.” On the other hand, the same Blessed Apostle could never have told his Corinthian brethren indiscriminately, that “the natural man receiveth not the
 “things of the Spirit of GOD, neither
 “can know them;” had there not been another principle or nature in man, opposed

posed to the celestial seed of life, and incapable of being wrought upon by the Divine Spirit. To this latter principle, called the natural man, “the things of God are,” and must ever be, “foolishness.” Had we brought no other principle with us into the world, there could have been no more possibility of our being redeemed, and raised up into a spiritual and heavenly life, than there could be for a plant to spring forth from the ground, without its proper seed having been sown there.

It is a truth, therefore, on which our eternal Salvation rests, that we all have within us, according to the language of Scripture, “an incorruptible seed of the Word of God;” and that though our “natural man,” which we receive from the first Adam, (under which we are born into this world “children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins”) “receiveth not the things
“ of

“ of GOD; though they are foolishness
 “ unto him, and he cannot know them,
 “ because they are spiritually discerned;”
 yet GOD was graciously pleased, by
 his own free gift in JESUS CHRIST,
 to impart to our first progenitor, and,
 through him, to all his posterity, “ a
 “ seed of the woman, a spiritual Jacob,
 “ a Son of the free woman, an Heir of
 “ the promise, to bruise the serpent’s
 “ head,” to overcome the spiritual Esau,
 to cast out the Son of the bond-woman,
 and to receive the promised inheritance.
 It is by virtue of this free gift of
 Heaven to fallen man, that he is put
 into a capacity of being redeemed. It
 is by virtue of this, that he can say,
 with the Apostle St. John, “ Behold
 “ what manner of love the Father hath
 “ bestowed upon us, that we should be
 “ called the sons of GOD.” It is by
 virtue of this, or as my text expresses it,
 “ because we are sons,” that GOD hath
 “ sent

“ sent forth the Spirit of his SON into
 “ our hearts, crying, Abba, Father !”

Having thus pointed out to you, from Scripture, the foundation which JESUS CHRIST himself hath laid in every man’s heart, for carrying on the great and salutary purpose of Redemption ; let us attend to the manner, in which this process of Love is accomplished, which my text expresses, by “ GOD’S sending
 “ forth the Spirit of his SON into our
 “ hearts.”

I shall not at present dwell upon the narrative of that awful and glorious transaction, which gave rise to this day’s solemnity. I shall only observe, that the whole of it must be spiritually fulfilled within our souls, or we cannot derive the least advantage from it. A mere historical faith in the event itself, as recorded in the Scriptures, will stand us in no stead.

The

The Holy Ghost, co-eternal and co-essential with the Father and the Son, the author and giver of life, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, and eternally shedding abroad his life-giving influence throughout the whole universe of being—this “Holy Ghost” himself must “come upon us, this power of the Highest must overshadow us; like a rushing mighty wind,” he must enter into, and fill the temple of our hearts; call forth the hidden Seed of Heaven, into a new Birth; enable it to breathe, and live, and act, to “speak with other tongues,” to seek its PARENT GOD, and to sound forth the praises of its Redeemer. The bestial and diabolical nature, the “man of sin, the son of perdition” the reprobate, will fly before this wind of Heaven, whilst the “Elect, the called, the chosen,” the sanctified nature, will be thereby awakened, cherished, and strengthened.

“He

“ He HATH sent the Spirit of his Son
“ into your hearts.” The Apostle does
not say, he WILL send. The very mo-
ment a child is born into this world,
the air of this world is ready to meet it,
that its animal life may be supported
by the inspiration and respiration of
this air. And can we think, that GOD,
who hath provided thus liberally and
universally for the support of our ani-
mal life, hath not also provided as li-
berally and universally for the support
of our spiritual life? Certainly he
hath. His spirit is perpetually moving
upon the face of all fallen nature. It
is a truth to be met with in almost
every page of our Bibles, and which our
church hath adopted in every part of
her excellent liturgy, that the Real Chris-
tian can only be supported by the im-
mediate perpetual inspiration of the Holy
Ghost. I could enumerate many col-
lects and other parts of our service,
which we never repeat, without pro-
fessing

feeling to believe the doctrine of immediate inspiration. Nor have we any more reason to be offended at the word “immediate,” when applied to our spiritual life, than when it is said, that our animal life depends upon the immediate and constant inspiration of the air around us. The awakening and bringing to full maturity the Child of GOD in the human heart, is the blessed operation of the Holy Ghost, whom we properly call, in one of our Creeds, “the Lord and
 “giver of life, and whom GOD “sends
 “forth into our hearts” for this very purpose.

But some perhaps may be ready to say—If there be, indeed, such an offspring of the Divinity in every man’s breast, and if the Holy Spirit is so universal in its operation; whence is it, that every man in the world does not feel this Heavenly inspiration, and in
 consequence

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consequence of it, live and act as a Child of GOD? This question may be fully and satisfactorily answered from Scripture itself. “Light is come into the world
“ —but men loved darkness rather than
“ light, because their deeds were evil”—
“ Ye will not come unto me, that ye
“ might have life.” Leaving all systems of Divinity, and all comments upon these words, I think common sense will direct us at first sight to their plain and obvious meaning. They certainly establish the Universality of the Spirit’s operations, and at the same time give the only true reason of their frequent failure of success.

Still, however, it may be asked, supposing this to be true, in what manner does this Universal Spirit make himself known, and how are his influences felt and distinguished in the mind of man? My text solves this question:

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question: “ God hath sent forth the
“ Spirit of his Son into your hearts,
“ crying, Abba, Father !”

And where is that human heart, in which this cry of the Blessed Spirit hath not at one time or other been heard? The vicious hear it as well as the virtuous, the sinner as well as the faint; with this difference indeed, that the latter attend with pleasure and delight to its Heavenly Voice, and suffer the Heavenly Offspring within them to cry through the Spirit to its parent, for its proper food and nourishment; whereas the former, though they cannot but hear, yet seek to drown its gentle voice, by turning to the clamours of earthly passions, and suffering the tender plant of Paradise to pine away for want of its true Spiritual sustenance,

Ah,

Ah, thoughtless finner! that art perpetually “ spending thy money for that
 “ which is not bread, and thy labour
 “ for that which satisfieth not!” the pampering of thy bestial and diabolical nature, engrosses thy whole attention and sollicitude; “ What shall I eat,
 “ what shall I drink, and wherewithal
 “ shall I be cloathed?” how shall I obtain such or such an object, which avarice, ambition, or sensuality, hungers after? what method shall I take, to have the calls of envy, malice, or resentment, fully gratified?—These are the anxious cares and pursuits, in which a worldly spirit is perpetually involving thee: and thus it is, that thou art inspiring its poisonous breath, which will ere long contaminate thy whole frame, and plunge thee into irremediable woe! Happy thou canst not be: enjoyment in every instance mocks thy most sanguine expectations, and disappointment treads close upon the heels

of worldly hope. Still, however, thou pursuest the phantom—and neglectest the only real object that can give thee peace here, and glory hereafter.

Cruel and relentless! to crush the tender plant—to deny it the sustenance, which Heaven hath prepared—to stifle the infant Angel in its birth!—O heart of stone! why art thou not pierced by its voice?—“Abba, Father!” it cries—or fain would cry—release me from this bondage of earth and hell!—unite me to thyself—Enliven—support—and give me the dominion over this reprobate nature, in which I am entombed!—No—thou repliest—“Away with him, “away with him,—crucify him!” And crucify him thou dost, whenever thou resistest those powerful calls and warnings, which are given thee by sickness, by affliction, by the ministration of God’s Word, and the various dispensations of his Providence.—Turn thee,

thee, alas! ere it be too late; ere the Light within thee, by thy own obstinate resistance of its beams, be turned into darkness; ere the breath of the Divine Spirit ceaseth to move over the Deep of thy fallen nature; ere the dissolution of thine outward body leaves thy naked spirit deprived of the Light and Air of Heaven, condemned to dwell with congenial spirits of darkness, in unextinguishable flames!

But who is yonder pensive mourner, whose reclined head, and sad dejected countenance, speak more than common anguish and distress? “Behold, I am vile!” methinks I hear her say—“I was conceived in sin, and born in iniquity—The imaginations of my heart are only evil continually—My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head! Ungrateful rebel against the God of
C c 2 “ Love!

“ Love! who shall deliver me from
 “ this body of sin and death?”—Peace,
 thou child of sorrow!—who told thee
 these melancholy tidings? Who told
 thee thou wast vile, ungrateful, and
 rebellious! It was the Spirit of
 Truth himself. But he did not tell
 thee this, to distress thee beyond
 hope—it was only to shew thee thine
 own weakness, and the power of
 thine adversary. Cease, therefore, from
 the workings of thine own disturbed
 imagination—Thou wilt find a Friend
 within thee, whose mild and gentle
 voice will speak peace and comfort to
 thy soul—The distress that thou hast
 felt, and dost now feel, proceeds only
 from the awakened desire of the Child
 of Heaven within thee—It hath long
 been crying, “ Abba, Father!” though
 thou hast not yet understood its plain-
 tive language. O suffer it still to cry
 —and mingle not thine earthly passions
 with

with its virtuous and pure desires! He that feedeth the young ravens, cannot be insensible to its wants, but will fend it its proper food in due season.

“ Abba, Father!” methinks I hear another say—Full well I know these pleasing sounds—this language of Love is familiar to my soul! I felt it long before I understood its glorious import. With far more freedom than I could ask any earthly parent to supply my temporal wants, I now cry, “ Abba, “ Father!” to my redeeming God. What though doubt, and darkness, and affliction, and temptations of every kind, do frequently surround me, yet I know in whom I have trusted. I know the Blessed Source, from whence my strength and consolation must proceed. “ Who shall lay any thing to the “ charge of God’s Elect? It is God “ that justifieth!”—“ The law of the “ Spirit of Life hath made me free
 C c 3 “ from

“ from the law of sin and death.” This Spirit of Life hath begun, and I have a sweet hope, that he will accomplish his salutary work in my soul. The sinful suggestions, snares, and temptations of my natural man, I feel, and expect to feel, till this body of sin be laid breathless in the grave: but though I do feel them, though I shall feel them, though they are the Cross which I must bear, the warfare in which I must persevere as long as I live; though I cannot be permitted to lay down my arms till the battle is fought, till the victory is won, till, with my Dying Lord, I can say, “ It is finished;” yet, from a repeated experience of the power of his Grace, and the largeness of his Love, I am even now enabled to say, “ Thanks be to God, who giveth
 “ me the victory, through JESUS CHRIST
 “ my LORD!” Though future difficulties, dangers, and temptations, should present themselves to my view—yea,
 “ though I should walk through the
 “ valley

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“ valley of the shadow of death—I will
“ fear no evil.” For I have an humble
hope and happy confidence, that my
Redeemer will be with me; that his
rod and staff will support me; and that,
through realms of darkness, and legions
of devils, he will conduct me safe to his
own bright Abodes of Everlasting Life,
and Light, and Love.



D I S C O U R S E XX.

THE GROUND AND NATURE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

HABAKKUK, CHAP. ii. VER. 20.

This discourse was preached at the
Opening of a New Church, called
ALL SAINTS CHURCH, in PENN-
SYLVANIA, November 7th, 1773.

DISCOURSE XX.

HABAKKUK, CHAP. ii. VER. 20.

2

“THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE:
“LET ALL THE EARTH KEEP SI-
“LENCE BEFORE HIM.”

I Cannot enter upon the subject, which I have made choice of for the present solemn occasion, without congratulating my audience, my countrymen, yea, all the inhabitants of this western world, upon the rapid progress which True Religion hath already made on this American continent. The raven wing
of

of the Apostate Seraph had for ages been spread over its dark and trackless deserts, brooding over and cherishing his own gloomy offspring, ignorance, error, superstition, and wrath, in every savage breast. Though “the LORD was at all times in his Holy Temple,” though “the earth and the fullness thereof was his,” though his Illuminating and Beatifying Presence was never limited to any part or parts of the great Temple of the Universe, but shone with as bright a lustre in these western wilds, as in the most flourishing churches of the east; yet the darkness of untaught nature could not comprehend him. Though as near to the roaming Indian, as to the Heaventaught Patriarch, Prophet, and Apostle; though “in him he lived, and moved, and had his being” as much as they; yet, wanting the aids of an Outward Revelation, he knew not where to seek, or how to serve him,

Doubtless,

Doubtless, the seeds or principles of Truth and Goodness are implanted in every human heart. Some Glimpses of Heaven, some Touches of Virtue, have been seen or felt by the darkest of mortals, in their darkest state. The sweetness hath, no doubt, been grateful to their souls; but ignorant of the Blessed Source from whence it came, they have been incapable of improving the little they had received, or of applying for more. “ How beautiful, “ then, upon the mountains, must be the “ feet of those that bring good tidings, “ that publish peace; that bring good “ tidings of good, that publish Salva- “ tion; that say unto Zion, Thy God “ reigneth!” How welcome the watchmen that lift up their voices in the darkest corners of the Temple! who announce to those who sit in darkness there, that “ the LORD is in his Holy “ Temple;” and proclaim the true mode of worship, and only acceptable homage, that his creatures can render him, by
 calling

calling upon the whole “ earth to be
 “ silent before him.” How pleasing
 and glorious too, are the effects of this
 ministration? “ The wilderneys and the
 “ solitary place are thereby made glad—
 “ The desert rejoices, and blossoms as
 “ the rose!” The very soil and its
 productions, are sanctified; and goodly
 Churches are erected, and true spiritual
 worship is performed, on those very spots,
 perhaps, where savage men and savage
 demons had heretofore held their infernal
 orgies.

The progress of civilization among our
 Indian natives, hath not indeed been very
 rapid; and consequently, but few of their
 numerous tribes have yet been converted
 to Christianity. But we trust, that
 the same good Providence, who, for his
 own wise and gracious purposes, and not
 for any merit or righteousness of ours,
 hath given us possession of their territo-
 ries, will render us, ere long, instru-
 mental

mental of the greatest good to them; and for the temporal inheritance, which we have acquired among them, will, through our means, secure to them or to their children, an inheritance of Truth and Virtue here, and of immortal Glory hereafter.

In this view, and as tending to the accomplishment of this great purpose, I consider the erection of every new Church for Protestant worship in these colonies; and doubt not, but such Labours of Love will be remembered by the GOD OF LOVE, to all those, who, with cheerful hearts and liberal hands, have contributed thereunto.

Much Christian commendation, therefore, my brethren, are we warranted from Scripture to give to you, who have at your own private cost erected this plain, decent, and commodious building; and are now assembled, to dedicate it, with
all

all due solemnity, to the service of your GOD, and the GOD of your fathers.

This external dedication, or setting apart of the edifice itself to sacred uses, is a ceremony highly decent and proper, and founded upon primitive and patriarchal, as well as legal and evangelical usage—The different modes of doing this, avail but little—the intention is good and pious, by whatever form it may be executed.

But more than this remains to be done—The Dedication of yourselves, your souls and bodies, all that you are, and all that you have, to the LORD, as your just and reasonable service, is the subject which I would principally enlarge upon, as being the best improvement of the present occasion. You have built a Temple unto the LORD. It is an “Holy Temple,” as being dedicated to none but holy uses—“The
 “LORD

“ LORD is in his Holy Temple : let all
 “ the earth keep Silence before him.”

This sublime declaration and solemn precept of the Prophet, may be considered as relative to the proper Worship of GOD both in public and private. Indeed, these two kinds of Worship are necessarily connected, one being always preparatory to the other.

The Knowledge of GOD must be first obtained, before we can have any idea of the Worship that will be acceptable to him. But how is this Knowledge to be obtained ? where are we to go in quest of this most Desirable Object ? how are we to discover the Lovely Footsteps of Divinity ?

In vain do we seek for GOD in arguments and reasonings : the knowledge of his existence and attributes, collected from the works of nature, may

satisfy our understandings, but cannot comfort our hearts. His own Blessed Revelation, without which we could never have known where to look for him, directs us to our own hearts.— There is his Holy Temple, in which he is to be spiritually worshipped— we must find, we must feel his Presence there—till we do so, we cannot be said to have any true Knowledge of him. Thou canst never reason the Atheist into an hearty belief of the existence of GOD—thou canst never argue the Deist into a conviction of the necessity of a Redeemer—The evils and miseries of their present state of existence, must be intimately felt by both, before they can be led to look up for support and consolation to a Power superior to their own weak nature.

Call off, therefore, O man! thine attention from outward things; and
bow

bow thyself before the High God, in the Temple of thine own Heart! It is no difficult matter to inform thyself, when and how his Presence is manifested within thee, when he speaks, and what must be thy answer. His own Scriptures have given thee ample direction upon this important subject.

Every good and virtuous thought, every sensibility of Meekness, Humility, Patience, Resignation, and Love; every little rising of conscience against the suggestions of vice; every little check or reproach thou feelest for an unworthy thought, or a shameful action—all, all bespeak a Present DEITY—a GOD and SAVIOUR, seeking to make himself known to thee in his Holy Temple; to awaken thee from the death of a sinful earthly nature, in which thy Immortal Spirit is imprisoned; and to give thee Life, Heavenly Life and Liberty. O turn thee, then, to

this Propitious GOD! “ Let all that is
 “ of earth within thee, keep silence
 “ before him.”

It is true, the first appearances of the Divinity to the fallen spirit of man, are faint and shadowy, like the first feeble ray of morn that shoots athwart the gloom of night. But do thou observe the precept of the Prophet in my text; wait, and watch, in Awful Stillness; impose silence on the clamorous calls of every earth-born appetite and passion! stand in Meekness and Humility, with thine inward eye turned towards these first Emanations of Divine Light, and thou shalt soon perceive “ the Day dawn, and the Day-Star rise upon thy soul.”

Such is in general the nature of that private Worship, which man must offer up to GOD, in the Temple of his own Heart—Yea, and let me add, my brethren,

thren, that this Private Worship is the “Prayer without ceasing,” which the Apostle enjoins. We are never safe a moment, unless we are in this praying state, unless this be the habitual frame of our souls.

By this Awful Silence, and Waiting upon the LORD in his Temple, we place ourselves, as it were, upon hallowed ground; and, if I may borrow an image from ancient superstition, a magic Circle of Heavenly Light and Lustre is drawn round us,—nor will the dark malicious enchanter, who only rules in Earth and Hell, dare to approach its radiant limits.

When our hearts are thus fitted and disposed by inward and private Worship and Communion with GOD, we are not to neglect the assembling of ourselves in the outward Temple of the LORD’s House. “We are to enter into his

“ gates with thanksgiving, and into
 “ his courts with praise.”—We must
 mingle our prayers and praises with our
 assembled brethren—The devout flame
 will thus be kindled from breast to
 breast—By a more than human Sym-
 pathy, each will assist his fellow-wor-
 shippers ; each will offer up his incense
 from the golden censer in his own
 heart ; whilst the whole ascends in one
 fragrant cloud to the Throne of Grace,
 and is returned upon the humble wor-
 shippers in showers of Divine Benignity
 and Love.

As the true and acceptable Worship
 of GOD, is emphatically expressed in
 my text, by “ keeping Silence before
 “ him ;” it may be necessary to explain
 more particularly what this awful silence
 means, when applied to Public Worship,
 which seems to require a vocal and ar-
 ticulate expression of our inward feel-
 ings.

Were

Were we all pure spirit, unembarrassed with these gross vehicles of clay, there is no doubt, but we might, even publicly, join in Silent Worship, and catch the fervours of devotion from each other, without the intervention of speech or corporeal sound. Or could we conceive an whole assembly of real Christians, so far raised above the sensations of flesh and blood, as to be alike capable of this pure spiritual intercourse with Heaven; I see no reason, why such an assembly might not publicly worship GOD in this silent spiritual way. But inasmuch as the utmost stretch of charity could not lead us to form such a judgment of any assembly upon earth, and as the present fallen state of human nature renders it necessary for the most advanced Christians to avail themselves of external aids, so the Church of GOD, in every age, has had recourse to them, and the SON OF GOD himself hath thought proper to institute

outward ceremonies, accompanied by outward forms of prayer and thanksgiving, to assist us in this imperfect state. Were we Angels, we might worship as Angels ; but whilst we are mere mortals, we can only worship as Men.

Indeed, we can have but very inadequate ideas of the Worship rendered to the great Creator by Angels and glorified Spirits. There is something, however, inconceivably awful and sublime in a few expressions which we meet with in the Revelation of St. John : “ There was Silence in Heaven for about “ the space of half an hour.”

“ There is,” says a truly enlightened Christian, “ a Communion, which language cannot express, a Worship, that wants not the aid of words, nor is it to be defined by an harmony of sounds, in which we approach the Sacred Author of Unutterable LOVE !”

“ When

“ When there was Silence in Heaven
 “ for about the space of half an hour”—
 when the vocal tribute of “ Holy, Holy,
 “ Holy !” and the Hallelujahs of sancti-
 fied spirits in endless felicity, were sus-
 pended—their Worship still continued
 in awful, holy, solemn, inconceivable SI-
 LENCE ! It was a rapturous adoration,
 too copious for language to express—
 For no power of eloquence can suffi-
 ciently acknowledge the obligation and
 reverence we owe to his Infinite Ma-
 jesty, who fills Heaven and Earth with
 his GLORY and GOODNESS.”

Doubtless there are times, when the
 sanctified soul is constrained, as it were,
 to offer up the silent sacrifice of the
 spirit, and when the sacrifice of words
 must fail. Nor is this spiritual Wor-
 ship in the least checked, but rather
 promoted by public prayers and praises
 in the House of GOD—The flame once
 raised by outward helps, will continue
 to

to blaze, when every form and appearance of the fuel is gone.

Our excellent Liturgy is admirably adapted to this solemn and spiritual Worship. The rests and pauses, in the different parts of it, where the congregation are silent, and the minister alone reads or prays, affords every worshipper a full opportunity of making this silent sacrifice—of humbling himself before the LORD in his Temple, of breathing forth his own deep-felt wants, and waiting in Stillness for an answer of Peace.

In a word, when applied to Public Worship, the Silence here enjoined, undoubtedly means that reverential awe and profound submission, which though due at all times, and in all places, from the creature to his adorable Creator, seems to be more immediately so, when we assemble together in places dedicated
to

to his Worship, which, according to his own declaration, he favours with his more immediate Presence, and where “his honour more particularly dwells.”

The public exercises or acts of piety, which are usually performed in these places, are, Prayer, and the Administration of the Christian Sacraments ; to which is generally added Preaching, not considered as a part of Divine Worship, but as an useful and necessary institution of CHRIST, to awaken sinners, and to comfort the broken-hearted, to confirm and strengthen the faithful, and to impart religious instruction to all. These several duties, which should engage the attention of all Christian assemblies, can only be profitable, when they are performed or observed with the disposition required in my text.

Whenever, therefore, my brethren,
you are about to enter this Temple
of

of the LORD, pause a moment at the threshold! Consider whose Presence you are approaching! Consider, that “the LORD is in his Holy Temple”—Reflect upon your own numberless wants, weaknesses, and imperfections, and your own absolute inability to supply, or relieve them. Leave all earthly desires, cares, and anxieties, behind you. Bring nothing, if possible, but a sense of your sins, and an earnest desire of being delivered from the guilt and dominion of them. If during the service, or the sermon, some ray of Divine Light should dart into your breast, some touch of Love should deeply affect your heart, turn aside immediately from the general service. Keep Silence before the LORD, whilst he is speaking to your hearts—improve the Blessed Moment of sweet Communion—and you will then taste and see how gracious the LORD is; and from your own happy experience, be enabled to
 declare,

declare, that it is “ good for you to
“ be here.”

And now, O LORD GOD! great and glorious! who fillest the heavens and the earth with the Majesty of thy Glory, vouchsafe to fill even this lowly tabernacle with thy Gracious Presence! Inspire the hearts of thy ministering servants, and assembled people, with that true Wisdom which cometh only from thee! Enable them to speak the Truth in Love, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit! May every member of this Congregation be, indeed, a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven! May thousands, yet unborn, be enabled to praise thee for their Spiritual Birth and Resurrection to a New Life, by the means of thy Gospel preached here! And may all those, who are ministered unto, as well as those
that

that minister, be endued with thy Holy Spirit, and enriched with thy Heavenly Grace! May they be prospered with all happiness here, and brought to thine Everlasting Kingdom hereafter! Even so, we pray, through the merits, and for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, thy SON, to whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit, One Eternal and Ever-Blessed God, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Majesty, and Dominion, now, henceforth and for ever! Amen!

F I N I S.





