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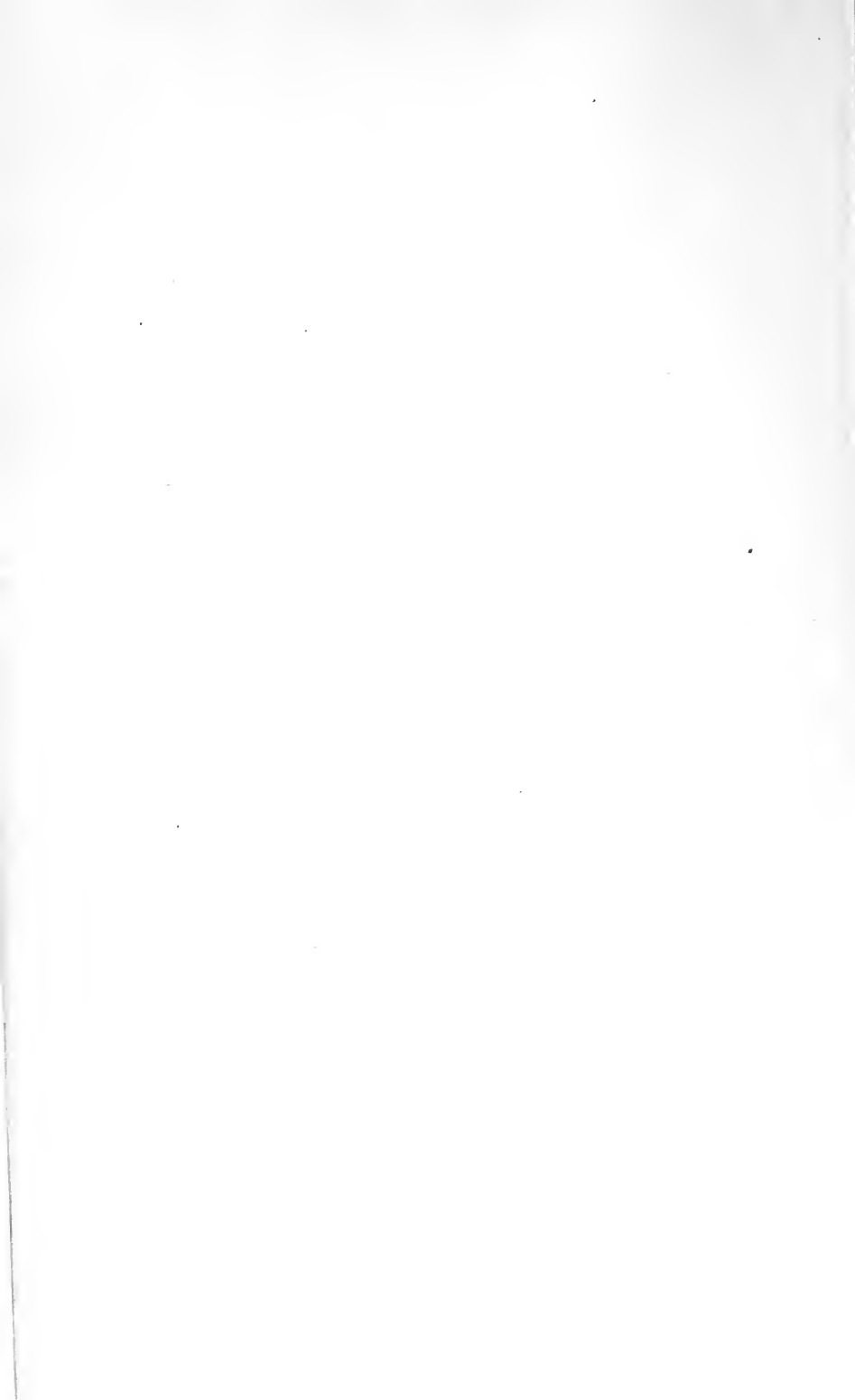
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REMAINS

OF THE LATE REVEREND

RICHARD HURRELL FROUDE, M.A.

FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Se sub serenis vultibus
Austera virtus occulit,
Timens videri, ne summ,
Dum prodit, amittat decus.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE
REMAINS

OF THE

REV. RICHARD HURRELL FROUDE, M.A.

SERMON I¹.

DISPROPORTION OF OUR EXERTIONS TO OUR
PROFESSIONS.

JEREMIAH XXXV. 14.

“The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father’s commandment: Notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto Me.”

IN the days of the prophet Jeremiah, one period of the trial, which the Lord vouchsafed to His disobedient and gainsaying people, was drawing near to a close. A period of more than 800 years had now elapsed since the Lord had brought them up out of Egypt to establish them in the land of promise. During that long interval, they had been watched over by their Almighty Father and King with the

¹ [These sermons were written between 1828 and 1833. Sermon I. was written in 1830.]

tenderest and most anxious care. Their nation had been preserved from foreign enemies, by a succession of deliverers whom the Lord raised up. Their faith had been kept alive by a long succession of interpositions, which, to us who survey them from a distance, bear the evident impress of divine superintendance. The truth had been constantly held up to them by the long line of prophets and teachers, who acted as the interpreters of God's miraculous dispensations. They had never been suffered to lose sight either of causes of the evils they brought upon themselves, or of means to remedy them. All had now been tried which either threats or promises, forbearance or fatherly chastisement, could effect, and all had been insufficient. "I have spoken unto you, saith the Lord, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto Me. I have sent unto you also all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers. But ye have not inclined your ear nor hearkened unto Me. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel; Behold I will bring upon Judah and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken to them but they have not heard, I have called unto them but they have not answered."

The measure of their iniquity was now full. Yet even after all this, the Lord did not think fit to pronounce this final sentence of condemnation unaccompanied by a concluding expostulation. Before the prophet Jeremiah was commissioned to utter their irrevocable doom, the Lord said unto him, "Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, and give them wine to drink." Then Jeremiah took Jaazaniah and his brethren and his sons and the whole house of the Rechabites, and set before them pots full of wine, and said unto them, Drink ye. But they said unto him, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever.

This was one of those almost dramatic representations in which the prophetic books abound; and the real meaning is subsequently explained. "Then came the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, saying, Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction nor hearken unto My words. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed, for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment. Notwithstanding I have spoken unto you rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened unto Me."

This instance of obedience to a human parent,

one who had been in the grave more than 200 years, and to whose memory they were attached by nothing more than an hereditary feeling, is contrasted with the obstinate neglect of the Israelites to obey the living God—their heavenly Father, whose eye was always over them.

The Rechabites could deny their appetites without repining, and refused to enjoy the comforts of a domestic life, but dwelt in tents, living in a land where they were strangers. And this they did, not with a view to obtain any benefit to themselves—not from any motive either of hope or fear—but merely because their ancestor Jonadab, the son of Rechab, had charged them so. The privations and restraints which God imposed upon the Israelites were far less grievous than these. He required scarce any thing at their hands but what a just sense of their own happiness would have dictated. And from obedience to this easy yoke, they had every thing to hope; from rebellion against it, they had every thing to fear. Yet in spite of all this, they would not incline their ear, nor hearken. This is the contrast which God sets before them. By the example of the Rechabites, He shows them that they could obey if they would, and because they would not He determines to punish them.

It is probable that few have read this chapter without feeling astonished at the obstinacy and infatuation of the Israelites. But if we stop short with mere astonishment, we shall have lost the

most instructive portion of the lesson it conveys. These things are not recorded to show us how very foolish and deaf to their best interests men have been in distant ages, but to make us distrustful of our own security; to remind us that since we also are men, we must be on our guard against the same infatuation.

Nor let any person allow himself, on light grounds, to suppose that he in his own person is entirely free from it. The point in this narrative which is most surprising, is the perseverance of one set of men in pursuit of an object, the value of which we cannot understand, and the complete indifference of another set, to an object quite as easily within their reach, and the value of which we perceive to be inestimable. Now if any one will be at the pains to look around him, or to examine his own heart, he will find that he himself, and almost every one, are in themselves an example of this surprising inconsistency. He will detect himself and his neighbours in dedicating as much time and pains to the pursuit of things, which even themselves own to be comparatively insignificant, as would, if directed to higher objects, secure to them an inheritance in heaven.

There is indeed scarcely any thing in the whole face of human affairs, which when one comes to consider it, is so amazing as the disproportion of the exertions we make, to the acknowledged value of the ends to which they are directed.

We cannot turn our eyes in any direction without seeing instances of men who lead lives of labour and discomfort in the pursuit of such things as wealth, power, or praise, and really think nothing of the difficulties they face, and pain which in many instances they undergo.

How many people are there, who, at an early age, leave their friends and their country, to go into the most unpleasant and unhealthy situations—some into the most intensely hot countries, and some into the coldest, with the certainty of not returning till many of the best years of their life are past, and with the great chance of either dying themselves before the time of their return arrives, or at any rate of finding many of their dearest friends dead before they have another opportunity of seeing them. These persons are actuated with the wish, which, as far as it goes, is a good one, of relieving their parents from the burden of maintaining them, of making their way in the world, some by the profession of soldier or sailor, some by taking a share in trade, some by acquiring knowledge. And all of these would despise, as a pitiful low-spirited person, any one who should shrink from an opportunity of getting forward, either through regard to his health or to his comfort.

Nor need we look to these alone for instances of perseverance and self denial; we see the same thing, though perhaps in a less striking and obvious degree, in our own immediate neighbourhood. The

lives of the farmer, the tradesman, the mechanic, are each of them lives of continued labour; they require patience, industry, self-command. Each of them spends by far the greater part of his time in occupations from which he would be very glad to be released, in order to acquire the means of making his family comfortable, and himself respectable. Nor are those who seem at first sight exempted by station and by fortune from the actual necessity of laborious occupation, in many cases disposed to take advantage of this exemption. Each has his favourite pursuit; some to increase their wealth, some to make themselves powerful; the better sort to obtain the esteem of their neighbours by activity and kindness. All these feel no scruple or hesitation in sacrificing their time, their money, their quiet, to the various objects which they propose to themselves to attain; and think these sacrifices so natural, so much matters of course, that it never occurs to them to take credit to themselves for vigour and strength of mind; or if any of them do so, they become an object of ridicule to all that know that they do so.

Such as I have described is the common state of things which meets our observation wherever we turn our eyes.

Now I do not mention these things as being in themselves blameable or wrong. Did men but exert themselves in all respects with the same zeal and energy which they do in these—were the pains

they take to please God and to earn a heavenly inheritance, as much greater than the pains they take for these earthly objects, as the acknowledged value of a heavenly reward exceeds that of an earthly— all this would be just and commendable. Industry in the pursuit of unimportant ends is not blameable, except when coupled with remissness about such as are important. But when coupled with such remissness, it then assumes a very different character, and becomes a direct insult to religion.

The obedience of the Rechabites added to the criminality of the Jews; and in the accusation which is brought against them, is urged as reason why God would no longer delay His vengeance. How much worse then and more inexcusable must be our conduct, if we ourselves can be appealed to against ourselves: of how much severer punishment shall we be thought worthy, if we ourselves show our *power* to obey, by our conduct in temporal things, and our *unwillingness*, by our neglect of the things eternal!

The question which we have to answer to our consciences is this: does the belief that such and such actions on my part will please God, make me as resolutely bent upon doing them, as the belief that the same line of conduct tends to bring about some worldly advantage?

What we have to compare together is, not the degrees in which we are influenced by bad motives and good motives, not whether we deliberately pre-

fer other services to God's, but whether the trifles which surround us, admitting them to be ever so innocent, do not, in point of fact, urge us to act more vigorously, than the great prospect which faith holds out to us. And this question is not such an indefinite one as it may at first appear—it is no matter of feeling, but one of practice; and (though we cannot judge of it at all in the case of our neighbour) each of us may ascertain pretty accurately how matters stand with himself.

The parts of our duty, which will furnish us with the most intelligible answer, are those to which we cannot possibly be urged by any other motive than the knowledge that God requires them of us. Those secret duties which we owe to our Maker, but which are attended with no visible consequences to ourselves, and cannot in any way, that we understand, affect the interests of our neighbours—for instance, the duty of private prayer.

It is plain that we are obliged to the practice of regular private devotion, by the same, if not still higher authority than that which obliges us to the attendance of public worship. The chief difference between the motives which lead us to each is this, that while in the discharge of this latter duty, we are assisted by the consciousness that we are falling in with what other people think right, and perhaps by a feeling that we also in our turn derive advantage from seeing so many of our fellow creatures joining in the same confession of our common

Faith¹: in the former case the motive is wholly unmixed, we pray to God in private only, from the knowledge that He has promised to hear us, and that our asking is the condition on which alone He will grant us what we have need of. If then we really have faith in God's promises we shall be as sedulous in private as in public worship; and unless we are so, we may feel sure that it is some other motive than reliance in God which induces us to obey Him in the instances we do.

Now do we endeavour as constantly and as earnestly to serve God in this point as in the other parts of our duty? In the first place, do we even say our prayers with regularity, morning and evening, never allowing any but the most urgent excuse to interfere with us? This is the first step; do we take this? The question is no idle or unimportant one; the answer to it concerns us, as nearly as the young man's answer to Jesus concerned him. Our eternal welfare is at stake on it. Next, supposing us ever so regular, are we as sincerely diligent in the endeavour to keep our thoughts about us while at prayer?—to fix our attention on the meaning of the words we repeat, and to connect every petition with the realities of our daily conduct? This is no easy matter; it is one in which we have room for the greatest zeal and diligence. Every one who sincerely endeavours to perform this duty rightly, will

¹ [Vide vol. i. pp. 129—133.]

find out, in the course of his experience, many ways by which to gain power over his thoughts in this most important exercise. It was with a view to this exercise that the holy men, of whom we read in the first ages of Christianity, had recourse to fastings and penances which we can hardly bear to think of. They found that their thoughts rested with more earnestness on their treasure in heaven, the less they had to think about with pleasure on the earth; and rather than mock God by praying to Him in word, when indeed their hearts were fixed on other things, they made Him their only consolation, by voluntarily foregoing every other. Rather than that their right eye should offend Him, they plucked it out and cast it from them, thinking it better that one member should perish, than that their whole body should be cast into hell. Such are the efforts and sacrifices which have been made, in order to perform rightly a duty, which is no less incumbent upon us than upon the first Christians.

We, like them, must pray to our Father which seeth in secret, and He will not be contented with a less perfect sacrifice from us than He required of them. Now I do not ask, do we make such efforts and sacrifices as they did; but, do we make any efforts at all? Can we mention to ourselves any one thing that we are in the habit of doing, in order to assist our attention in private prayer? Is there any one sacrifice of earthly pleasure, which we

can tell our consciences we make with no other object, than that we may take more pleasure in the thought of God?

When we have answered this question, let us next turn our thoughts to the pains and sacrifices which we make every day, without even ever thinking of them, for the sake of getting on in our businesses. And then let us own with shame, how very little indeed the wish to serve God enters into the motives which make us useful and respectable—how little our diligence in business arises from fervency of spirit, or is likely to render us acceptable with God.

We shall have to acknowledge, that did we make one half or one quarter the sacrifices in obedience to our Heavenly Father, which we make without the slightest scruple or hesitation, in the pursuit of ends which we acknowledge to be comparatively of no value at all, we should be very much better people than we are.

To such persons as us then, the warning in the text speaks as loudly and as fearfully as to the disobedient Israelites. “Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto Me: therefore thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel, I will bring upon Judah, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have spoken against them.”

Let us then, without withdrawing ourselves from worldly concerns, endeavour with all our minds to convert them into religious duties, and exert ourselves on all occasions with a zeal proportionate to the importance of the object we have in view. And may Almighty God, who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto His people that they may love the thing which He commands, and desire that which He does promise, that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON II¹.

RELIGIOUS USES OF INDUSTRY.

ECCLESIASTES i. 13.

“ This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith.”

IN the passage from which the text is taken, King Solomon is taking a review of the pursuits and occupations of mankind: “ all the works that are done under the sun.” He pronounces them all to be vanity and vexation of spirit, but reminds us at the same time that “ this sore travail is given to the sons of men to be *exercised therewith.*” He perceived by his wisdom, that in God’s dealings with us, our comfort is not so much studied as our good; and that the unsatisfactory things, in the immediate pursuit of which we are obliged to spend so much of our time, are intended rather as the occasions than the objects of our exertion: that they are not held up to us, in order to our being gratified by attaining them, but that we may be exercised in pursuing them.

Such was the conclusion at which the wisest of

¹ [Written in 1830. The first six pages were corrected in the MS.]

men arrived, after he had “given his heart to search out by wisdom all things that are done under heaven”—after he had seen that “all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”

We have then before us an instructive lesson, which is well worth our attending to. God, we all know, has so arranged the course of things as to force men, whether they will or no, to contend with difficulties and endure vexation: and we are told that He has done this in order to exercise us, to discipline our minds in habits of industry and patience. This lesson is instructive, as it must in all reason enforce on us the obligation we are under to cultivate such habits, and the due consideration of it is of great importance, as we are apt to look with far too much lenience on the vices to which they are opposed, *viz.* idleness and impatience.

The lenience with which we regard the vices of idleness and impatience, arises, in a great degree, from the circumstance that their opposites, industry and patience, are not necessarily virtues. The state of things in which we are placed is such, that our temporal success and prosperity depend in a very great degree on the pains we take to secure them: every body sees this. Bad selfish people are often quite as much aware of it as those of an opposite character, and are induced, by seeing it, to lead lives of as much activity, and one may almost say self-denial, as the best people do in pursuit of the

best objects. Thus it comes to pass that since these habits are so useful and desirable, in a worldly point of view, as to render them their own reward, we look on their opposites as their own punishment and as in most cases deserving rather pity than censure. They are thought to be among the things in which a man may judge for himself and stand by the consequences; and that if in such respects he stands in his own light, he is nobody's enemy but his own.

But the conclusion which the wise king came to was very different. He looked on industry in our calling, not as a means towards securing success and prosperity; not as tending to make men more rich, more learned, more powerful; this indeed he saw well enough that it would do, but this he knew by experience to be vanity. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour that he taketh under the sun?" On the contrary, he saw, in the active pursuit of such things as these, the fulfilment of one end of our being, the exercising of ourselves in that sore labour, which God has appointed as the task of fallen man.

Industry and patience, though they tend to secure us trifling worldly advantages, and on this account are often cultivated by otherwise bad men, tend also to make us firm, sober, and self-denying, therefore cannot be neglected consistently with our eternal interest.

In order then to set these virtues in their true light, I will now endeavour to point out how very deeply and thoroughly our condition is affected by them, not so much externally as internally,—not so much as to what they will acquire for us, as to what they will make of us. And I shall begin with the commonest and most obvious things.

First then, the course of nature is so regulated, that there is scarcely any one [part] either of our bodies or minds which could have become what it is without some degree of industry and patience, and which might not have been indefinitely improved and elevated, by higher degrees of them than we have used. We are, in a certain sense, our *own creation*, even in the manifest features of our persons and characters. For consider how it is that from children we have become men : what is the process that has effected so great a change in us, and fitted us for taking our part in a sphere of life, totally different from that in which nature first placed us? The process has been a slow and tedious one, occupying a very considerable portion of that short space which is allotted to us in the world ; and in that time we have had a great deal to do. Our present attainments, be they what they may, both of body and mind, may most perceptibly be traced by us to their first sources. In the picture of our past lives, the causes of our present peculiarities are painfully discernible. We may recollect the point at which feelings first began to take hold of us, which have

since, either for good or bad, spread their influence over our character : and if we try to do so faithfully we shall readily acknowledge how much we owe to past instances of industry,—how deeply we have to regret our negligence and self-indulgence.

Our strength and activity we may trace to exercise ; our knowledge, to industry and experience ; our desires, to past indulgence ; and our moderation, to past self-denial. All the minutest rules for the direction of our conduct towards others, without which we should every moment be exposing ourselves to ridicule, or even incurring dislike and censure, are a possession which we have gradually accumulated, and which is valuable in proportion to the use we have made of our opportunities.

In fact, all that we are now, which we were not when children, has been the toilsome acquisition of slow experience—of the “sore travail which God has given the sons of men to be exercised therewith.” And even our own memories will suffice to show us that we have become our present selves, not by a mere vegetative change of mind and body, but by contending with difficulties, enduring privations, suffering for imprudence, and feeling the advantages of right conduct.

This we might learn merely from observation of our own selves, if there were no other persons in the world. But the lesson is brought home to us in a more striking way, if we compare the progress which we have made with that of other men. Few

persons can compare their own character with that of others, who have to appearances been similarly circumstanced with themselves, and not perceive each for himself that there are very many respects in which his attainments fall short of his neighbours'. One will find himself less persevering, another less temperate, another less considerate for other people; or less willing to face pain for the sake of honesty, than he sees other people to be, who nevertheless have had no greater advantages than himself. And in many cases this divergence of character is so remarkable, that one can scarcely believe the beings in whom it is observable to belong to the same species. Now what is the cause of all this? Are we to suppose that tempers of mind grow up in us, as it were of their own accord; and that we have nothing to do but to sit still and wait for the event; in short, that nature settles for us what sort of people we shall become?

The difference between man and man cannot be so accounted for, and we must be careful against indulging a delusion in which it would be so pleasing to acquiesce. Nature has not placed so wide a barrier between one person and another, but that all are to be judged by a common rule. The law which is to try Noah, Daniel, and Job, is that by which we too must stand or fall. The Holy Apostles were men of like passions with ourselves. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in all things like unto us.

We have to acknowledge, and that with shame and confusion, that the great gulph which seems fixed between us and the Saints, who were tried like us, has been fixed by our own carelessness and self-indulgence.

Such are the vast consequences which attend on industry and patience : without these we shall make nothing of ourselves, and bury our talent in a napkin ; with them, if we persist on resolutely, we may still improve ourselves indefinitely ; and if it were not for the time we have already squandered, we might at this moment have been even like the Saints.

It is indeed undoubtedly true that many persons are so constituted that such habits come much easier to them than to others : some have a less difficult task in overcoming one passion, some another : and God undoubtedly will make allowances for each of us, in proportion to the difficulties which we experience. But there is one important habit, that of self-command, which we all must have equal difficulty in attaining. We can only be said to have command over ourselves in proportion as we are able to resist pleasure from a sense of duty. It is then only in proportion as we have temptation to overcome, that we have any means of showing this habit ; and it is as absurd to suppose self-command easier to persons who have no passions to contend with, as [to suppose] the acquisition of bodily strength, easier to persons who have no hard work to

do, or sharp exercise to tire them. Upon the whole then we are much more on a footing than we may at first suppose; and those on whom nature has imposed the hardest tasks, have so much more opportunity of disciplining themselves. We are placed in the world with the power of becoming almost what we please; and according to the use we make of the opportunities put in our way, we may attain almost to any degree of virtue or of wickedness.

Every temptation we meet with, is one of those opportunities; for, whether it be great or little, still we know well enough that it is in our power, at the time, either to resist or to yield. And very little observation will teach us, that every victory gained over our inclinations will make the next struggle easier; whereas, every time that we allow ourselves to be overcome, we entail on ourselves a severer contest on the next occasion. Thus it comes to pass, that while those who take every occasion to stand up resolutely and manfully against temptation, are constantly gaining strength themselves, and diminishing the obstacles which they have to contend with: those who allow themselves to indulge the impulse of the moment, find their own powers fail, and those of the enemy increase against them, till at last they give the matter up altogether, and fall into a state of recklessness.

Such as I have described, is the path which God has left open to us, for fitting ourselves to act our part in life; such is the sore travail which He has

given to the sons of men ;—a great part of it they must endure whether they will or no. They must pass from childhood to manhood; they must be dependent on others before they can maintain themselves; they must be governed by others, before they know how to keep themselves out of mischief; they must learn to refrain from many things that they would like, and to do many things that they dislike exceedingly. All this they absolutely must undergo, even in order to get their living and keep out of the hands of justice.

Far more than this must they submit to, if they would ever pass through life with tolerable respectability,—if they would be loved and trusted by their fellow creatures.

Now what is the reason of all this? The wise king tells us it is that we may be “exercised therewith.” And when we take into consideration what we all know, that the present state of things is to fit us for another state, into which we are to pass after death, we shall see plainly enough what is the use of this exercise. We shall see, not merely that it is a task which we must submit to, but also why it has been imposed on us; and learn to look on it, not as an instance of God’s arbitrary power, but of His considerate benevolence.

Consider then, that as it is absolutely necessary we should become people of a certain sort before we are qualified to fill certain situations here on earth, so even common sense would teach us that,

in order to our being fitted for acting our part in the other world, some acquirements or other, some sort of character, must be necessary. If a man is to go into a foreign country to transact any important business, how many things has he to attend to, and prepare for! He must acquaint himself with the sort of circumstances in which he shall be placed, the sort of people he shall have to deal with, their manners, their language, the sort of questions he shall have to answer, the sort of difficulties he shall have to contend with. He may have either to endure great fatigue, or to exert great nerve and firmness, or to submit to hunger and cold, such as require long training to bear up against; and, unless he does all this, he must make up his mind to certain failure, or in many cases to death.

Now common sense would tell us to expect something of this sort in the country to which we all have to go. A country far more distant, and more unlike our own, than any traveller has reached in this world. And though we might not be able, by common sense alone, to make out what sort of training would best fit us for living in this country, still even *it* would teach us that self-command, courage, justice, benevolence, must be of the greatest service to us, under any change of circumstances, and however events turned out.

We have, however, a surer and safer guide to determine this important point for us. God has

Himself told us what sort of country it is to which we are going, and what sort of persons we must be in order to live happily in it.

We are to dwell in the presence of a great King, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, and yet to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. How then shall we be able to endure His looks, or dare to appear before Him, unless we have done all in our power to make ourselves such as He approves? With this prospect before us, we ought to feel in the highest degree grateful for the time He has given us for preparation; and more especially so when we consider that the kind of discipline which He has provided for us during the interval before our summons, is exactly such as to prepare us best. He has furnished us with opportunities for exercising all those tempers of mind which He will then expect of us. All the sore travail that He has appointed for the sons of men, He has appointed that we may be "exercised therewith,"—exercised in the ways of self-denial, purity, charity, and, above all, faith. For, it will be observed, that our present situation is, in a particular manner, suited to cultivation of this temper—a temper, the very essence of which consists in a steady performance of duty, in spite of every discouragement, which endures as seeing Him that is invisible.

Thus, then, I have endeavoured to point out that the course of things is so arranged as to make pa-

tience and industry the only means by which we can be brought to any good, first of all in this life, and then in the life to come: that they are the appointed means, not only of securing to us subsistence and comfort, but also of fitting us to act our part in life with respectability, of making us just, firm, honest, temperate: and that they have been appointed, in order that the pains we are obliged to take in order to acquire these tempers, may farther make us self-denying, obedient, faithful, that we may, by degrees, be built up in godliness, and fitted to take our station in another and higher sphere of existence.

And I have dwelt on all this in order to show the paramount importance of that patience and industry, which are, as it were, the key to all these advantages, the necessary instruments for working out our salvation. The practical inference, then, from all this is, that we are to cultivate these virtues for their own sake, more than for any tangible effects which we may expect to derive from them. They are of equal importance to the rich and the poor: to those who have to work for their maintenance and those who are born to affluence. To go even farther, one may state, that even such persons as have been blessed by nature with moderate passions and desires, such as are disposed of their own accord to kindness, sobriety, seriousness of mind, even these persons have need to "exercise" themselves,—to pass such lives as require industry

and patience,—almost as much as others of less favoured temper, in whom the effects of self-indulgence would be more obvious and offensive.

Many indeed there are, who, without much pains or restraint, may go on very comfortably and respectably, by means of those habits which they have already acquired, and in consequence of the discipline which they have already undergone. Perhaps even most people, before they have advanced very far in life, have sufficient command over themselves to keep out of danger from the ordinary temptations we meet with, and to act almost instinctively according to a certain standard of temperance, honesty, and benevolence. Now persons in this condition should remember, that, though they stand in less immediate need of exertion, yet that on its own account exertion is requisite for all; and not less indispensably so to them than to others,—unless indeed they suppose themselves to have attained the highest perfection of which their nature is susceptible. Though God does not force them to labour in order to escape present evil, He commands them to do so for the sake of future good; and, as He shows, here on earth, that we must discipline ourselves up to a certain point even for the sake of our worldly comfort, so He enables us to perceive that, if we would improve beyond this point, if we would fit ourselves to dwell with Him, and with the Holy Angels, discipline is the appointed and only means

by which we are to press forward towards the prize of our high calling.

Again, the previous considerations lead us to observe, that what is true of moral is no less so of religious improvement. It has been unhappily supposed, by some, that religion is a matter of feeling, to be attained to, and judged of, in quite a different way from other tempers and habits. We see, and own readily enough, that it is impossible to become manly at once, prudent and temperate at once; we observe, that to become men instead of children, we have need of time and trouble; and that, after we are men, we have still much more to do before we are sensible and trustworthy men; yet we feel a kind of indefinite hope that, without such a process, we may become religious men. Now we have but to consider what are the acts that religion requires of us, and we shall see that this must be a complete delusion. That the temper, which alone deserves the name of religion, is just as much a habit, just as much the consequence of discipline, as any other temper that can be named.

For, whatever are the duties common sense and prudence oblige us to discharge, to obtain the respect of our fellow men, and the approbation of our own conscience, these same duties does religion enforce upon us, but with this difference;—that whereas in the former case our industry is stimulated, and our patience supported, by the knowledge of the object for which we are working, and

the consciousness that we are making progress towards it, in the latter we are to do all to the glory of God,—we are to impose the same restraints upon our inclination, but for the sake of a Being whom we do not see, a reward which we cannot comprehend.

Thus, then, throughout the whole course of human conduct, to obtain for us what we want, and to make us what we ought to be, industry and patience are essentially necessary; and we have this cheering thought to console us in our difficulties, that though God obliges us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” yet He Himself has promised to “work in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

SERMON III¹.

DILIGENCE IN SECULAR MATTERS.

ROM. xii. 11.

“Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

AMONG the mistakes which persons are apt to fall into about the nature of true religion, a very common and a very fatal one is the supposing that there is something in a religious life which makes it inconsistent with activity and business. Most men have a kind of vague idea that it is impossible to be at once very diligent in worldly affairs and also fervent in spirit, that is, very zealous in the service of God. Without being at the pains to think distinctly on the subject, they are in the habit of taking for granted that “being very religious” means being very much engaged in reading and talking about religion, and withdrawing in a great measure from the merely temporal affairs in which the generality of mankind are engaged. The people, too, who in a general way get the character of being “the very religious” are not those who are much taken up

¹ [Written apparently in 1831.]

with their business or professions, not those who make themselves most useful in a neighbourhood, or even who are most in the habit of doing kindnesses and making those about them happy. These people are respected and loved; they are looked on as upright and excellent men; but if we go by common opinion, they have not the character of being the most religious men. Those to whom this name is most commonly given are persons who withdraw from active pursuits of every kind, who spend their time in reading and talking about religion to others, and who appear to have no relish whatever for the amusements with which their neighbours please themselves.

Nor is this way of thinking and talking confined to those who themselves follow this kind of religion, and propose to themselves persons of this sort for their examples. It is the notion which most careless and indifferent people adopt, as well as those who themselves profess to be religious. They fall into it, as it were, from not taking the pains to get clearer and more correct notions, and give the name of religion to a particular way of life, and of being religious to a particular kind of person, without at all thinking that it is incumbent upon themselves to follow this way of life or imitate this kind of person. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if men were glad to encourage in themselves the notion that religion and goodness were two distinct things; that the very good people and the very religious

people were different, and that the way to deserve respect and esteem was not the same as to serve and honour God. It seems as if many irreligious men were rather glad to catch at this distinction as a sort of excuse for their own way of life; as if it were possible for them to aim at being one of these two characters without attempting at the same time to be the other; as if it might yet be in their power to merit respect and esteem without giving up the practices and the pleasures which they know to be inconsistent with God's commands. These people know that certain vices which they cannot make up their minds to abandon are clearly denounced by the Bible as irreligious; and therefore they are glad enough to persuade themselves that many other things also are equally irreligious which they see to be practised by good and upright men. They cannot hide from themselves the irreligion of their own conduct; but they wish to make irreligion seem less odious, by persuading themselves that others, however free from their vices, are in fact as irreligious as themselves, and that there is no way of being really religious without at the same time ceasing to be useful.

Thus it is that the supposed distinction between a religious and an actively useful character comes to be taken up and adopted by bad careless people. It is also easy to see how the notion came to be started, in the first instance, by persons of a very different character; how persons of sincere inten-

tions, and anxious to serve God according to His ordinances, might themselves get into the very same mistake which others from different notions are ready to indulge in. For considering the careless habits and worldly views with which most children are brought up, and the bad examples with which they are so likely to be surrounded, it is too probable that even those of the best dispositions will be led in the beginning of life, at least, to look on religion as a matter that does not much concern them, and that before any thing has happened to give their thoughts a more serious turn, they will have got into habits, both as to their pleasures and their business, which it will be absolutely necessary for them to break through. Something wrong will have intruded itself into almost every part of their daily conduct. They have been too exclusively taken up with all they have been engaged in, too intent upon success, too anxious to distinguish themselves; they have set about all their undertakings, even the most praiseworthy, too much for the sake of the things themselves, and too little for God's sake; so that it is no wonder when they come to see things in a different light, and to acknowledge the obligation they are under to serve God in all things, that they should endeavour to escape as far as possible from all the ways by which they have been accustomed to serve the world. All their old occupations will seem to them but so many snares which only tend to withdraw their thoughts from God;

they will think it necessary to avoid all pleasures, however innocent, all business, however useful, unless they have a direct reference to the concerns of another world. Now, perhaps, there are cases where, in the first instance, such a course might be a wise one; for some persons it may be necessary to make a violent break in the chain of their thoughts and habits, and to force themselves into a way of life as opposite as possible to that which has led them wrong. There may possibly be such cases as this, but it should be remembered that where persons are thus obliged to withdraw themselves from the active business of life, the obligation arises not from the nature of religion, but from their own past misconduct. The new manner of life which they take up is not a mark of exalted piety, but of humiliation for long negligence; it is no excellence in them, but their misfortune. The error they fall into is this, that because in their own particular case religion and business are incompatible, therefore they are necessarily incompatible to every one; so that instead of trying by degrees to get into a way of following both together, of returning to their old occupations but pursuing them for God's sake, they think they cannot go too far in avoiding every thing of the sort, and in regarding all business as sin, unless it has a direct tendency to keep God in their thoughts.

Thus it is easily seen how, as well among the bad as the well-meaning, religion and active business

should get to be considered incompatible: how the former are glad to look on all active pursuits as equally irreligious with their own, so as to make religion and uselessness seem the same thing; and how the latter are afraid to engage in any thing which can, as they suppose, divert their thoughts from God. Now of this distinction, it may be sufficient to say, that it is unscriptural. The religion which is not compatible with activity in worldly business is not the religion with which God calls on us to know Him. In the New Testament multitudes of examples are given us of persons who were at the same time fervent in spirit and not slothful in business, who converted their daily task into the service of the Lord. St. Matthew was a publican sitting at the receipt of customs, when Jesus Christ saw in him a heart ready to forsake all and follow Him. The man of whom it is said that Christ had not seen so great faith, no not in Israel, was a Roman centurion. Of the first Gentiles who were baptized as Christians, and that, too, by the especial direction of the Holy Spirit, one was the Ethiopian eunuch, the ambassador of a great queen, and the other a Roman soldier. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul we find among the list of zealous converts the names of persons engaged in all kinds of secular occupations; a jailor, a seller of purple, a tanner, and, what least of all seems to leave a man time for serious meditation, a slave. Nor is this all: we not only find in these

persons a temper fit to receive and profit by the Gospel, but we know that their having received the Gospel and become Christians did not in any way interfere with their continuing these occupations. St. Paul on all occasions speaks to his converts as persons still engaged in all the common offices of life, and exhorts them, as in the text, to show themselves "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." All he wishes them to keep in mind is, that whatever they do they must do it as serving the Lord, that is, because they think it their duty, and as knowing that they can in no way please God so effectually as by discharging their duty diligently.

To give up our business, then, for the sake of religion is clearly not what God requires of us; but farther than this, it is likely to prove a dangerous snare, and to interfere with the performance of those duties which God actually does require of us. The man who retires from active occupation because it tends to divert his thoughts from serious subjects, is likely to find a more dangerous enemy in the want of settled employment for his thoughts: instead of the one thing which used to absorb too much of his attention, he is likely to find a hundred things forcing themselves at random into his mind while he endeavours to collect his thoughts for meditation, and what is still worse, it is more than likely that some of these thoughts may be far from innocent.

His mind, instead of running as it did before to the difficulties and projects which business presented to it, and which it ought to a certain degree to be employed upon, might now to be taken hold of by thoughts altogether wrong, either uncharitable, or self-conceited, or impure; and however much he might endeavour to repress and stifle them, they must necessarily have their effect in disturbing and distracting the attention. Against such thoughts active and constant occupation is the best security, and though it may also have its injurious effects in taking up too much of our attention, yet this may perhaps prove in most cases the least of two evils. It may be better for us to be too much absorbed in something itself innocent, than to be the prey of the random thoughts which are sure to cross unoccupied minds.

Here, then, is one evil of giving up business for religion; it is likely to prove injurious to us in the very point which seems at first to be its advantage; it is likely to render us even less disengaged than formerly for long serious meditation.

Again, it is likely to assist the encroachments of indolence. There is no greater assistance to us in opposing an indolent turn of mind than the having something definite to do, and being obliged to feel inconvenience if we fail to do it; and the having this assistance is one great advantage of active business which does not admit of relaxation. He who withdraws from business throws away this

advantage, nor is he likely to supply its place effectually by any resolutions he may make to employ himself in some way which he marks out for himself. He may indeed be sincere in these resolutions, but he will bring them into action under a disadvantage; he will have to labour without a stimulus to his industry, and without any thing to remind him when he relaxes it. Besides which it is scarcely possible, that he can be consistent in his determination to withdraw from worldly business. The great probability is, that he will be only changing one kind of worldly business for another not less worldly; and that when he has laid aside one pursuit, because it withdrew his thoughts from religion, any other that he takes up will soon mix itself up with worldly motives, and prove equally distracting to his thoughts. Suppose he gives himself up to teach religion, it is most likely that he will soon get to pride himself upon his self-devotion, and perhaps on his fancied success, and that he will have often before his mind that other people are looking up to him and admiring him. The same thing is true of charity, and of all other good deeds which people go out of their way to perform, and, as it were, make a profession of. They may be actuated, in the first instance, by the purest intentions, but these are sure, before long, to get mixed up with something of baser quality. In fact, all businesses, whether more or less connected with the world or with religion,

come pretty much to the same thing as to the advantages they afford to the cultivation of a religious temper. It makes much less matter than people may think, what is the immediate object on which they occupy themselves. It is possible that occupations most directly connected with religion may be debased by worldly motives; and, on the contrary, that those which seem to be least so may be elevated by sincere persons into the service of God. The great thing to look to is, that our business be innocent, and the next thing that we be not slothful in it. If we do but attend to this, we, like St. Matthew, the publican, or like the good Cornelius, or like Lydia the seller of purple, may convert our daily labours into a sacrifice acceptable to God. But, to look farther than this, to be puzzling ourselves about finding some line of life that may make our religious duties easier, to leave the business in which circumstances have placed us, and mark out for ourselves some other, supposed to be more consistent with our spiritual interest, is a course not only unauthorised by Scripture, but at variance with common sense, and is not unlikely to end in making us proud and indolent.

These considerations, though they apply principally to the case of those who themselves withdraw from worldly business for the sake of religion, are also well worth the attention of those who think their being engaged in business an excuse for irreligion. I am not here speaking of such per-

sons as were before mentioned, persons who endeavour to satisfy their consciences with intentional irreligion, by persuading themselves that religion is inconsistent with activity, and that, in order to be religious, a man must cease to be useful as well as to abstain from vice. These are open despisers of religion; but there are others, and numbers of others, who, though they look up to what they consider religious people, and hope sometime or other to be religious themselves, yet excuse themselves for not yet setting about in earnest, under the plea that their worldly concerns for the present hinder them. This state of mind is by no means uncommon among persons who are far from leading vicious lives. They are regular perhaps in their attendance at Church, and often at the Sacrament, and nothing could prevail on them to do an act directly immoral or dishonest. They are not adulterers, or liars, or drunkards; but they do not feel themselves called on to adhere closely to the strict precepts and high examples which the Scripture proposes to them. To take up their cross and follow Christ seems to them something beyond what can be required of persons in their circumstances; they have a family to provide for, much to do and much to think of, which necessarily calls off their attention from serious subjects, and they cannot be expected to lead such lives as the Apostles and the Saints did, or such as ought now to be led by clergymen and people employed about

religion. At some future time, perhaps, when they have fewer worldly cares on their hands, they may have leisure for more serious thoughts, and for more constant attendance on God; but at present they must be content with leading respectable lives, and attending industriously to their business.

Now all that has been said of the folly of persons who neglect their business in order to be religious, is also equally applicable to those who neglect their religion for business; only that the case of these last is much the worst, as their conduct implies that they undervalue religion in comparison with their worldly concerns.

Let them rest assured that the circumstances in which they are placed are not such as to interfere with an honest endeavour to serve God. They may, if they please, overcome the difficulties which they have to contend against, but there is no possible way of evading them. They may, if they please, turn all that now seems to distract their thoughts into religious exercises, and be not slothful in business as serving the Lord. But they may rest assured, that, if they find their present circumstances too hard for them, if they cannot attend at once to their present concerns and to their religious duties, no other circumstances are likely to arise; they are not even likely to be engaged in other concerns, which will prove more favourable to them in this respect. If they cannot now be religious, they are not likely ever to be so;

if industry interferes with their serious thoughts, idleness is sure to do so in a tenfold degree. Let them, therefore, be wise in time; let them use this world as not abusing it, and endeavour at the same time to follow both of the Apostle's precepts, to be alike diligent in business, and fervent in spirit.

SERMON IV¹.

KNOWLEDGE USELESS EXCEPT TO THE SERIOUS
MINDED.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

FEW of our tendencies have been a more frequent subject of declamation than that which disposes us to underrate the advantages which we possess, and to look with a vague admiration on what lies beyond our reach. Its effects, however, are of greater magnitude and more serious import than may at first sight appear to be the case. They concern not only our present comforts but our prospects of future happiness.

For of all the blessings which we enjoy and undervalue, none are so little appreciated as our religious privileges. In spite of all the great things that God has done for us,—His long miraculous in-

¹ [Preached at St. Mary's, before the University, on Easter Monday, 1830.]

tercourse with the world—His precious gift of the inspired volume—the bright examples which He has held up to us in the lives of Saints, who, as it were, show us the way to heaven—above all, the means of grace and the hopes of glory, which conclude the beneficent dispensation that He has revealed to us,—all these things seem but little in our eyes; still, as of old, “the Lord in this place, and we know it not.”

In the abstract, indeed, when we withdraw our thoughts from the real and practical effect of these blessings, and, as it were, survey our religious condition from a distance, our understandings cannot but assent to all the glowing language in which Scripture describes our privileges. We cannot but acknowledge how important are those things which many prophets and righteous men desired to see, though they did not see them; how goodly are those tents of Jacob and tabernacles of Israel which Balaam beheld afar off, and in which it is our privilege to abide.

But when we take a more practical view of the subject, and instead of looking at the abstract character of these blessings, turn our attention to the real change which they produce in our hearts and conduct; when we think of them not as they *ought* to appear to us, but as they *do*, we are obliged to observe that, in spite of all we know respecting God and His ways, we are nearly in all respects the same persons as we should have been without this

knowledge, and that we should probably go on much in the same manner as we do, were our religious creed no condition in the regulation of our conduct.

This unsatisfactory answer too often sets us on looking about for excuses, and endeavouring to shift the blame from ourselves to our circumstances. It directs our thoughts rather towards what seems defective in God's dispensations, than to the great blessings which in the abstract appear so clear to us, and disposes us to indulge the deceiving thought, which our Lord reproveth in the text, "that if one came unto us from the dead we should repent," or in other words, that if God would manifest to us His power and superintendance in more striking ways than those in which He has thought fit to manifest them, we should then find it easier to enlist in His service.

It is needless to [prove] that this idea must be very hurtful to those who entertain it; and as it is more or less apt to intrude on most of us, it may be of advantage to show how completely it is destitute of foundation; how hopeless it is to imagine that any thing more *can* be done for those who will not take advantage of what has been done for them.

To state the excuse then in the fairest form in which it can be made, we may say, that notwithstanding all the means which God has taken to convince our understandings what is our duty and interest, yet that nothing has been done for us

which tends to counteract the influence of the temptations which immediately surround us. God's presence is not impressed upon us in any way that awes the imagination, nor His superintendence in any way that stimulates obedience. Every thing that we see and feel, the whole course of the natural and moral world is so regulated as to lull us into security, and divert our attention from those truths which reason indeed does tell we should keep constantly in view.

Now all this must be admitted to be true, and as an *account* of our irreligion might be brought forward with justice, but as an *excuse* for it is nothing to the purpose,—it is merely assigning, as a cause of our disobedience, that we cannot overcome those difficulties which alone make obedience valuable; that we are not God's servants, because we will not perform the duties which constitute His service. This, then, might of itself be a sufficient answer to those who allow their minds to dwell on the excuse; but it may be as well to go farther, and to point out that the state of things which such persons seem to picture to themselves would in all probability fail of the end which they have in view, and leave us just where we were as to our moral and religious improvement. For suppose our external circumstances to be the most favourable that imagination can suggest, suppose our relation to the Supreme Being to be forced upon us in a manner ever so striking and irresistible, yet all this

would go but a little way towards engendering in us, even *the knowledge* which is implied in true religion. The idea which we must acquire of God and His ways is essentially moral, and it is more than questionable whether the nature of things admits of its being communicated by any other than the tedious process of a holy and self-denying life; for before we can be said to have a just conception of the Divine Nature, we must have formed in ourselves those affections of which He is the Object, such as love, reverence, trust; and it is only in proportion as we have formed them, that we can annex any idea to the promise that He will be their full and final satisfaction. We have Divine authority for asserting, that “if a man say he love God and love not his brother, he is a liar;” so, too, we must learn what reverence is in our relation to earthly parents, before we can reverence our Father which is in heaven. And thus must we seek the Lord “if haply we may feel after Him and find Him, although He is not far from every one of us.” It would be easy to pursue the subject to an indefinite extent, but it may suffice to state that the idea of the Supreme Being is one which must be collected by long experience, which must be engraven on our character, and associated with all our feelings, before we can be said to know Him to good purpose, and to have fulfilled the end of our existence. And how small a way we should be carried towards this by any impression which external circumstances

could excite in us may be very easily perceived; for the most that such circumstances could effect would be, to fix our thoughts in the right direction as long as the impression lasted; as long as we continued in that state of mind which, foreign to our habitual temper, had been forced on us by some extraordinary display of God's presence. But any discovery of Himself which God could make to us, however sublime and astonishing, must, in the nature of things, at last become familiar to us; and any impression, however vivid, must by the same necessary process wear out: so that if we were to rely on these for our religious improvement, we should need an uninterrupted succession of new discoveries and fresh impressions; or if this were not granted, we must become worse and worse, instead of better and better, every day from our conversion.

Nor are we left to arguments from mere probabilities, in order to bring this conclusion home to us. We have in a degree, at least, experienced the inefficiency of the most overpowering and sublime events, in fixing our attention on the Great Being who dispensed them. We have an opportunity of knowing in person what our Lord declared to our forefathers; "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

For let us consider the bearing of the event which we at this season commemorate. It is, as we

must perceive, the literal fulfilment of the rich man's prayer for his brethren. One *has* come unto us from the dead. Nor does it make any great difference that we have not heard this preaching in person, but rely on others for the report of it. We are just as certain that our Lord is risen as if we had ourselves witnessed His resurrection; and the evidence which is thus afforded us respecting our future destiny is not so very different from that which was granted to His immediate followers. To the imagination, indeed, it is less awfully overpowering, yet even to the imagination it is not without its force.

The Ceremonies and Services of this season are just as much tangible effects of the Resurrection as those which the Apostle Thomas sought to confirm his faith; and the same process which has made us familiar to the one in the course of time must have destroyed the impressiveness of the other.

Thus it is then that the Services which we are performing furnish a practical comment on our Lord's declaration in the text, and, on the abstract argument which may be derived from the nature of impressions.

Christ *has* risen, and the present face of the world obtrudes the fact upon our notice; yet the melancholy prediction is fulfilled, which winds up the last words of Inspiration. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him

be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Thus then we may infer, both from a consideration of our own nature, and from the fact of the Resurrection, that God has done all for us which any thing but our own will can do; and that if we neglect our present advantages, we have nothing to blame but ourselves.

Yet it may serve to give us a clearer view of the subject, and will at the same time be attended with practical advantage, if we apply to the Resurrection in particular, the considerations which extend equally to all God does for us; and reflect on the means through which alone, it can become an instrument of practical good to us. It will thus be seen that the advantage which may be derived from the knowledge of the fact, has a necessary dependence on the habitual religious condition of the persons to whom it is communicated; and that the process by which we are to take advantage of it, is a discipline just of the same sort as that which we undergo in forming virtuous habits; so that to create a strong impression on the mind, far from being the object of the Dispensation, scarcely enters into its design: and if in any instance it accidentally effects this, yet that by so doing it no more fulfils its final purpose, than the excitement of good impulses completes a virtuous character.

The real benefits then which have been conferred on us by the Resurrection of our Lord, the

substantial advantages which it has effected for us in our state of religious probation, seem to be the two following.

It has given us evidence of a very peculiar kind, that we shall survive death:—

And has taught us that the Being, whose history is recorded in the Gospels, is now in heaven to receive our prayers.

Now these consequences, important as they are, effect no obvious or immediate good for us; they must be dwelt on long before they can be felt at all, and seem rather intended as comforts to the religious than warnings to unholy minds.

1. And first, as to the evidence afforded of our immortality.

Let us consider in what manner it is that this branch of evidence affects at all.

It clearly is not wanted to make up any deficiency in the proof: for without it we have abundant ground of certainty in the plain declaration of Jesus Christ. He tells us, in the most unequivocal manner, and on several distinct occasions, that a life is in store for us, “where they cannot die any more, for they are equal to the Angels,”—“where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,”—where everlasting happiness or everlasting fire are laid up for all of us. And even had we wanted His omniscient authority, yet the general tenour of Scripture would be sufficient to dispel all the doubts that hang over natural religion. Our Lord’s own Resurrection

then can add nothing to the proof that we have independent of it.

Again: it cannot be said to be of importance to us, as superseding other grounds of conviction, and thus presenting the argument to us in a less embarrassed form. This indeed was true with respect to the first converts to Christianity, who had to be instructed from the very *foundation*, and required to learn the most important truths in the simplest manner. But we have no need of this kind. The simplest ground on which we believe any thing is our Lord's word, and they who will not listen to it will believe nothing.

Thus then it appears that the Resurrection of our Lord, considered as an evidence of a future life, can neither strengthen nor simplify that which we have independently; and consequently that it can have no tendency either to force conviction on those who will not believe, or to supersede the necessity of investigation for those who are too idle to seek truth by labour.

The effect which it is calculated to produce upon the mind is rather to keep up a sustained practical assurance, than once for all to convince the understanding. The circumstance is one to which the thoughts very frequently recur, as they do to past events in our own life, and on which we may dwell with the same consolatory satisfaction, as on the instances in which we have experienced God's faithfulness in our own persons.

A Christian's belief, that he shall live hereafter, differs from that which rests on a trust in God's promises, not in degree but in kind; and much in the same way as the confidence of experienced people in any maxim of worldly prudence, must differ from the reliance of those who take His word upon trust.

But in order that this happy effect be produced in us, it is necessary that we should discipline our thoughts into an habitual attention to the subject. The quiet confidence of which I am speaking does not spring up in our minds of its own accord, or attend as a natural consequence on the knowledge of our Lord's Resurrection. The temper must be acquired in the ordinary way in which tempers are acquired; and it is only after we are disposed to catch hold of any thing as a stay for our faith, and have made it our first concern to look in all directions for means of retaining our affections for God's service, that we can know what it is to derive comfort from the circumstance that "One has come unto us from the dead."

It must be observed too that the temper which has just been mentioned, involves with it all the other features of a religious character, and a course of life conformable to it. No one can feel any very great concern about the life to come, or feel a settled wish to keep the consciousness of it before him, unless he feels at the same time that he has a great deal at stake, on its turning out to be a reality. Unless he is sensible that his treasure is in

heaven, and that for God's sake he voluntarily forgoes a great deal of the pleasure which would otherwise be within his reach, he will have no reason to look farther for consolation, but like the rich man in the parable, will say within himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years."

It is clear that only in proportion as he knows his way of life to be without an earthly object, he can have a proper value for the heavenly; and that a privilege which consists entirely in assisting this certainty to become habitual, will be no privilege at all to those who without it would not "have endured as seeing Him that is invisible." It appears then that our Lord's Resurrection, as an evidence that we shall follow Him, must, in the natural course of things, be useless and indifferent to irreligious minds. Though Christ has come unto us from the dead, those who would not otherwise have listened to Moses and the Prophets, will turn a deaf ear likewise to Him.

2. The other great blessing which is derived to us from this wonderful event, is the knowledge that such as Jesus Christ was upon earth, such He is now after His victory over death. We are not left to guess what degree of change His nature has undergone, in the mysterious transition from mortal to immortal; we know that since His Resurrection He conversed among His disciples with the same affectionate regard, and showed the same sympathy for their human distresses, which during life had

rendered Him an object of such deep affection: and that in His [glorified] state, He still retained that same personality of character to which their imagination clung so fondly. This may in some degree be looked on as a discovery, as a truth not merely conveyed to us in a new and more impressive manner, but one which would have been comparatively unknown to us, except for the circumstance of the Resurrection. It does then, in some degree alter the condition of all Christians, inasmuch as it puts them in possession of a fact respecting their relation to the Supreme Being, of which they must otherwise have remained in ignorance. Yet, on consideration, it will appear that in this respect too, as well as the other, the mercies of God have been thrown away, and rendered ineffectual, in the case of those who would have neglected their previous privileges.

For the advantages which we derive from this knowledge may be summed up in the language of St. Paul; "Seeing," says he, "that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are. . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need."

The only practical and substantial blessing which

this knowledge *can* effect, is the disposition to comply with the Apostle's exhortation,—the disposition to come boldly to the throne of grace. And the means through which it effects this disposition, is the assistance it gives to the habit of devotional reliance on God, by presenting a definite object to our religious meditation.

Now if this be true we may form a tolerably correct estimate of the degree in which we are personally benefited by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by examining ourselves as to the satisfaction we feel in these religious exercises, I mean more particularly in our private prayers, which are most strictly our medium of intercourse with the unseen God. The practical comfort which we derive from these, is the only real advantage which the knowledge that Jesus Christ is in heaven can be supposed to confer on us; and in proportion as each person's conscience tells him that this comfort is enjoyed by him, in that proportion alone is he entitled to account himself the better for the event which we this day commemorate.

It is not my purpose to enforce this melancholy consideration by dwelling on the sluggishness with which this duty is generally executed: what I wish to insist upon is this;—that this sluggishness arises *necessarily* out of such a course of life as would indispose a person to attend to “Moses and the Prophets;” and that none *can* feel the peculiar appeal which is made to us by Him, “who has

come unto us from the dead," unless their whole temper and affections are so regulated, that even without this appeal they would walk in His ways.

Consider then, seriously, what is that way of life which disposes a person to seek shelter and consolation in the presence of the unseen God. It needs but little discernment and self-knowledge, to make one aware that such a disposition is wholly inconsistent with a life of ease and enjoyment. Those whose affections range at large over the world of present pleasures will but little understand that hunger and thirst which Jesus Christ has promised to satisfy. Those who will not leave houses and lands, and brothers and sisters, for His sake, must remain in ignorance whence the manifold greater blessing is to proceed.

This is no more than what common sense tells us in the ordinary affairs of life. It is precisely what we feel with reference to absent friends, whose memory is in no way so effectually cherished as by abstinence from the pleasures and amusements which might fill the vacancy that their absence causes. The ceremonies of mourning, superficial as they generally are, yet prove how the common feeling of mankind requires self-denial as a tribute of affection; and what in common decency we pay to our earthly friends, religion too demands for our heavenly Guardian. We must lead lives of voluntarily endured privation, if we would ever give Jesus Christ that place in our affections which He

has promised to supply for those who seek Him earnestly.

It appears then that in the two respects in which we can be conceived to be benefited by the circumstance that "one has come from the dead," none either are or can be partakers of the blessing, except in the degree in which their minds are set on God's service. That the knowledge of it is not calculated to excite, but to reward religion; and that its practical effect, as a motive to exertion, can only arise from habits which render its influence comparatively unnecessary.

Thus then it appears, that in this last and most wonderful of God's miraculous dispensations, the one which of all others seems at first sight most likely to force mankind into God's service, our obstinacy can and will frustrate God's goodness. Previous to our experience of its efficacy, we might have excused ourselves as the rich man did his brethren: "Nay, father Abraham, but if one come unto them from the dead, they will believe." But now that they have this experience, it is but self-deceiving folly to hope for favourable circumstances, and neglect those in which we are placed.

God may say to us, in the dreary language of the Prophet, "What could I have done more for My vineyard? lo, I looked for grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes!"

SERMON V¹.

THE GOSPEL THE COMPLETION OF NATURAL
RELIGION.

JOHN iii. 12.

“ If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things ?”

THE doctrines which the New Testament inculcates on us are of two sorts. One sort consists of those simple rules for virtuous conduct, which all good men had known and endeavoured to act upon in all ages, and which the heathens ought to have known as well as the Jews; for instance, such as veracity, purity, charity, piety, in short, all that is called natural religion; all that human reason, assisted by the natural light of conscience, might have taught to persons anxious after the truth. And it is of this class of doctrines that our Lord here speaks under the title of earthly things.

The other class of doctrines, which are opposed to these under the title of heavenly things, are those

¹ [Preached on Trinity Sunday.]

mysterious truths which we could not have known except by a revelation from God, and which He has thought fit to communicate to us by messengers especially commissioned for that purpose. Such, for instance, as the influence of good and evil spirits over the hearts of men ; the eternal rewards which are reserved for the righteous after death, and the eternal punishments which await the wicked ; above all, the inestimable privileges which our Lord's death has purchased for us, and the great mystery which the Church this day commemorates, the divinity of the Three Persons of the Godhead, and the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These two classes of doctrines are both contained in the New Testament ; and both are alike essential to Christianity, though the latter alone are peculiar to it.

Indeed, it is very observable, when we consider that to teach the latter was the *peculiar* office of Christian preachers, how large a space has been allotted to the restatement and inculcation of the former. How very much time is spent in dwelling upon natural religion, which all men ought to have known, by the persons who were peculiarly commissioned to bring to light things "hidden from the beginning of the world."

It is very observable, since it is not exactly what we might have expected beforehand ; for surely nothing would be so little calculated to excite surprise, interest, and curiosity, as this systematic

endeavour among the teachers of a new religion, to associate all that they taught with what was already known, and as much as possible to give the appearance of triteness to the most novel and striking communications.

Yet, remarkable as it may appear, it is nevertheless perfectly true, as very short consideration must convince us. Let us first look to the ministry of John the Baptist, the promised forerunner of our Lord, whose office it was “to go before the face of the Lord; to prepare His ways: to give knowledge of salvation unto His people, by the remission of sins, through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us: to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: to guide our feet into the way of peace¹.” This was the express office of John the Baptist. He was to go before the face of the Lord, and to give light to them that sit in darkness. And yet what was this wonderful doctrine that He taught? “And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptised, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded

¹ Luke i. 76—79.

of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Such is the common-place answer which he gives to those whose feet he was to guide into the way of peace, to whom he was to show the dawning of the Day-spring from on high.

And we shall find exactly the same thing, if we look to the teaching of our Lord Himself. His great and first object was to make men *good*,—to impress on them the necessity of loving God, and their neighbour. "A certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? and He said, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live." Indeed the stress which our Lord lays on natural religion, or earthly things, throughout His whole ministry, is so great, that the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, the heavenly things, seem scarcely to be put forward at all, till just before He was to go to the Father; and then only in secret to those chosen companions, who had been trained for three years in His service, and had been prepared, throughout this time, by His teaching and example.

The same thing is also observable in the teach-

ing of St. Paul, as handed down to us in the Acts of the Apostles. We find him on all occasions, whether preaching to Jews or Heathens, always pursuing the same course. He uniformly begins by showing how that degree of religious knowledge, which men had hitherto attained, was a preparation for that which he was going to communicate; that the earthly things and the heavenly things were all part of the same system; and the latter only the completion of what the former was the beginning. To the Jews, he states that the same "God who at sundry times and in divers manners, had spoken in times past unto our fathers by the Prophets, hath in these latter times spoken to us by His Son;" that the Gospel was only the fulfilling of the Law, and that the *new* doctrines which it added were the substance, of which the Law was the pattern. To the Greeks he says, "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: 'To the Unknown God.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him I teach unto you. God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, although He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being. As certain also of your poets have said; For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we also are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or

silver or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent. Because He hath appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained: whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Such pains does St. Paul take to show the Athenians, (anxious as they were for some new thing,) that what *he* was about to teach was really *old*—was a communication from that God of whom their own poets had written; and whom good men among themselves had endeavoured to "feel after and find."

It appears then that our Lord's forerunner, our Lord Himself, and His chosen messengers, all followed the same course; all attempted so to propose to their disciples the heavenly things, which they were to reveal, as to make them seem nothing more than a completion of the earthly things, which they ought already to have known. The lives of Christians were not to differ from the lives of other good men, except in the greatness of the pains they were to take in serving God. No new rule was given them for pleasing God without self-denial, and getting to virtue by a shorter road. The Being, whom they were to serve, was the same God who had imposed on the heathen the law of conscience, and had revealed to the Jews the law of Moses: and the things which were now required in addi-

tion, viz. belief in the peculiar doctrines, the heavenly things of Christianity, were not to be substituted for, but superadded to, the service which was previously due from them.

Indeed in the text our right performance of the duties of natural religion is proposed as a kind of test, how far we comply with the commands peculiar to revelation. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Our Lord seems to say that it is impossible for those who are deficient in the one class of duties, to perform the other properly. He puts it as an absurdity, that any one who neglected to perceive what he might know by the light of reason and of conscience, should be capable of understanding what was far more difficult, the hidden mysteries of God.

The text which He here proposes to us for ascertaining how far we believe rightly in heavenly things, is much of the same sort as one which He gave on another occasion respecting natural piety, "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only." He seems to say, that a belief in that part of religion which common sense teaches, is as necessarily implied in a belief of that other part, of which only revelation can teach, as consistent good conduct is implied in natural religion itself; that as a person cannot be said to believe in any God at all, who lives as if he looked to

nothing beyond the world ; so no one can be said to believe rightly in the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, unless he believes also rightly, *i. e.* acts consistently on the belief, that there is a God who loves holiness and hates vice ; who requires of us to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with Him ; and who expects of us that if we love Him we love one another also.

Such is the conclusion we may draw from our Lord's own words, " If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not ; how can ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ? " But it is also a conclusion to which serious consideration ought to lead us, even had our Lord been silent on it ; for we have only to think attentively on the nature of the doctrines themselves, I mean those of the Trinity and Incarnation, and we shall see that the only possible way of understanding them, and profiting by them, or indeed of entering at all into their meaning, is by leading that sort of life which they are intended to help us in leading.

It can never be supposed, by any serious-minded person, that the sort of belief which God requires of us is a mere idle opinion ; that He will be satisfied with our fancying that we believe ; and that He will consider us to be sincere believers unless we actually entertain heretical notions. If such were the case, it would certainly be no hard matter to believe when He tells us heavenly things, and to

secure to ourselves the rewards which He has promised to the faithful. But common sense tells us that this cannot possibly be so; that the faith which is so precious in the sight of God must have a deeper seat than this in the hearts of Christians; and that though we may say the most orthodox creed over and over again, and fancy we assent to every word of it, we may, notwithstanding, at the time be little better than the heathen. It cannot be imagined, for instance, that a belief in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ can be of any avail towards securing His favour, unless it makes us love Him, reverence Him, and study to obey Him in all our thoughts, words, and works; unless our belief makes us different persons,—more holy in our lives, by the imitation of His example,—more earnest in our prayers, by the knowledge that we have in heaven a great High Priest¹, who is not unable to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities,—more patient under all the afflictions with which God visits us, from the recollection of the sufferings which Jesus Christ underwent for our sake. Such, one would think, is the only meaning which any one in his senses *could* annex to a belief that our Blessed Lord was the only begotten Son of God; for it seems that any thing short of this, so far from being pleasing to God, must actually be an aggravation of our sinfulness, inasmuch as disobe-

¹ Heb. iv. 14.

dience is worse in those who know their duty, than in those who are ignorant of it. Now, if all this is necessary in order to impart value to our belief in the mysteries of religion, it is sufficiently clear that those are little likely to attain to a true sense of heavenly things who have been told of earthly things and believed not. It would be to little purpose to preach the divinity of Christ to one who lived as if he believed in no God at all, or to declare the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit to one who neglected the plain voice of conscience. They who heard not Moses and the prophets would not believe though one came unto them from the dead; and they who neglect the obvious duties which the light of nature points out to them, are not the persons to derive advantage from the peculiar doctrines of revelation.

These things are well deserving of very serious consideration; they are not matters of mere curiosity about which we may make up our minds at leisure; but they very intimately concern every one of us in the most important of all respects. For if indeed it is so hard a matter to hold the Catholic Faith, common prudence would teach us at least to *doubt* how far we have attained to it, and to exert ourselves to the very uttermost in order to secure our safety.

This question, "Am I, or am I not, a sincere believer?" is one of no light import, as the Services of this day most fearfully remind us. In repeating

the Athanasian creed, we have all expressed, "Who-soever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." And we must remember that these awful words are no human invention, so that the author of them should be deceived: they are little more than a repetition of our Lord's own sentence, "Whoso believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned¹." It cannot but concern us all to know to which of these two classes we belong; to those who believe and shall be saved, or who believe not and shall be damned. And in settling this point each for himself, we need not perplex ourselves with subtle and curious questions about expressions which we cannot understand; we should go at once to the test with which our Lord has furnished us in the text; we must try our belief of heavenly things by our conduct in earthly things. We must ask ourselves, not "Am I thoroughly convinced and certain that these mysterious doctrines are true?" for that is a matter over which we have no control; we cannot feel certain by trying to feel ever so much; and God will not require of us impossibilities. But what we must ask ourselves is this, "Is my conduct such as it *would be* if I was thoroughly convinced of them?" In the first place,

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

do I act as if I believed God to be my Father, and my neighbour to be my brother? that is, do I believe in earthly things? and, secondly, as to heavenly things, do I *endeavour*, with all my might, and with all my soul, and with all my strength, to *follow and obey* the Lord Jesus Christ *as* my Saviour and my God?

Such are the thoughts which must be suggested to all serious minds by those solemn words of the Athanasian creed, "This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." It is to be hoped that we who are here present have not this time repeated them in vain; but that we shall return to our labours more diligent, and more humble, and more charitable to all mankind, from the lively consciousness they should impress upon us of our own weakness and need of mercy.

SERMON VI.

THE PATH OF DUTY NOT DIFFICULT TO FAITH.

ROM. x. 6, 7, 8.

“ But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven ? that is, to bring Christ down from above : or, Who shall descend into the deep ? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it ? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart ; that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”

IN a Christian country, where men are taught from their childhood the fundamental doctrines of religion, it is to be hoped that few so entirely lose sight of the great truths which it is our highest interest and duty to keep constantly in view, as to acquiesce with entire satisfaction in irreligious courses.

It is to be feared, however, that the number of those is still smaller, who lay these things so seriously to heart as to shape their daily practice conformably with the standard of the Gospel, and who live in such a manner as to render the thought of God's presence consolatory.

It is the melancholy duty of most of us to confess at each pause of serious reflection, the unhappy discrepancy between our faith and conduct. To acknowledge that in the cares of our worldly occupation we lose sight of the only object which renders any occupation reasonable; that we pursue as ends valuable in themselves what we know to be the mere instruments of remoter good; and are so absorbed in the present system of things, and regulate our lives so entirely with reference to it, that there are very few things in which we should act differently if we were without God in the world.

This is a sad but not exaggerated statement of the condition even of the better sort of people. Numbers there are who act respectably in the different relations of life; who are diligent in their calling, kind to their families and neighbours, and act on principles, which, to a certain extent, are just and proper, but who go no farther than this; who take very little pains to keep their thoughts fixed on serious subjects, and who would probably live very much in the same manner as they do, if they had never heard of Jesus Christ, or even of religion at all.

Now this way of spending one's time clearly cannot be right or pleasing to God. His holy revelation cannot have been intended to have no effect on our lives and characters; and till we become a good deal hardened by habit, we are well enough aware of this.

Many there are, among young people especially, to whom the consciousness of it is a source of great uneasiness; and the consequence is, that unless their inward dissatisfaction drives them to change their courses, and act consistently with the relation in which they stand to God, they look about for means of quieting their consciences, and hiding from themselves their situation, by saying to their hearts "Peace, when there is no peace."

Among the various artifices by which men endeavour to effect this, not the least common is the attempt to shift the blame from themselves, from their own idleness and self-indulgence, to something in their natural disposition, and the circumstances in which they are placed. They endeavour to think that their disinclination to a religious life is rather their misfortune than their fault; something which rather excuses their defective conduct, than forms itself a part of their sinfulness. They lament that although they know and believe that which the Gospel teaches them, yet they cannot feel it to be true. They do not mistrust the declarations of Scripture, yet cannot bring themselves to conceive how such things can be; how that great Being of whom they have read, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, can really be watching over and attending to the thoughts of such creatures as themselves. They lament this dullness of their spirit, and hope it will not ever continue to impede their progress in religion. But this is all: they

only have recourse to barren and idle wishes for amendment, and vaguely look forward to some period when God shall set their heart at liberty; some summer of good feeling, independent of patience and self-denial.

This is the beginning of a temper which generally terminates in one of two ways—either in mere worldlymindedness and forgetfulness of religion, or an enthusiastic desire to attain this talisman, a strained endeavour to excite some impression in their minds, which is to supersede the necessity of moral discipline, and make them religious at once.

Persons of this latter class are those to whom St. Paul may be supposed to address himself in the text; at least, the restless craving, against which he warns his converts in the former verse of it, seems the natural growth of such a character as I am describing. Such an one continues to think and talk about religion, and to indulge a vague admiration of high things; and reading about Saints and Martyrs, without having any practical notion how to resemble them, runs into all sorts of strange fancies in his conceptions of excellence.

Having formed no regular habits of religion, nor learned by experience how the common affairs of life may become exercises of piety, he thinks he cannot remove himself too far from the state of things in which God has placed him. He cannot imagine that St. Paul, or St. John, were men in like condition with himself, having to contend

against the same tediousness of spirit, conscious of the same exclusion from the presence of God. He tries to work up his mind into the state to which he conceives those of the Saints to have been elevated, and to escape, as it were, into some new climate of feeling, where he may serve God without thwarting his inclination. In the words of the Apostle, he says in his heart, "Who will go up into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above), or, Who will descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead.)"

These, then, appear to be the persons to whom St. Paul more immediately addresses himself. But the consideration which he suggests, to make them conscious of their danger, is equally applicable to all those of whom I spoke at first; all, whether enthusiastic, or indifferent, who hope for some impression to be made on them, which may turn their thoughts to serious subjects, and give them a relish for religious occupation, all these alike stand in need of the admonition, that the "Word of God is among them, even in their hearts, and in their mouth, even the word of faith which we preach."

And, I believe it will be found, that almost all of us, whether we are conscious of it or not, labour more or less under this delusion.

If we care enough for heaven to hope we shall some time go there, and yet do not follow those great examples who are held up to us in Scripture, as it were, to show us the way thither,—if we can-

not bear the thought that, at the day of judgment, Christ will declare that He never knew us, and yet allow ourselves to follow courses which we know He would disapprove if He were with us, it is *impossible* but that we must cherish some indistinct expectation of a more favourable state of things [to come]; we *must* suppose that, at some time or other, religion will come easier to us, if we hope *ever* to attain to holiness, yet do not now strive for it. We *must* imagine that God's assistance is not equally within the reach of all, if, when we know how he has enabled his Saints to serve Him, we are content to be like the men of Laodicea.

To persons like us, the Apostle is speaking, when he declares that "the Word is very nigh unto us, even the word of faith which is preached:" and it is to the same temper that our Lord addresses Himself, when He declares that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you." Nor is it to any other purpose that we are told, "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

In other words, little as we may be affected by it, God is with us at this time as really, and His Spirit ready to assist *us* as effectually, as He has done to any of God's chosen servants since the foundation of the world, and as He ever will do till the day of judgment. We have nothing more to look for, no superhuman call, no perceptible operation of

grace. We may know the will of our Maker if we will attend to His Revelation. We are members of His Holy Church, which day by day admonishes us, entices, threatens us. The word of faith is among us, "even in our mouth and in our hearts."—"The kingdom of God is within us."

These things it behoves us most seriously to consider: and, first, with reference to the important question, how are we attain to a proper sense of the privileges we enjoy; how is that much wished-for change of feeling to be accomplished, which will enable us to live as in the presence of God,—to act and think consistently with the circumstances in which we are placed.

Disheartening as it may seem, this is a difficult and long task. Long enough to occupy a whole life, and hard enough to demand all our energy. We are not indeed called on to strain after lofty feelings, and to form great conceptions of God; but to set ourselves patiently and contentedly to work, dull and unspiritual as our inclinations may be.

We are to *do* the will of our Father. This is what He requires of us,—and to leave all the rest to Him. Doubtless He will, in His own good time, so improve our hearts and purify our desires, that the work of regulating them will become less irksome and difficult. And this is the rest to which we must look forward. Doubtless, also, He who knoweth all things, must be aware of the temptations which oppose us, and will reward us in pro-

portion to their greatness. This, then, must be our consolation.

But it is not on rest and consolation that we are to employ our thoughts; we are to persevere in doing God's will, and to force ourselves to act, however reluctantly, as we should do of our own accord, if our hearts were such as we wish them to become.

Nor is there any thing strange or new in this manner of proceeding; it is exactly of a piece with what common sense teaches us in all the ordinary affairs of life. If a man is intended for a profession that requires much time and labour; if he knows he has to sacrifice much of what occupies and amuses him, before he can get on in his new line of life, and turn to account the advantages which are offered him; what is the course we expect him to take? Surely not to sit still and wait till he gets a relish for the business he is to follow, in order that he may then learn and attend to it with better prospect of success. He does not try to acquire the taste first, and then act upon it; but, if he has any sense, he sets to work immediately, to make himself master of all he can learn about it, and then, as he grows familiar with what at first was perplexing, and experienced at overcoming difficulties, he gets to take actual pleasure in those very things which at first were most vexatious to him.

What does a man do who knows that he shall,

at no very distant time, be called on to perform some exploit requiring great bodily strength? He does not *hope* to become strong and active, and then promise himself success in manly exercises. But, in the language of St. Paul, "He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things," and this reflection suggests to the Apostle what it should do to all of us. He proceeds to contrast the conduct of those persons, whose object of pursuit is of so little consequence, with that of Christians contending for salvation. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

This course of conduct, which common sense points out as reasonable, is exactly what God requires of us in religion. This is the way in which we are to pursue holiness, and open our eyes to the kingdom of God which is within us. And a little consideration will convince us, that whatever schemes we form in our imagination, however we may long for a more visible manifestation of God's presence and power, in order to make religion come more easy and natural to us, they all would be alike futile and unsatisfactory. Nor has God left us to infer this for ourselves. In the course of that long discipline which He vouchsafed to His chosen people, in order to fit them for the farther manifestation of His goodness, as well as to make them an example for future ages, He thought fit to reveal Himself in different ways, and with different degrees of visible glory.

For example, let us reflect on the condition of the Israelites in the desert, which is perhaps the most remarkable instance we have, of men living under a dispensation of miracles. God's cloud was before them in the day, and His pillar of fire by night. The sea was parted before them when they entered, and their enemies were overthrown by its return. Water was brought for them out of the stony rock, and they were fed with the bread of heaven. They saw Mount Sinai covered in fire and clouds, and they heard the trumpet of God out of the smoke. And yet, while Moses, their guide, had gone up into the mountain, they made for themselves a graven image; and, in the very presence of the Most High, they bowed down before an idol.

Nor let us imagine ourselves to be so very different from the Israelites, but that we, under the same circumstances, might have done the same. Our Lord's declaration, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," is as true with reference to us in the present day, as it was at the time He uttered it. Nor could any thing rouse the energy of those who are not awakened by the call of the Gospel. For consider what it is in which the striking character of miracles consists. The very idea of a miracle, implies that it is different from the course of things to which we are accustomed: and to the Israelites the pillar of cloud and fire, and the

rain of manna, would soon become as familiar, and seem as natural, as the things which God daily does for us by His ordinary Providence. A mind indisposed to serious thoughts would soon become as indifferent to these things, as to the changes of tides and seasons, the growth of trees and the ripening of fruits, which are no less real indications of God's presence among us, than were the deeds of His mighty hand and outstretched arm.

We are to remember, then, that all has been already done for us which the Bible promises, or which can promote our salvation. He, who alone knoweth and chooses what is best for us, has seen fit to place us in the state in which we find ourselves, and graciously promises that if we so live here as to fit ourselves for being made glad hereafter by the joy of His countenance, He will, in another world, take us to Himself; we shall wake up after His likeness and be satisfied with it.

If, however, we fail on our part to perform this condition; if we will not hear "the word which is very nigh unto us," "but wilfully sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden

under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace.”

SERMON VII¹.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD ATTAINABLE ONLY BY
FIRST ACTING ON IT.

ACTS xvii. 27.

“ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.”

IN a former sermon¹ I endeavoured to point out to you that we are so constituted as to make discipline and exertion necessary, in order to bring us to any good, either in this world or the next; that we were so long in passing from childhood to manhood, not because God had arbitrarily decreed it should be so, but because unless our whole nature was changed it could not possibly be otherwise; and that it was highly to our advantage that our body and mind did not arrive at maturity, till we had acquired enough experience and self-command, to enable us to govern and restrain ourselves;—also, that the “sore travail” which God has given us during the remainder of our lives, after we have arrived at maturity, is not given us for nothing, or merely to try

¹ [Vide Sermon II. written in 1830.]

us what sort of people we are, but that we may be “exercised therewith;” that the habits of patience and industry, which are absolutely necessary for most of us, if we would obtain the conveniences and even necessities of life, may also be of further and much higher service to us, in fitting us for another state of existence; for that in the same way as the habits gained in our education as children fit us afterwards to take our part in active life, so those which we are trained into by this subsequent education, such as honesty, sobriety, self-denial, faith, are the very qualifications of which we shall most stand in need, when after death we have to take our part in a much higher station, in the presence of the great King. In conclusion, I stated that as all this is true, with reference to the formation of our moral character, it is no less so as regards our religious character; that the love and fear of God are just as much habits, as any other temper of mind that can be named, is so; and that discipline is just as requisite for the attainment of the one, as of the other.

On this head I intend to dwell more at length on the present occasion; and to show, not only that we cannot love and fear God as we ought to do, without such previous discipline as He has provided for us, but that without this we cannot even know Him: that we have need of this preparation, not solely to acquire such a temper of mind as He is pleased with, and to fit ourselves for dwelling

hereafter in His presence, but in the first place, “to seek the Lord if haply we may feel after Him and find Him:” to learn who that great Being is, “in whom we live and move and have our being.”

Now this is a point which deserves more attention than is generally bestowed on it. We are too much in the habit of assuming, that, whatever may be the difficulty of *seeing* God, to *know* Him is at any rate no hard matter. We remember what we have been taught from children, and have read in the Bible of “God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,” and suppose that because we have been always familiar with this and the like forms of words, therefore we have been also familiar with the ideas which they convey,—that to know God is as easy as to talk about Him,—and that since when children we used to make mention of Him in our prayers, the knowledge of Him must be something very simple indeed: and this is not only a great mistake, but leads, in many cases, to very serious bad consequences in practice. For when men have taken up the notion that they know all they need about God and religion, they are very apt indeed to miscalculate on their powers of turning to God as soon as they please. It seems to them that the time will come when they shall be less tempted to disobey His ordinances; and that it will be time enough then to think of acting in conformity with them.

The folly of such a notion is indeed sufficiently

exposed, by showing that a religious frame of mind is a habit, and must be formed, like other habits, by persevering in such conduct as religion prescribes; so that they who go on in courses which God condemns, with the hope that they shall at last be able to lay them aside without trouble, are like men who should march directly away from the place to which they want to go, with the hope that they may by and by find themselves nearer to it than they are at present.

But one would hope it must still farther tend to impress this lesson on men's minds, if they could be made to see, that without trying to serve God, they cannot even know what sort of service He is pleased with,—nay, that they cannot be said even to believe in Him in any true sense.

This then is what it will be my object now to put before you, in the plainest manner I can.

1. Now I suppose that it will hardly be considered strange to assert, that the attaining to that sort of knowledge, which will enable us to act and feel in a manner pleasing to God, cannot be easier than the attaining knowledge of the same sort with reference to our neighbour. It is hardly to be supposed that the relation in which we stand to our Almighty Father and King, is so much more readily understood, than our relation to our earthly fathers and earthly kings; that our duty to the former should come to our knowledge with less pains than our duty to the latter: yet we have but to look around

us, and we shall be forced to own, that the honour due to fathers and to kings, is far from being a thing that we may learn at any time and at once. Perhaps there are scarcely any two persons who look on their relations exactly in the same light, or entertain the same notions of the duties they require of us: at any rate, the different conclusions at which different people arrive, are inconsistent to a lamentable degree. Most men may perhaps admit in words that they are bound "to love, honour, and succour their father and their mother; to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him," yet, if they were to explain what they mean by these words, some would be found to interpret them in a manner which others would think quite profane and wicked. Yet if it were so very plain and obvious a thing, what our duty is in these respects, no such difference could possibly subsist; all would necessarily agree in their opinions, however much they might differ from one another in their conduct. The fact however is, that in such matters as these our opinions are the result of our conduct; and that discipline and experience are just as necessary, in order to teach us what love, honour, and obedience mean, as to enforce them upon us in our lives and conversation; and by natural consequence, those who spend their lives loyally towards the King, and piously towards their parents, come to have a higher and higher sense of what is required of them; whereas, those who are

careless and indifferent, or indulge their bad selfish dispositions, lose gradually all shame and uncomfortable feeling, and get to be quite satisfied that what they do is not very far short of what they ought to do.

Nor is this confined to the relations which I have mentioned: we have but to compare together the opinions of the kind and oppressive man, the honourable and the base, the liberal and the selfish; and we shall find that they differ from one another quite as much in their interpretation of their duty, as in their external demeanour. No one has any notion of a standard very far superior to the one which he proposes to himself; and while the best people always have a conception of something beyond what they can attain; the very worst content themselves with the notion, that if they were a little better they should be as good as they need.

Now is it to be supposed that the knowledge required for acting our part rightly in relations such as these, is so difficult to arrive at, and yet that we all know our relation to God, as it were by instinct? Is it so much easier to understand how we ought to feel and act with reference to Him that is invisible, than to perceive what natural religion teaches us, of our duty to those among whom we live? It is indeed no hard matter to read our Bible; and we see there, in terms sufficiently plain, what is the service that God demands of us. It is easy to say in words, that we ought "to believe in Him, to fear

Him, and to love Him, with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength." But then it is just as difficult to arrive at a right sense of what these words mean, plain as they are, as it is to arrive at the full meaning of those equally plain words, that we ought "to love, honour, and succour our father and mother; to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him."

Thus then it is in one sense true, that during our discipline here on earth, we have "to seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after Him, and find Him." We have to find out, by serious and constant endeavours to serve Him, what sort of service it is that He requires of us; what sort of behaviour will be exacted of us, when we come into the presence of the Great King.

2. Again: there is another sense in which it may be said that we are placed in the world to seek the Lord. The difficulty which we have to encounter consists not only in learning how to please the Lord, but who the Lord is: in learning to perceive that great power, wisdom, and goodness, which are exerted for us and around us, at every moment; "which giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." This knowledge is not, any more than the other, to be attained without seeking diligently.

The belief in the One True God, and that sort of knowledge of Him which is necessary to belief, simple and obvious as we are ready to suppose

them, are, in fact, only to be acquired by the patient exercise of our highest faculties. We have to go through a slow and laborious progress in believing faithfully, just as much as in serving faithfully. And to suppose our belief entire, is no less a fatal mistake, than to suppose our practice perfect.

For consider what it is that is meant by knowing and believing God. Are we to think it enough that we give our assent to such a form of words as that at the opening of the Apostles' Creed? "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; and in the Holy Ghost." This, indeed, it is easy enough to do, as far as we understand them. But are we sure that, when we take into our mouths such glorious and fearful Names, we are not using a language which we very imperfectly comprehend? Are we sure that we are doing much better than uttering a charm in an unknown tongue? A true view would teach us, that when we make mention of such awful and mysterious things, we have but a very faint glimpse of the subject we are talking of; that we annex but little more ideas to our words, than a man who had been blind from his youth would do, if talking of the distinction between one colour and another.

Yet, it may be asked, is there any other knowledge than this which we can possibly attain to? Though our knowledge of God is very incomplete, is there any thing which we can do to advance it

further? And unless this is the case, it is nothing to the purpose to enlarge on the imperfection of such faith as ours, since, if it is all that we can attain to, it is all that can be required of us.

Now it must be admitted that our knowledge of the unseen God is very imperfect, do what we will, and that till He admits us to His presence in a different manner from that in which He admits us now, we must see as through a glass darkly, whatever pains we take "to seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after Him and find Him." But still there is a great deal that we can and must do; a great advance in knowledge which we can make just as well in our present circumstances as if we saw the Almighty face to face, and which, as far as we can tell, may be absolutely necessary to us, in order that in another world "we may know even as we are known." For will any one suppose that all men, whatever be their moral attainments, are equally capable of understanding the situation in which they would be placed if they were at this moment to appear before the presence of God? Common sense tells us that this is very far from the truth, and would lead us to expect that those who had not taken much pains to acquaint themselves with God's ways, and to prepare their minds in the manner which He has prescribed, would be little more affected by His actual presence than the Jews were by the thunders of Mount Sinai. For we observe in our intercourse with one another, that

all which is most truly great and noble is least readily perceived to be so. Even human wisdom and goodness, exercised in circumstances with which we are conversant, and therefore (one would think) of which we might form a judgment, are very little understood and appreciated, except by those who are themselves advanced far in virtue. So much so indeed, that people may have patterns of the greatest perfection constantly before their eyes, and yet be totally unconscious of it; and of this the Bible furnishes us with a most fearful lesson. There was a time, we all know, when God Almighty did actually come in person among His creatures, and lived with them as a man like themselves. These persons among whom He lived saw their Creator face to face, and had an opportunity of knowing His character by their own personal experience of it. And how were these affected by it? what was the use they made of the remarkable opportunity offered them? There were a small number of persons whom He selected as His friends, and with whom He associated constantly for three years. Most of these appear, indeed, to have loved and revered Him from the first; yet even one of these, in their very last conversation with Him, gave occasion to this rebuke from his Lord, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father." This was the knowledge which even the best men

had attained respecting their Almighty Visitor. And what was the case with the rest? They put Him to death as a malefactor.

We see, then, that it is possible for power, and wisdom, and goodness to be displayed before men in the utmost perfection, and that, too, in ways and under circumstances which common sense should enable them to enter into; and yet for them all the while to be utterly ignorant and hardened against all that goes on around them.

It appears, then, that our ignorance of God arises from something more than our exclusion from His presence; and though we may excuse ourselves under the plea that we see as through a glass darkly, we have no reason to suppose that we should do better if we saw Him face to face. We might be brought into the actual presence of our Almighty Father, and yet remain in as utter ignorance of Him as the Jews did of Jesus Christ.

It will be seen, then, that though the knowledge of God which we can attain on earth must necessarily be very limited, still that there is a knowledge of Him which we must attain here, if we would ever hope to know Him more fully hereafter. And in this sense, as well as that other of learning how to serve Him, we have "to seek the Lord if haply we may feel after Him, and find Him, although He is not far from every one of us."

Such is our business, and the way in which we

are to execute it is very plainly pointed out to us. In all our daily conduct and conversation we are to act as if we saw God; as if we observed His eye looking down upon us from heaven; and we are to harbour no thought, indulge no inclination, which we should fear to harbour or indulge in if we stood in the presence of our Father which is in heaven.

We are to do His will, and thus we shall gradually understand the doctrine which He has taught us concerning Himself. Thus it is that in our earthly relations we get to be acquainted with those who are higher and better than ourselves. We have first of all to learn to obey them whether we can see the reason or no; and by and by we get to see the reason, and to understand the kindness of our advisers. Thus it is that a soldier gains confidence in his general, or a patient in his physician, or a son in his father; thus it was that our Lord's Apostles learned by degrees to acknowledge that in Jesus Christ "they beheld the glory of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth;" thus it is that each of us must learn to confess "the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

SERMON VIII.

KNOWLEDGE OF OUR DUTY ATTAINABLE ONLY BY
PRACTISING IT.

ST. JAMES, i. 22—24.

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

ONE reason for the easy, careless way in which most men regard their religious concerns, and put off the consideration of them to the last, is the notion that they already know as much about them as they need, and that all that remains for them to do is to act up to the principles which they have been taught. They know the lessons which they have been taught when children, and they have probably picked up many maxims of religious conduct both from the Bible and from sermons, and from the more serious part of their acquaintance. Possibly, too, they sometimes fancy that they feel a great admiration of virtue, and a love of those great

examples of goodness which we read of in the Bible; and though they do not at present feel disposed to imitate the conduct of the people they admire, yet they doubt not that by and by, when they have fewer things to distract them, they shall be able to put in practice the lessons they have heard, and shall find themselves just where they would have been if they had begun a religious life from the first. It seems to them that, if they do but take to being religious at last, it cannot make much matter whether they begin earlier or later. For that they already know all that is necessary as a preparation for a change of life; and that it is almost a waste of time to begin so soon when there is so little to be learned.

This is a way of thinking which has probably occurred to many minds, and which men are likely to get into in proportion to their carelessness about religious conduct.

Now the greatest mistake that these people make is in thinking that knowing about religion is any great help towards being religious. But this is not their only mistake, nor the one which I shall at present notice. It is not only mistaken to suppose that we shall be religious as soon as we begin to act on religious principles; but it is also mistaken in people to suppose that they know the principles on which they ought to act. The fact is, that to know how to be religious is a very hard matter; and that the sort of knowledge which we can gather about it

by reading and talking is in reality but a very small step towards that sort of knowledge which we should be able to act on. The maxims which we have heard in Church and read of in our Bibles, about our duty to God and our neighbour, are indeed of the highest value, and if stored up in our memory, and applied on all occasions, will help us to acquire a real knowledge of what it concerns us so much to know. But the mere remembering them and being able to repeat them without this constant application, will be no good to us at all. They will be no more than words to us, of which we do not know the meaning; and this we shall find to our cost, when we come at last to apply them to the regulation of our lives.

That religious knowledge is not so easily attained as some persons seem to imagine, might be seen, one would think, with sufficient clearness from the great variety of opinions that exist respecting religious duty. If we look only to the very different notions people have of the sort of perfection at which they ought to aim, we shall see that, while the generality seem to think themselves not so very far from being as good as they ought to be, and propose to themselves to become only a little more temperate, more disinterested, and more serious, there are others who in all these points have watched themselves with the utmost strictness, and yet who still think themselves very deficient in all. Some men think they should have done all that can

be required by getting to a point, which others pass far beyond, and yet confess themselves to be wretched sinners. Thus, then, people's opinions about what they ought to be are as different as their endeavours to make themselves what they ought to be; and the more they attempt to do, the more they are conscious of what they have undone. This consideration alone one would think sufficient to show the difficulty of attaining religious knowledge, and ought to convince us that in order to understand what it is that God requires of us, we have more to do than just to call to mind the good advice which we have from time to time received, and to talk over the principles which the Bible proposes to us; for if those who have done this can still differ as widely in their notions of what is right as careless persons do from self-denying persons, and since one of the two must be mistaken, it is clear that this way of learning our duty must be very uncertain and imperfect.

But the same thing may be brought home to men's minds more clearly, if they will reflect how different the knowledge is which can be got by reading and talking in all the common matters of life from that which is to be got by experience. This any one will see at once by thinking over any art or business in which he is personally engaged; he will then acknowledge at once that nothing which he could be told beforehand, no advice or instruction which could be given him by others,

will ever supply the place of experience. He will recollect how different he has often found things, when he has come to be actually engaged in them, from what he had expected to find them beforehand. Suppose, for instance, that a mason or carpenter had read in a book the rules for doing some difficult piece of work, and that he had taken ever such great pains to understand them, it is ten to one that when he came to put them in practice he would find a hundred difficulties and perplexities that he had never thought of before. He would find that he had overlooked many points which it was necessary to attend to, and misunderstood many, without the knowledge of which his work would not come true. Indeed in all cases where we want to know how to act, so little value is set on that kind of general knowledge which can be got by reading and talking, that if any one was to trust to it for the regulation of his own concerns in matters where he had no experience, he would be thought deficient in common understanding. For instance, if a man had an estate to let, and wished to ascertain the value of it, how absurd he would be considered if he chose to judge for himself about the goodness of the soil and the advantages of the situation by general rules which he had heard laid down, instead of trusting it to the management of an experienced agent. Or if a man had a house to build, what would be thought of him if, instead of consulting some one acquainted with the kind of

work, he was to set about making calculations for himself out of books about the labour and materials that would be wanted, and all the contrivances for executing the work. If in such things as these a man is foolish enough to trust any knowledge but that of experience, he is sure to get into numberless difficulties, and to bring down on himself the ridicule of his neighbours.

Are we to suppose, then, that while in the common concerns of life it is so difficult to know what we ought to do, and that while in these so much knowledge is necessary which can be supplied by nothing but experience, the greatest of all our concerns, our duty towards God, is so very easy to understand, that we are able to execute it at once by the rules which we have heard and read?

If any one does suppose this, let him only take any single one of these rules, and consider how he should turn it to account in the regulation of his conduct. Take, for instance, the first words of our duty to our neighbour; "My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do unto all men as I would they should do unto me." Nothing can be simpler than this rule, and yet one who has not been in the habit of applying it to his conduct, would find, on his first endeavours to live according to it, that even here he had much to learn which nothing but experience could teach him. He would constantly find himself at a loss to know how his love should show itself, and what was in reality

the course which he would have others pursue towards him. It would often happen that by doing what his neighbour most wished, and would take most kindly, he would really be doing him an injury, and that in order really to advance his welfare, it would be necessary to do what seemed harsh and morose. Here, then, he would often find a source of perplexity; he would feel unwilling to give his neighbour pain, and yet would know that this pain would in the end be of service to him. Are we then to consult for his interest or for his wishes? are we to take upon ourselves to be his guardians, and force him to do what is unpleasant that he may obtain what we consider for his good? There are cases in which such conduct would be an impertinent interference, and some in which it would be an imperative duty; but how we are to distinguish between the cases, how we are to know when we ought to consult his wishes, and when his interest; this is a point of which the rule cannot inform us, for it we must trust to our own experience. Sometimes we shall have to comply with foolish requests, sometimes to resist very earnest intreaties. At first we shall often act injudiciously, and sometimes wrongly, even when we try best to keep a straight course; but by degrees we shall find out what is the right course, and learn to feel that punishment itself may often be an act of charity; indeed, that it is wrong to punish except with a charitable intention.

Such is the case as regards our duty towards our neighbour; and exactly the same thing is true as regards our duty towards God. It is very easy for us to know that we ought constantly to preserve a serious frame of mind, and that we should have God uppermost in all our thoughts; and men, who lead careless unthinking lives, fancy that they quite understand what is meant by this; yet any one who converses with them on the subject, or who watches the perverse feelings that will frequently intrude upon himself, must be aware that, without care and experience, it is impossible to have any idea of the conduct to which such a rule would lead. He will see that the notion which most unthinking people annex to a serious life, is that of constant weariness and constraint; that they suppose it impossible to enjoy pleasure seriously; and that they connect the idea of religion with moroseness and melancholy. To have God uppermost in their thoughts, seems to such persons impossible, without destroying all that freedom of mind which makes life tolerable. And yet those who have most tried to live serious and holy lives, will be found to give a very different account of the effect which is produced in them by the thought of God. To them, it seems, that the oftener they can think of Him, the more nearly they approach to living in His presence; and that living in His presence seems like living in the presence of the greatest and kindest of benefactors, who has done most for their good,

and who delights in seeing them happy as long as happiness is consistent with their interest. They find it no more impossible to be joyful when thinking of their unseen Father, than our Lord's disciples did, when they were blessed by His actual presence. And the reason of this is, that they know Him. Careless people feel restraint and uneasiness at the thought of God's presence, because to them He is a stranger. His ways are not their ways; and they feel towards Him as they do towards a stranger, who does not enter into their pursuits and way of living. And it is only by trying to know Him, as people try to know their earthly acquaintance, that they can possibly attain to a different notion of him. Our earthly friends have not become our friends all at once; we have not come to know and esteem them by a sudden determination, or by talking to others about their character. It is by living with them, and studying to please and serve them, that we have got to understand their feelings, and to have pleasure in living with them. So too it is with the unseen God. It is only by living with the thought of Him present to us, and by constantly endeavouring to do His will, that we can train ourselves to know and to love Him; and it is not possible to do so in any other way. In proportion as we endeavour to live in this way, we shall find it possible to be serious and joyful at once; but, to those who lead careless lives, the thought of God must always be

a painful thought, and when they come, if ever they come, to a more serious frame of mind, they cannot but feel awkward and unnatural, as in the presence of a stranger. This we often see exemplified in the case of persons who have come to a sense of their duty late in life. The religious conversation of such persons has in it, generally, much of effort and affectation. They wish to feel as if they knew and loved God all at once; and yet this new disposition of theirs is so entirely at variance with every thing easy and pleasant, that they find themselves quite unable to connect religion with the ordinary affairs of life. Hence they frequently assume an unnatural voice and manner, when talking on religious subjects, and seem more like men acting a part than like persons whose conduct arose out of their feelings. Thus they prove, by their example, how impossible it is to get a real knowledge of God's ways by any other instruction than the experience acquired by serving him. They may read their Bible with a real wish to understand it; they may be really in earnest in their late endeavours to imitate the Saints in Scripture, but they have not that knowledge which a holy life can alone give. They have only begun to seek the Lord, when others have lived long in His service: and they must not be surprised if their awkwardness and ignorance betrays itself on all occasions. Here again, then, we see, that it is not by reading, or by talking and meditating on

our duty, that we can get to know enough about it to be of service to us in the regulation of our lives.

Again, there is another very important part of religious knowledge, which it is quite evident we can derive only from experience. That knowledge which is more particularly specified in the text, the knowledge of ourselves. The knowledge of the particular temptations to which we are most exposed, and the most effectual means for each of us to resist them with. Every one who has paid any attention whatever to his way of living, and has endeavoured to repress the encroachments of any single vicious feeling, will have been aware how much more liable he is to be led away when temptation takes him on a sudden, and of what great assistance it is to think over beforehand the full difficulty to be encountered, in order to summon his resolution, and direct his efforts to the exact point where they will be wanted. Yet it is quite clear that this sort of foresight can only be attained by frequent observation. Men cannot at all guess beforehand how they shall feel in circumstances entirely new to them; and it would be quite impossible for one, to whom self-denial was new, to picture to himself the exact situation in which he should find himself, when first endeavouring to act up to his religious principles. Such a person would probably observe, in each successive struggle, some of the causes why his last efforts had been ineffectual; he would see, as men do who are

learning an art, what were the points in which he failed most, and to what defects in himself the failure was attributable. He would see whether it was the love of pleasure, or of gain, or of praise, or whether it was the fear to disoblige others, and lose their favour, which last induced him to act wrongly. He would observe, too, what was the particular shape in which the temptation presented itself. Suppose it was the love of gain; he would recollect the sort of excuses he had made to himself for indulging it. Either he had a family to provide for; or he wished to get into his hands the means of making himself useful; or he had felt a kind of satisfaction in outwitting others who were attempting to take unfair advantage of him. Or, suppose it was the fear to disoblige; he might remember how he had excused an indolent, or cowardly, or cringing spirit, under the name of reluctance to give pain to another, or a wish to secure the friendly feelings of another, in order afterwards to be of use to him, and to give him good advice with a better chance of its being accepted. These, or a thousand other little things, any man would be sure to gather up and profit by, in the course of a long continual effort to overcome his bad dispositions. But to one who is first beginning the practice of self-government, such knowledge must be entirely strange, and in consequence he must lose much of the advantage which is to be gained by meeting temptation prepared. His own character would be

very imperfectly known to him, as a man's countenance might, if he had once seen it reflected in a glass. He might be generally aware that he was wicked, and that God required of him to be good; but, until he had done more than this, until he had done his best to act on this general knowledge, the impression would be very indistinct, and would soon pass away from his mind. He would "go his way, and straightway forget what manner of man he was."

Thus, then, it appears, that in all the great concerns of life, our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, the knowledge requisite for acting our part properly can be attained only by experience; that having read about religion ever so much, and being able to talk about it ever so well, will be but of little assistance to us in really understanding our duty, unless we attempt, at the same time, to apply what we read and say to our daily practice. Till we have done this, we shall know as little of our religious condition, as a man would of his strength, or health, by beholding his face in a glass; but, by doing this regularly and honestly, we shall by degrees get to understand the true meaning of the words we have been in the habit of using, to know "what manner of men we are," and to see more and more distinctly the exact line of conduct which is prescribed for us in each sentence in our Duty towards God and towards our neighbour.

When all this is taken into consideration, it should make men more careful than they seem to be, of the time allowed them for learning to be religious. It should teach them, that when they come in the end to aim at improving themselves, and preparing for death, they will find much more to learn than they are in the habit of expecting; that they will find almost as much difficulty in knowing what they ought to do, as in doing it when they know it. Every thing will seem strange and new to them; and they will find themselves bewildered by the difference between what they actually experience, and what they have before imagined to themselves, when going their duty over only in thought. Such will be their situation even in respect of religious knowledge; they will find that even this, if it were all that is necessary to a religious character, would still be enough to occupy the whole time that is given them; and that, begin as early as they may, and live as long as they may, they will always have more to learn than they have time to learn it in.

Here, then, is one, among many reasons, against delaying the time of repentance. By so doing we lose the only opportunity we can possibly have, of learning what true repentance is, and what is the sort of life which God will require of us. May we lay this to heart in time, and resolve to make the best of the days that are allotted to us! And may the Lord, from whom all good things do come,

grant to us His humble servants, that by His holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by His merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ;—To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.

SERMON IX.

AFFLICTIONS NECESSARY FOR EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION.

ROM. v. 3—5.

“Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.”

MOST people who are accustomed to think at all will be likely now and then to have the thought cross them, that their temper of mind and way of living are very different from what they ought to be. Whatever excuses they may make to themselves for their misconduct during the presence of the temptation that urged them to it, and however successful they may generally be in convincing themselves that God will not indeed deal with them by the severe rule which He threatens, there will, in spite of all this, be moments when they feel a misgiving that all is not right, and when they are disposed to resolve on altering the courses which lead to such painful dissatisfaction. This is a feeling which all are likely and even certain now and then

to experience, unless they take one of two means to stifle it,—unless they are steadily bent on one of two objects, either to act resolutely and manfully on the highest possible rule, conforming all their thoughts, words, and deeds to the strict commands of conscience; or on the contrary, to rid themselves altogether of its troublesome admonitions, and to follow the bent of their inclinations, wherever they may lead.

Except we take one of these two courses, and pursue it consistently, it is next to impossible but that now and then we should be crossed with the painful feeling, that unless we amend our lives and sacrifice our pleasures, it is impossible we should ever secure to ourselves the favour of God.

Now it is to be hoped that few are so bad as to escape this unsatisfactory feeling in *one* way, and it is to be feared that there are few indeed who escape it in the *other*: that few are so bad as utterly to have deadened their consciences, and few so good as to have secured uninterrupted peace of mind. The generality of people are between these two states; they know what is wrong much better than they do what is right. And though they sometimes escape the stings of conscience by thoughtlessness and habit, they now and then are brought, as it were, to their senses, and resolve, however feebly, to set about a reformation of character.

Such is the condition of a very large portion of Christians, and, strange to say, it is a condition in

which many are contented to remain all their lives. In spite of all the warnings which God gives them through their conscience, they seem, as far as their moral improvement is concerned, to sleep on in a kind of listlessness without getting much better or much worse, but to all appearance the same in temper and feelings, except so far as the progress of age brings about a natural change in some of their tastes. If we do but look about us, how very few instances do we find of men who seem to have effected any considerable apparent change of character! How few do we see who were once too fond of money, and who afterwards become liberal! How few who have begun by being cowardly, and yet afterwards make themselves brave! How few that began by being indolent, and who afterwards roused themselves, so as to make the most of their time! The same thing is true in almost every point of character; except, indeed, that in some cases the same vice takes a different turn in old men from what it had taken when they were young, or circumstances arise which make it inconvenient to people, in a worldly point of view, to go on indulging pleasures which once were attended by no such inconvenience. These two considerations will account almost entirely for the few cases in which men seem to change as they grow older. They change their outward conduct, but if we may judge from appearances they seldom change or even seriously attempt to change their tempers. The

peevish man continues peevish, the grasping man continues grasping, the man who has long allowed himself to disregard the exact truth never again gets credit for his statements. And here I am not speaking of very bad people, not of those who have gone into any great excesses in their respective failings, but of those who content themselves with following a standard of duty short of that high one which alone can satisfy their consciences, and which is alone consistent with the commands of Scripture.

This state of things would be surprising indeed to any one who could look on as an unconcerned spectator, without partaking himself in the feelings which cause others to go on in this inconsistent and unsatisfactory way. But if men will be at the pains to examine their own hearts, they will readily enough detect in themselves what it is that so clogs their exertions and keeps their moral improvement at a stand. The fact is, that the generality of what are called respectable people have contrived to gain just that degree and kind of ascendancy over themselves which enables them to get on in life without open inconvenience. They can avoid the vices which would tend to lower them in the eyes of their neighbours, and cause their society to be avoided. But when they have got thus far, they cannot stir themselves up to farther exertion; they have gone on as long as they had some immediate object in view to stimulate them, and in the efforts to which this immediate object has urged

them, they have perhaps not lost sight of the higher and purer motives with which religion calls on them to the same conduct. They have perhaps mixed a wish to please and serve God with their wish to avoid the disrespect of their fellow creatures. But their religion is not sufficiently strong to act by itself. It has been called into action by the presence of other feelings which draw in the same direction; and when these have lost their influence, when the object which they aimed at has been attained, their religion, left to itself, has proved an insufficient stimulus. These men have advanced to a certain point in the pursuit of virtue, but to attempt further progress seems an interminable and hopeless task. They see no end to the exertions they shall have to make, and they cannot observe in themselves any perceptible advance during the short fits of industry which they now and then have worked themselves up to; so they give the matter up in a kind of despair. They give way to the notion that God will make allowances for the difficulties they have to contend against, and that He will not require of every one the same degree of strictness and self-devotion.

This indolence is the consequence of the apparent hopelessness of the task imposed on them, of the endless distance by which their object seems removed from them, and of the notion that nothing but wearisome thankless toil will be experienced by them if they attempt to reach it. They say,

with the servant who hid his talent in a napkin, "Lord, I knew Thee that Thou wast a hard master, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed," and like him, instead of being the more diligent on this account, and putting their money to the exchangers, they think to escape censure by hiding it in the earth.

Now among the different ways, by which God in His kindness endeavours to rouse us out of this torpor, and put us upon living a life more calculated to turn our talent to account, one is that which St. Paul speaks of in the text, *tribulation*. "Tribulation," he says, "worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." When men will not exert *themselves* in God's service; when He sees them indolent and irresolute, wishing to do better, yet lingering, as it were, at the brink of self-denial, and shrinking involuntarily from the displeasing prospect, He sometimes so far pities their infirmities as to force them to take the step at which they hesitate. They fear to serve Him actively, but He forces them to serve Him passively. He places them in a situation from which they cannot shrink, and in which they are actually compelled to conduct themselves either much better or much worse than they have been accustomed to do. He no longer calls on them to afflict *themselves*; but *He* afflicts them, and calls on them to take it patiently. The suffering they must endure, whether they will or no; but it rests with themselves whether they shall

make this suffering a blessing or a curse, whether they will follow the wicked advice of Job's wife,—“Curse God, and die,” or whether, in the better spirit of that holy man himself, they will say, “Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?” These two courses are open to them; but a middle course between the two they are not very likely to find. They are placed in circumstances, which scarcely allow them to linger between two choices; at least many of the temptations are now removed from them, which caused their former indolence and indecision. Pleasure and quiet they cannot seek, much as they may wish to do so; and, when fairly roused into exertion, they will most likely *take their side*, and rank among either the *servants*, or the *enemies* of God.

Thus it is that “tribulation worketh patience;” it forces us either to love God for His chastisements, or to hate Him for them; and if happily the afflicted person chooses the former course, then patience will work in him “experience;” that is, he will find, by his own experience, what he never might have thought of beforehand, that the service of God is not so perfectly irksome, not quite so destitute of enjoyment, as he had imagined. He will see that he has the power, if he would but exert it, to endure great sufferings and privations, greater far than those which in an ordinary way we are called on to submit to in the path of duty; and yet not to be borne down by them and ren-

dered miserable. A kind of quiet pleasure will be found to attend even on suffering itself, when endured for the sake of God, and considered as a token of His regard; a pleasure, of which we can form no more idea, while living on in comfort and indulgence, than people could of the look of starlight, who had never seen night, but lived constantly in sunshine.

Such a state of mind, and it is far from being a rare or exaggerated one, may justly be called "experience that worketh hope." A man who has, though against his will, been forced to see that pain and self-denial are not necessarily mere misery, must be strangely forgetful, if it does not raise in him a hope that he shall be able, at some future time, with his will and intentionally, to face the same sufferings, and find in them the same satisfaction. He will learn by experience to think higher of his own capacity for improvement, and to feel less dread of the toil by which such improvement is to be attained.

It is not indeed to be expected that a man, who takes to a strict life after his habits have been formed, will find soon, or perhaps ever in this life, that Christ's yoke is easy or His burden light; but he will find that it is not such unmixed weariness as he has been in the habit of thinking it. The glimmerings of satisfaction which he experiences, when undergoing any severe trial which God thinks fit to expose him to, may be sufficient to show that

the way of self-denial, rough and dark as it may be, does lead to a happier end, than might be expected from its beginning; and that even he, late as he has begun, has not yet forfeited all chance of deriving comfort from it, on this side the grave.

In this manner, experience may work hope in persons, who, had they been left to themselves, to live on in ease and comfort, might have wasted all their time in indolent despondency. And in this manner it frequently *does* work hope in persons who have been roused by misfortune or disease. Indeed nothing is commoner than to hear people in affliction say, that their religious duties have appeared to them in quite a new light, and that they are resolved to conduct themselves for the future, in a manner more worthy of their high calling. When their worldly affairs have gone very contrary to their wishes, when they have lost something on which they had set their affections, or have been forced by sickness and bodily suffering to give up their ordinary pursuits, they very frequently have recourse to religious consolation, and believe that they shall be able, during the rest of their lives, to profit by the experience which they have derived from tribulation. But the worst of it is, that, in nine cases out of ten, when these persons have recovered from their afflictions—when the sorrow which their losses have caused has been worn off by time, or when they have regained their usual health and spirits, the feelings which they had ex-

perienced in sorrow and sickness wear off too. A return to their former occupations, and mixing with their former companions, call them back to their old state of mind, and they find themselves unable to retain the impressions which they lately hoped would stay by them for ever. By degrees the wishes and resolutions which they had formed in sickness get to appear forced and unnatural; and they get to feel almost ashamed of ever having entertained them, as if they were merely the effects of weakness, or of an excited state of mind.

Such, in too many cases, is the effect of a return to comfort, upon those whom God has called to Him by fatherly chastisement; and it is indeed a melancholy effect. It may be truly said of the persons who allow it to take place in themselves, that their latter end is worse than their beginning. The unclean spirit which had gone out of them, comes back, bringing with him seven spirits more wicked than himself, and finds the house swept and garnished. For it is easy to see that on the return of indolence and indifference to a mind which *has* hoped to throw them off, they are likely to gain a far firmer hold than they had before. One means of shaking them off has now lost its effect; and a return of sickness and misfortune will not be likely to bring back the same impressions which they first had done. When they return, they will return on a mind prepared for them, and hardened, to a certain degree, by habit, against their natural results.

The man who has known what it is to be excited by circumstances such as these into the hope for religious improvement, and knows too what it is to regard his excitement as a weakness, after the circumstances which caused it have ceased, is not very likely to go through the same process twice. The hope of these persons, the hope which they had felt in misfortune, has not been a hope which "maketh not ashamed." And it is to be feared that this is the common character of the hope which sorrow and sickness give birth to. This, however, though the common case, is happily not the only case. There are persons with whom "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and whom hope maketh not ashamed."

If men have but the strength of mind and consistency to persevere, when in health, in the resolutions they have formed in sickness; if on their recovery they do not in the first instance allow indolence to regain its hold on them, and so by degrees get back into their old state of mind, but force themselves on the first opportunity to realize their feelings by putting them into practice, then instead of getting to look on the impressions of sickness as an unnatural excitement, inconsistent with the realities of life, they will find that these are in fact the only realities, and that every thing else which they have liked and pursued is nothing better than a dream.

This happy result is to be obtained by putting in

practice the resolutions we had formed, by bringing them into operation in our daily conduct, and making them produce visible effects. If we do this, we shall not get to be ashamed of them, but shall get to disregard every thing else in comparison of them.

One caution, however, ought to be observed by those who are in tribulation, when they resolve on a new life, and hope to find their happiness in it. If these persons would not be ashamed of their new hopes, they must be cautious not to hope too much. Nothing is so likely to bring shame on them, as over expectations which cannot be realized. Let them set their hopes as low as possible, and their resolutions as high as possible. Let them determine to face all difficulties that may present themselves to their progress; and let them be prepared to accept with thankfulness any consolation with which God may be pleased to alleviate their labours. But let them expect nothing. Theirs is not a case which entitles them to expect much earthly happiness from their religious occupations, or to claim, as a promise made to themselves, the declarations of the Bible respecting the blessedness of God's service. These declarations do not apply to persons who take to God's service after their habits have been formed, after they have contracted tastes and dispositions inconsistent with their Christian calling. They apply only to those, who have sought happiness in the way in which God has invited

them to seek it ; who have been obedient from the first. Others who have begun by disregarding God's invitation, and have followed their own imagination, must be content to bear many of the consequences of their past folly, even after they are bent upon a new course. They have forfeited their claims to that happiness and peace of mind which God promises to the faithful upon earth ; and thankful they should be, that they have not at the same time forfeited their inheritance among the faithful in heaven. This should be enough for those who seek their heavenly Father with true penitent hearts. This is all that He has promised them ; and whatever earthly comfort God thinks fit to grant to them besides, must be regarded as something beyond what they have a right to hope for.

May all of us lay these things to heart ; may we be careful so to control the good impressions and high hopes which tribulations may at times create in us, that on the return of worldly comfort, we may not find ourselves disappointed ; and may we so govern and discipline ourselves in the time of our prosperity, as not to unlearn and feel ashamed of hopes we have entertained in misfortune.

SERMON X¹.

ST. PETER A LESSON TO THE ENTHUSIASTIC AND
IRRESOLUTE.

[JOHN XXI. 18.]

“ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”]

THE history of our Lord's Apostles is, with few exceptions, very little known to us; and the scanty notice which the Scripture furnishes us respecting their characters and actions, afford scarcely sufficient materials for the Services in which we commemorate them. Such however is not the case with the history of St. Peter: the facts which are recorded concerning him are so various and striking, that for Lessons, Epistle, and Gospel, the Church has been obliged only to select the most prominent, and has necessarily left many unnoticed which nevertheless

¹ [Preached on St. Peter's day, 1831.]

are very illustrative of his character, and afford us most useful subjects of meditation.

The character of St. Peter is one to which our notice is directed from the very commencement of our Saviour's ministry, and the things which we are told about him are so peculiar and so important, that they plainly demand our especial attention.

Immediately after our Lord's Baptism, He set His mark on this Apostle by giving him the name of Cephas or Peter, instead of Simon, which he had formerly borne ; and this mark He afterwards interpreted in the remarkable words of to-day's Gospel. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Again, when our Lord began His ministry, Simon Peter was one of the two whom He first called as His constant followers ; and there were only two besides him who were admitted to witness our Lord's Transfiguration and Agony.

Nor is St. Peter's own conduct less remarkable than the notice with which he was honoured by his Master. On all occasions his words and actions seem different from those of other men. It was St. Peter that walked on the sea ; it was St. Peter who after the Resurrection, when he saw our Lord standing on the shore, girded himself and leapt into the sea. It was St. Peter, whose agitation on witnessing the miraculous draught of fishes, showed itself in the remarkable words, "Depart from me,

for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He it was who, on the night previous to the crucifixion, when he heard that one of those present was to betray their Master, exclaimed with an indignation which he seemed unable to repress, "Lord, though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee;" and who when the servants of the priests and the band of soldiers came out to take Jesus, drew a sword, and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

And if we may believe the traditionary account of events which happened after the close of the Sacred History, he, in his last moments, when about to suffer death upon the cross, gave another proof of that peculiar ardour which characterised him throughout life, in requesting that he might be nailed to the cross not in the common way, for that he was unworthy to die the same death as his Master.

Again, in the history of St. Peter there are other points which no less forcibly demand our attention, and which form a sad but instructive contrast with those which have been already mentioned. It was St. Peter, who when he had trusted himself to the sea in full confidence that he should be protected from all danger, found his faith misgiving him in the midst of the waves; "And when he saw the wind strong he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, saying, Lord, save me." It was St. Peter who the very night after he had declared that he would rather die with his Lord than betray Him,

and at a time too when he was giving evidence of his sincerity by following Christ to the judgment hall, instead of flying with the other disciples; at this very time and with the knowledge of the warning he had received, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice," with these words one may almost say in his ears, yet on being told that he also was one of them, "began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the Man."

Nor is this all, for even many years after our Lord's death, when St. Peter had proved his penitence by enduring long continued persecutions, and by his own successful ministry, and the mighty works which God wrought through his means, had received ample proof that the Lord's arm was not waxed short, nor unable to bring about its own ends by its own means, after all this, gave occasion to St. Paul to withstand him to the face at Antioch. "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." In which thing St. Paul affirms, "that he walked not uprightly according to the grace of the Gospel."

Such is the very remarkable character which the Scriptures present us of the great man whose life and death we this day commemorate;—the rock on whom the Universal Church is built, the appointed shepherd of Christ's sheep.

On such a character it would be well for all of

us to meditate as an example of human greatness and of human frailty; but there are two classes of persons to whom such a subject of contemplation is more than usually necessary; viz., the enthusiastic and the irresolute. Those in whom the two characters happen to be combined may perhaps in their own experience find a counterpoise to each of their prevailing errors, their timidity may like St. Peter's render them occasionally sensible how little their enthusiastic feelings can be trusted in the day of trial; and the remembrance of the high thoughts which sometimes elevate them, may be sufficient to stimulate their failing resolution, and assist them to acquire courage of heart by urging them to courage of conduct. Yet even to these it may sometimes prove no small encouragement to recollect the recorded actions of one who has sympathised with them; and to feel assured, by the example of one who has finally triumphed, that the difficulties with which they struggle are not insuperable.

But to the two classes first mentioned, to those whose ardent feelings have no natural timidity to counteract them, and those whose irresolute disposition is never supported by the animation of quick feeling, to persons such as these, the example of St. Peter seems to supply a want which must otherwise be irremediable. And, even to those of an intermediate character, whose natural bias is in either of these directions, who are apt either to be too confident or too desponding, the subject is one

which requires to be often and seriously thought on.

And surely the number is not small of those who in one or other, if not both of these respects, are in danger of falling away from the grace of God ; and stand in need of all the support He offers to them ; who are either too confident in their occasional good feelings, or too desponding under the consciousness of weakness.

Over-confidence, indeed, few may be willing to acknowledge of themselves, and those who are really most chargeable with it, will on that very account feel the least so ; yet that there are such persons we all must be painfully aware ; and whatever we may think of our own case, we too frequently have occasion to notice it in others. It may be well to suspect, in a matter where we see many deceived, and to feel jealous of any feeling that approaches to confidence, lest in us it should prove to be over confidence.

If ever we feel our minds warm at the thought of virtue, if we are capable of admiring lofty conduct, and dwell with pleasure on imaginary imitations of it, we must beware of giving ourselves credit for a resemblance which as yet is *only* imaginary ; of believing that we are really like those whom in our fancies we wish to imitate. For we must remember that those persons heard the word with joy, who nevertheless are compared to seed that fell upon a rock ;—that those whose house was

built upon the sand, knew not of its weak foundation, "till the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house." That our imaginary love of virtue may be as vivid as the impression of a "man beholding his natural face in a glass," yet that unless our good feelings are built upon good conduct, "we may go our way and straightway forget what manner of men we were."

Again: even should our confidence appear to have a firmer basis, should we *feel* ourselves prepared to do some definite act in attestation of our sincerity; not only to love that which is good, but to sacrifice our affections to it, nay, even to face death itself in the service of our Master; yet we should remember that the Apostle, who at the cock-crowing cursed and swore, saying he knew not his Master, had in the evening declared, "Lord, though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee."

These are the thoughts which should be sufficient to repress, I do not say over-confidence, but all confidence; for in beings like us, any confidence is misplaced, is a snare to us, and is sure to fail us in the day of temptation.

Again: to persons conscious of an irresolute and yielding temper, the example of St. Peter may be of most material service, whether to stimulate their exertions, or to console them when desponding. For there are two directions in which such people are apt to fall away, and to desert the prize of their

high calling. Some are apt to indulge the thought that as God has given His servants different tempers, so He has intended them for different services. That whereas some have been endowed with daring minds, and enabled to take delight in dangerous and energetic occupations, while others have been fitted for easier and more indulgent lives, it can never have been intended for all alike to act up to one standard, to accommodate their various dispositions to one unbending rule. Martyrdom, such persons seem to think, can never be required except of men quite different from themselves; that for them it will be enough if they keep out of the way of harm, and inoffensively pursue the bent of their inclinations. Now to such persons it may be of service to observe, that one of those whom our Lord chose out to be His Apostles, nay, the very chief of the Apostles, one whose life was almost to be a continued martyrdom, and what is striking, who was made acquainted from the first of the terrible end by which he was to glorify God,—this man had to struggle against a natural disposition of that very kind which is deemed an excuse for self-indulgence. He was naturally an irresolute man, both as to facing personal danger and popular clamour; and an instance is recorded, in which each of these failings proved too strong to be checked by principle.

On the other hand, those whose conscious infirmity of purpose makes them despair altogether of

passing a certain mediocrity of character, and induces them to look on Saints and Martyrs, rather as beings of a different order from themselves, than as examples to which they may and ought to be conformed,—these persons will do well to trace the marks of human infirmity, which nevertheless did not unfit St. Peter for a death upon the cross.

Conscious weakness and the recollection of past failings, are indeed in themselves a cheerless earnest of what we may expect from our future trials; and were our own experience all we had to guide us in judging of our capacity for improvement, we might indeed despair with reason, of forming within ourselves the spirit of Martyrs. But when we recollect too, what sacred Scripture teaches of the beginnings of those very men whose ends we dare not even aspire to imitate, it surely becomes faithful Christians to trust themselves boldly to that narrow way by which others have attained to everlasting life.

God's arm we may be sure is not waxed short; and when He sees fit to bring temptation on us, He "will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it¹." And persons of the character which I am speaking of, persons conscious of irresolution, and dreading exposure to a trial above their strength, will derive advantage,

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13.

not only from reflecting on the final result of St. Peter's trial, but also from dwelling on the manner in which our Lord thought fit to prepare him for it. He was taught not only to expect, in common with the other Apostles, that as followers of a crucified Lord, their reception among men was little likely to be favourable, and that those who had persecuted the Master would be little likely to deal more favourably with the servants; but he was warned in an especial manner of the death which he himself was destined to undergo.

Almost the last words which our Lord addressed to him were these: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not: this spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this He saith unto him, Follow Me." This was the solemn thought which was to attend this Apostle through the remainder of his life, and cast its awful shade over his pleasures and his sufferings; and we know the strength which, in the end, it communicated to his character. Such strength, then, we should aim at by means like those through which St. Peter attained to it: we should make up our minds at once to the worst, and harden our characters against the impression of fear, by familiarity

with the thought of what we may be called on to endure for Christ's sake.

Such a discipline, if resolutely persisted in, in thought constantly, and in deed as often as opportunity presents itself, must in the end enable us to finish our course with joy.

SERMON XI.

THE DUTY OF AIMING AT THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE.

[HEB. xii. 1.]

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight.”]

No devotional exercise is better calculated to encourage each individual Christian, each member of Christ's Church militant upon earth, in fighting the good fight resolutely and manfully, than the thinking over and dwelling upon the successful struggles of those Holy Men who before us have had to contend with the same enemies, and yet have finished their course in God's faith and fear. This, then, is a benefit which we may derive in common from the Services of all those Holydays which the Church has set apart for the Commemoration of her Saints. It is, however, more especially connected with the Service of to-day, when we have brought together before our mind the general assembly and Church

[Preached on All Saints' Day, 1831.]

of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect;—and when we take into account too that of the ten thousands who have the seal of God upon their foreheads, the greater number were not, like the Saints whom we at other seasons commemorate, endowed with any special supernatural assistance, but men like ourselves in all respects except the use which they made of their privileges. They were not supported by God's extraordinary presence and protection, not directed by any light of inspiration clearer than that which we enjoy, and yet to them the trial under which we faint did not seem insurmountable. "Out of weakness they were made strong, they waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Such thoughts ought at all times and to all men to prove especially invigorating; they should urge us on: (if it were by nothing more than a spirit of rivalry) to follow the victorious army of the Lamb, and seek for ourselves the same blessed rest for our toils which these sought and have obtained. They should supply to us, and doubtless they are intended to supply, the place of that closer and more direct communion with God which He vouchsafed in the early ages of the world to some of those who sought Him earnestly, and which He gradually withdrew as men had more to stay their faith upon in the precepts and examples of their forefathers. And we in these last days should seek in the imitation of holy

men, and in the thought of the Communion of Saints, that same support and consolation which was imparted to the Patriarchs of old, by the high privilege of walking with God.

This is a train of thought to which no Christian should be a stranger, but in which the comfort of some is more particularly concerned. It sometimes happens that unfortunate circumstances of a peculiar construction deprive some individual Christian of the sympathy of those with whom he lives; that his trials are not their trials, his consolations not theirs, and that in some respects he is forced to feel himself an insulated being, on his pilgrimage alone. Whether this is really the case or not, some men are certainly so constituted as to imagine it so with themselves, and these are generally the very persons to whom such a thought is most likely to be oppressive and perplexing; they are apt sometimes to doubt the reality of their own persuasions, and feel inclined to give up every thing as a delusion. When they see the ungodly prosper in the world, they feel disposed to say, "Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency."

It is against this state of mind, which perplexed even the patriarch David, that the Services of this day are in an especial manner calculated to guard us. David repressed the impious thought which intruded itself upon him by the reflection, "Then should I have condemned the generation of Thy

children.” With us, even the most lonely mind is furnished with a stronger antidote in the words of this morning’s Lesson. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race which is set before us.”

Our eyes, like those of the young man who found himself alone with Elisha in the midst of the hosts of Syria, may behold a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about us, and we may feel with the prophet, “They that be with us, are more than they that be with them.”

This is the wholesome and profitable object which the Services of this day are calculated to answer, viz., the exciting us to act our part in life with courage and patience, in imitation of those who before us have wrestled with the same enemies, and prevailed. This however is not the only way in which we are likely to be affected by them. The effect which they produce on our minds is not by any means *necessarily* wholesome and bracing; indeed it may be of a character directly opposite, and instead of bracing and invigorating, it may enervate us, and give us a disrelish for the real business of life. The great beauty of the Services which the Church has selected, and the very fascinating character of the subject on which they are composed, are but too likely to appear to us, “but the very lovely song of one who playeth well upon an instru-

ment ;” we may “hear them and do them not.” For it must ever be remembered that it is very possible, indeed easy to be carried away by thoughts such as are this day suggested to us, by the mere force of imagination ; to interest ourselves in them, as though they had no personal concern with us, nor were better than mere fables. The achievements of great men in distant ages are always likely to take hold of the mind, and to draw it away from the dull realities of every day life ; we invest them with a kind of ideal splendour, the resemblance of which we do not trace in the persons and the affairs amongst which we are actually concerned ; and there is always a danger lest a mind which has allowed itself to run on things above its own experience, should picture them to itself so unlike any thing that it ever can realise, as to disconnect them from the world we live in, and the people we associate with.

And this is more especially the case with respect to religion, and religious characters, in proportion as this subject is itself capable of being presented to us in a striking and splendid point of view, while the opportunities we have for acquainting ourselves with it experimentally, are to appearance trivial and uninteresting. The familiar circle of duties in which we find ourselves engaged, the trivial occasions on which we are called to deny ourselves, the little annoyances and peevish feelings which we have to contend against, and which constitute the

main trial of most of us, seem scarcely to answer to the great names which are attributed to the struggles of the Saints, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our present temptation, be it what it may, seems not to offer an opportunity of resembling those great men whom we admire, and we come gradually to allow ourselves in the practice of taking the Name of God in our mouths, and of admiring the triumphs of His faithful servants, at the same time that we are acting directly in the face, both of the commands and the examples which we propose to ourselves.

A temper of mind like this, though it is perhaps seldom indulged to extreme degrees, is apt however to encroach in some degree upon us all; and by those whose business it is to read and talk about religion, or who, from circumstances, are engaged rather in thinking about it than practically exerting it, it is only by great care and watchfulness that it can possibly be avoided.

On a day then, such as the present, it would be well for us all to examine our state of mind in this particular point of view, and to recur to such thoughts as are fitted to awake as against such a fatal self-deceit.

Let us consider then, are *we* ever apt to indulge ourselves in lowering the standard of our duty, on the plea that the rules of Scripture were intended

for persons of more advanced holiness than we can hope to attain to? I do not say, do we wilfully allow ourselves to act in opposition to express commands, to violate the letter of God's law; but do we not endeavour, in doubtful cases, to explain away what seems the obvious spirit of the Bible, and follow a standard short of that strict one which St. Paul, and other of God's great Saints, seem to have proposed to themselves? Does it not occur to *us*, that, circumstanced as we are, it is allowable in *us* to care a little more for the world than they did, and in some degree to give in to customs which we should be singular in disregarding? Does it not sometimes seem hopeless to us to follow the self-denying laborious track by which the first Christians sought heaven, to enter the strait gate and narrow way, to take up our cross and follow Christ?

Now when thoughts like these cross our minds, (and now and then they cross most minds,—indeed the practice of the world proves them almost universal,) it may be as well to recollect, that however great may be the interval which separates us from the Saints who have gone before, however inferior may be our power of resisting temptation, and our capacity for exalted holiness, this interval is almost entirely of our own making; the effect of the easy self-indulgent lives which we have hitherto led. There was a time when it was in the power of each of us to be as great a Saint as any of those whom we this day commemorate, when we might have

earned for ourselves a place in heaven as high as that of Noah, Daniel, and Job; when, if the expression is not presumptuous, we might have purified ourselves even as Christ is pure. Our Lord Jesus Christ was once a child, He was brought up subject to His parents, He was tempted in all things like unto us, and by the time He was thirty years of age, He was, in His human nature, what the Gospel presents Him to us in His Divine, "the glory of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This was the effect of thirty years self-discipline, begun from childhood. We were children once, and pure once, and what have we become? the thought is almost too painful to think upon: yet it may be sufficient to remind us, what is the justice of the excuse we so commonly make for present self-indulgence. The difference between ourselves, such as we know ourselves, and the Saints, of whom we read in Scripture, is almost wholly attributable to the careless use we have made of our past opportunities; and surely no one in his senses will think this an excuse for future negligence. We are indeed most of us sadly unlike those Holy Men who are proposed to our imitation, and our strength is but little able to sustain what they sustained; but this is a poor reason for not attempting to sustain it.

Next, then, we have to consider, what is the wise course for those who have already lost so much time as we have, and lowered ourselves so sadly in the scale of God's creatures as we have done. And

the answer is a simple one. Instances are given us in Scripture, as well of those who have begun the good course late, as who have begun it early; and the gate of heaven is not yet closed even against us. We may yet strive to enter in at the strait gate, though at a time of life when some have advanced far in their journey; we may begin even from this day proposing to ourselves the strict standard of duty which we have hitherto evaded; we may endeavour at least to amend our conduct, if it is too late thoroughly to amend our hearts; and we have God's assurance, that if we do this, He will accept our sincere though late attempts to serve Him, in the place of that purity and simplicity of heart with which His own have followed Him from the beginning.

If we are careful to make this practical use of Commemorations like the present, resolving to imitate, instead of being content with barren admiration, they may be among the most useful as well as delightful Services with which we can honour God: and that of this day more particularly, as it becomes habitual to us, and associates itself with our daily thoughts and actions, will in a manner realize to us even here that fellowship with the Saints which we are taught to expect in heaven, and will tend to bind Christians together upon earth in amity and concord, as members of Christ's universal family: that as there is but one body and one Spirit and one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one

baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of us of one heart and one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XII.

REPENTANCE NOT EQUIVALENT IN THIS LIFE TO INNOCENCE.

JEREMIAH xiii. 23.

“ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?
then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”

THE doctrine that no wickednesses which we have committed during our past lives, great and grievous as they may have been, have as yet rendered our condition hopeless, but that if we will now repent, and from this day forward attempt to live as God commands us, we shall save our souls alive, is of all the doctrines of revelation the most consolatory. It is a doctrine which must come home to the feelings of the good no less than of the bad. For the better men become, the more conscious they are of their unfitness to appear before God ; and the more intolerable would be the burden of their consciences if they did not know His merciful promises of forgiveness. It is, however, like all other doctrines, liable to be misunderstood ; and the mistaken notions which do as a matter of fact prevail respecting it, have led to great practical errors.

On the one hand, it furnishes a false consolation and encouragement, to persons who are quite aware that they are at this moment living in habits which are displeasing to God, and who have little doubt that if death came upon them in their present state of mind, they should not be reckoned among the faithful servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. The notion that time enough yet remains for them to repent in, and that they shall be able by and by to attain, by repentance, that place in God's favour, which they are at present willing to forego for the sake of earthly indulgence, buoys them up in the midst of sin, and enables them to look the truths of religion in the face without fear for their own condition. Nor is this kind of self-delusion confined to a small class of men; it extends its influence much farther than we might expect, both among the bad and comparatively good. For few are so bad as to be lost to a sense of the fears which it lulls, or so good as to require no aid in lulling them. There are few even among those who, as it were, defy God to the face by deliberate sin, that are utterly insensible to the terror of meeting Him on the day of judgment; even whoremongers and adulterers are, in many cases, unable to disbelieve the terrible sentence which the Bible pronounces against them, and in the midst of their wickedness indulge the hope that they shall in the end repent and be saved. And, on the other hand, among those who in many

respects endeavour to lead holy lives, who shrink at the thought of disobedience to expressed commands, and make a conscience of conforming themselves, at least in some parts, to the spirit of the gospel. Among these there will often be found some lurking self-indulgence, which they have a suspicion is not right, but have not resolution to abandon yet. Perhaps indeed there is scarcely any one, who is throughout his character so sincere and manly, as not to feel conscious of cherishing some weakness for the present, with the hope of throwing it off at a more convenient season, and who would not feel called on to alter some of his ways of living, if he knew that his days were drawing to a close. Now all persons who are conscious of this feeling themselves, who feel that if they knew they were to die at the end of some short time, suppose within the present year, they should then feel called on to alter their way of life, to pray more earnestly and often, to abstain more frequently from amusement or pleasure, to give themselves up more to charity and other Christian duties; all who feel this, are, as it were, self-convicted of an improper reliance on the Christian doctrine of repentance; they in a degree wrest Scripture to their own destruction, and it is high time that they be roused to a sense of their situation.

Again: there are others who in a different way pervert God's promises to penitent sinners, who feel easy about their present situation, not because they

hope sometime or other to repent, but because they think they have already repented. They look back to a period of their lives, when, as they suppose, they were a great deal worse than they are at present, when they used to do many bad things which they now abstain from, and neglected many good things which they are now careful to do. They have perhaps left off swearing and drinking, and attend regularly at Church and the Sacrament; they no longer laugh at religion and serious people, as they used to do, but give much of their time to reading the Bible, and like conversation on religious subjects. Perhaps too they recollect some circumstance in their past lives which first set them on this change of life. They remember the time, when the change of their notions first began, and can trace it to a sudden feeling, suggested either by some conversation, or sermon, or perhaps by the loss of a friend, or some personal suffering, and then they go on to suppose that this sudden feeling was the act of repentance; that at the moment when they felt it, they passed from a state of reprobation into a state of grace, and have ever since been numbered among God's elect. These people are in the habit of dwelling on the suddenness of the change, as if it was a proof of some extraordinary call; and in thinking over the circumstances which attended it, are apt to exaggerate as much as possible, both their wickedness before it took place, and their improvement since. They try to prove to themselves that

the change was much greater than it seems to other people to have been ; and in order to this, they, on the one hand, confess with a kind of triumph the depravity of their former selves, as if thereby to prove their present humility, and on the other, by attributing their present good feeling to the especial grace which God has shown them, they at once conceal from themselves the arrogance of their self-satisfaction, and indulge it to the uttermost. In this way they encourage the notion that repentance is no more necessary for them ; they have already repented, and though, as they will say, they are now, if left to themselves, the vilest of sinners, yet by God's especial grace, they are " light in the Lord," " God's elect children," and, as they suppose, in no danger of ever again falling away.

That there are really such persons in the world, no one can doubt, but it is not for the sake of calling them into your minds that I have thus described their condition ; I wish you rather to reflect whether you yourselves cannot discover in yourselves some traces of the same disposition. It is a mistake to suppose that this or any other temper is to be found among men only in extreme degrees. It is a temper, to which all are naturally disposed, and in which most people may now and then detect themselves, if they will be at the pains to do so. For, however conscious a person may be of present defects, however unfit he may consider himself to meet his Judge, in the present state of his moral attainments, it is

still possible for him to indulge a kind of satisfaction in the advances which he has already made, to dwell much on the vices that he has got rid of, rather than on those which remain; and so in a degree to rest on the repentance which he has already shown. Indeed, it is but too common to find persons, who justify themselves in many instances of disobedience to God's laws, *on the ground* that they are more obedient than they used to be in some respects, who think their having repented of some sins, an excuse for indulging others, and are willing to suppose that their having once been much worse than they are at present, is actually a point in their favour.

This is a form of self-delusion to which all are too prone, and it is not unfrequently found combined with the apparently opposite error which has been before noticed. Instances there are of persons who excuse themselves in present negligence about their spiritual concerns, partly because they think it will be time enough to repent by and by, and partly because they suppose themselves to have repented already; they think it enough for the time that they have got the better of some bad habits in which they formerly indulged, and that they have no need of making farther progress till age or circumstances incline them to do so.

That there are persons who contrive to solace themselves in each or both of these ways, there can be no question; and if the solace is itself a

delusion, it is highly important to teach them that it is so.

It shall be my object then to show, for the sake of both, that repentance (great as are the promises made to it) does not place sinners in the same situation as that from which they fell by sinning; that, whatever be our present moral attainments, we are in nowise rendered more acceptable in the sight of God by the fact that we once were worse and have repented; and that, however sincerely we may, before we die, fulfil our resolution of further amendment, and endeavour, in the strictest sense, to lead a new life, still that we shall never lose the marks of our present wilful negligence, or attain by late repentance to the state, which we have now within our reach, if we will persevere from this moment in uniform self-denying obedience. And in showing this I shall not attempt to take an accurate view of the Scripture promises to repentance, by assigning to each its proper and limited meaning; but shall confine myself to such general considerations as are calculated to awaken in thinking minds an apprehension that these promises are upon the whole frequently misunderstood, and that the difference between early and late obedience may be much greater than many people seem to suppose. Of course it is not meant to insinuate that the pardon which God has promised may in any way prove incomplete; or that future punishment, even in any degree, may await the absolved sinner. Such thoughts are as

shocking as they are unscriptural ; but without any such supposition, it is still conceivable that a far different lot may be in store for penitence and innocence ; that those who have, to use the scriptural language, been healed from their sins, may yet not be restored to the full vigour of unimpaired health ; that the pain and danger of their wounds may be removed by the mercy of the heavenly Physician, and yet the scars and blemishes and weakness which have arisen from them may remain indelibly. Or, to leave metaphor, it is quite conceivable that sin may be completely pardoned, and yet its consequences not entirely removed ; and we in no way detract from the perfection of God's mercy by entertaining the notion that this will actually be the case.

That it will be so, may perhaps seem more than possible, when due weight is given to the following considerations.

First, then, how is it that we have become the sort of persons we are conscious of being ; that we have got to like what we like, and to hate what we hate ; that the thoughts which come into our minds are such as we know them to be, and cannot help their being. These things are not mere capricious accidents, which change from day to day, and which though evil now, may be good to-morrow ; on the contrary, nothing we are acquainted with is more permanent. Nothing is so difficult to get rid of, as a liking for the sort of things that we are very much

attached to; or so hard to acquire a contempt for, as what we have regarded with indifference. Particular objects are indeed hated one day by capricious people and admired the next; but even the most capricious do not change as to the sort of things which they despise and admire. The qualities which they are adverse to, or delight in, remain the same, and the apparent changeableness of taste arises from their allowing themselves to fancy at random one day one set of qualities, and another day the most opposite ones in the same object. Capricious people are as uniform in their caprices as obstinate people in their obstinacy; so much so indeed, that those who are well acquainted with them can often tell beforehand how particular circumstances will affect them. So too with those who at some point of their life seem to have undergone a great and sudden change of taste and disposition. Attentive observation will generally convince us that the change has taken place rather as to the particular objects on which they have rested their affections, than in the affections themselves. A man may change all at once from a profligate to a miser, and yet in the latter part of his life be pursuing money with precisely the same feelings which formerly made him greedy of pleasure. A man may change all at once from open profaneness to professions of great zeal in religion; nay, more, from unrestricted self-indulgence, to the rigours of penance, and yet may carry his old temper into his new

life. And the fact that those who make these changes are almost always vehement persons, may suggest the probability, that in both extremes of conduct they were different men from what they seemed, that their former self-indulgence no more resembled sensuality, than their present zeal resembles religion. It should seem that their vehemence has only taken a different turn, and that in both cases this was their ruling passion.

But leaving these apparent exceptions, the great mass of mankind seem to remain throughout life the same persons; or at any rate to change only by slow degrees, and generally either from better to better, or from worse to worse. In ourselves, if we are at the pains to look for it, we may trace the slow steps by which we have become what we are; some points of our character we may follow back to our earliest recollection, and the hold which each of our feelings has on us, seems nearly proportioned to the time it has been growing up with us.

Nor, again, does their first origin or the manner of their growth allow us to consider them as the work of nature, as things which have been made for us by an external power, and may by the same power be unmade. As the length of time, in which our characters have been forming, seems so slow that they cannot be changed suddenly, so the manner in which they have been formed shows us clearly, that except by our own exertions they cannot be changed at all. For we are all of us, in a certain sense, our

own creation: and in the picture of our past lives the causes of our present peculiarities are painfully discernible. Our present state of mind, be it what it may, is the result, not of nature, or of accident, but of our own past conduct; and could never have become what it is, unless we had acted as we have done. And this is true alike of what we are and what we are not, of those feelings which we once had but now cannot recall, and of those which have the most entire possession of us. If we can recollect the time, when the idea of sin was more appalling to us, and the name of God more awful, than to our sorrow we now know them to be, we can recollect also the steps by which the wretched change was brought about in us; possibly the very acts which began it, the first oath, the first lie, the first wilful indulgence of impurity either in thought or conversation, which exposed our hearts to the farther encroachments of the Devil. It was by our own act that we first gave him access to our hearts; we ourselves broke the spell, with which God has guarded us, our innocence. And we ourselves too, in each subsequent evil deed, destroyed barrier after barrier, by which we might have still resisted, and, with God's help, repelled our spiritual enemy.

And now we are what we are, with much still to lose, and with power of regaining much that we have lost. Even yet we may in some measure retrace our steps; and as by acting ill we have made ourselves bad, so by acting well we may make our-

selves better. "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." He will flee from those who strive to act well, in the same way as God's Spirit flees from those who persist in acting ill. But as it was by slow degrees that we fell, so it is only by slow degrees that we can recover; and as it was our own continued negligence that cast us down, so without our own continued perseverance we can never rise.

These considerations, relating to the manner in which our characters have been formed, may be sufficient to show the folly of putting off repentance, and so shortening the time left us to repent in. But there are other things which call for notice, and which may suggest a farther doubt whether any repentance, however soon begun and steadily persevered in, can ever regain for us all that we have lost by sinning; and whether each fresh sin which we commit may not, besides lessening our means of repentance, inflict also a fresh injury which no repentance can remove.

For if we consult the judgment of the great mass of mankind about those vices, on which it is most likely to be exercised sincerely, if we look at the opinions formed of persons who offend laws which the world upholds and is really jealous of, we shall see that it is reckoned no easy matter to wipe away the stain of once incurred guilt.

Offences against the law of God, may indeed obtain an easy absolution from the generality of men. The irreligious man may quickly enough get the

character of seriousness, the profligate of sobriety, if they do but reform their outward conduct. But on these points the world passes judgment unconcernedly; its decision is very different in the case of offences against its own laws.

Suppose, for instance, the case of one, who having in early life been notorious for dishonesty, has afterwards endeavoured to recover his character. Suppose a person who has been even once detected in theft or lying, after he has come to years of discretion; what is thought of such a person afterwards by those who are acquainted with his past conduct? Do we not see that a sort of suspicion attaches to him to the last; and that even those who know him best, and feel most interested in his welfare, still hesitate to entrust any important matters to his charge, and doubt his power to resist temptation? Can such a person ever place himself on the same footing in the esteem of his neighbours, as one who has from the beginning led an upright and honest life? Even supposing him to have long continued in unimpeachable courses, and to have done his best to prove a sincere amendment, is he not expected to keep himself in the background on all occasions, and to show, in all he says and does, that he feels himself to stand on a different footing from other people?

The same thing may be said of one who has given proofs, at some period of his life, of great baseness and ingratitude. Do what he will, he must be

contented to find himself a marked man all his life; his friends will never feel that trust and security in him which in ordinary cases are the natural consequences of friendship. Let him be ever so disposed to do kindnesses, let him have made sacrifices ever so great, to atone for his misconduct to those whom he has ill-treated, still he can do but little towards recovering his character, beyond removing the indignation which his past baseness had excited. He may be pitied, he may be looked on as a penitent; but he never can be regarded with that unreserved respect which may be attained by those who are constant from the first.

Another instance may be mentioned, though little need be said about it. There are persons in whom the world requires, what the Bible requires in all, the virtue of chastity. Now if such persons, in any single instance, subject their characters to imputation, they are lost for life: they have incurred a disgrace which nothing can remove, and are, in a certain sense, outcasts from society.

Such is the judgment which the common sense of mankind passes on the effects even of one bad action, whenever that action is reprobated by the world. And if in these cases the judgment has any reasonable foundation, it is to be feared that it must hold with equal force in the case of all bad actions whatever. If the world is right as to the effect of one offence against its laws, one offence against

God's laws can scarcely be less fatal in its consequences. And thus it becomes more than possible that every wilful sin which we commit, may do us an injury which a whole life of repentance cannot undo. We know indeed, that through God's mercy we may yet escape the worst consequences of sin, everlasting fire; and that even now some share of heavenly happiness is within our reach. But who shall say what we have already lost for ever, or what we may not still lose by a repetition of our sins?

Indeed, independently of all external considerations, the mere observation of our own hearts would teach us that sad interval between innocence and repentance. Every one who knows what it is to be ashamed of a bad habit, and to endeavour to overcome it, knows also what it is to be haunted with numberless bad thoughts connected with his former self-indulgence, to be crossed with the recollection of pleasure when he wishes to feel nothing but regret and self-abhorrence; to find his mind running involuntarily on evil devices, which he hates but cannot dispel; sometimes to feel unsupportable weariness at the prospect of ever-enduring self-denial. Such thoughts may, indeed, and probably will wear themselves out by degrees; yet some portion must remain as long as the recollection of sin lasts. It does not appear possible that any vice can again appear, to one who has indulged in it, in the same light in which it showed itself to him while a

stranger to it ; that intemperance or dishonesty can ever again appear to the drunkard or the thief, as it used to look, before he learned to despise his catechism and the lessons of his parents. Bad habits may be checked, evil desires perhaps finally overcome ; but they will not leave him, of whom they have had possession, in the same state as when they found him. Their marks will remain after they themselves have disappeared ; and in this respect they too plainly resemble what the Scripture itself so frequently compares them to,—“ wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.” Bad habits are to the soul, what wounds and bruises are to the body, not only in their consequences, if they retain their hold on us, but in the traces which they leave behind when they are gone. They themselves may be healed by care and discipline, and their worst consequences prevented by timely remedies ; but the scars will remain to the last. A right arm will not come again to one that has lost it, though the wound is dressed by the most skilful surgeon. So also purity of heart will not come again, though we strive ever so successfully to repress the encroachments of sin. The deformity which he has brought upon himself has grown into him, and become part of his nature ; he can no more get rid of it, than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots.

This we know by experience to be the condition of penitents in this world, to be the condition

of each of us in proportion to the degree in which we have transgressed; nor is there any thing to make us so very confident, as some persons appear to be, that in the future world no traces of it will remain.

We have, indeed, God's sacred word as a pledge, that, if we will apply the remedies which He prescribes, the sicknesses of our souls shall not be unto death; that no sin is beyond their reach, and no time too late to apply them. We are taught that God's Holy Spirit will assist us in the hard task of retracing our steps and healing the diseases of our souls. We are assured too, of a truth, which we could hardly otherwise have more than faintly hoped for, that, if we do sincerely strive to repent, God will accept our endeavours to lead a new life instead of innocence. And surely this is enough to know, both for our own comfort and in proof of God's goodness.

No reason can warrant us in expecting, that, because God has promised so much more than we could expect, He will therefore give so much more than He promises; that, because He tells us we have not yet forfeited every thing, we should therefore infer that we have forfeited nothing.

A truer wisdom would teach us to apprehend, that, though the worst consequences of sin by God's grace be removed from us, yet that many of its consequences may have been incurred inevitably; or, to pursue the scriptural analogy between soul and

body, that, though we may yet hope to retain our lives, we have lost our strength and our beauty perhaps for ever.

Let it then be our endeavour to arrest, by timely repentance, the progress of that spiritual degradation, the beginning of which is but too discernible in us already. Let us not forego what still remains to us of our heavenly inheritance, through the hope, that after all is spent, our Father's house may still be open to us.

Let us from this day forth resolve to amend our conduct, and may God in His mercy amend our hearts.

SERMON XIII.

INNOCENCE OF CHILDREN THE HIGHEST MORAL CONDITION.

ST. MATTHEW xviii. 2, 3.

“ And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them ; and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

THE words of the text and others to the same purpose, which are constantly occurring in the New Testament, some people are unwilling to understand in their simplest and most natural meaning. I shall not attempt to state the ways in which different persons understand them, or in which they contrive to divert their thoughts from the first impressions which the words suggest. It is plain however that many people do somehow or other contrive to explain them away ; and find a meaning for them different from what they would convey to any one who looked only at the drift of what our

Lord is saying. If we look only at the drift of the text, and afterwards at that of a passage which occurs in the following chapter, we can hardly avoid supposing that in what our Lord says of little children, he is actually proposing their minds as models of imitation for the minds of grown up Christians;—that there is something in the piety of little children which is peculiarly pleasing to Him; something which the piety of full grown people can scarcely attain to; something that we are [almost]¹ sure to lose in our progress through life, and which we must return to as we best can, if ever we would find entrance into the kingdom of heaven. “Then were there brought unto Him little children that He should put His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven; and He laid His hands on them, and departed thence.” It is difficult to find more than one meaning for these words; i. e. that our Lord is indeed proposing little children to His disciples for their imitation; and that He is pointing out to them a state of mind, which they considered childish, as being more pleasing to God than their own. It is difficult to find for the words another meaning than this, yet, if we put the case to ourselves, it is a meaning which we are not very ready to admit.

¹ [This word seems to be struck out in the MS.]

Most men, I suppose, would feel a kind of reluctance at going back to the state of children, and giving up at once so many qualities which they pride themselves on having acquired, qualities which it would be quite impossible that children should ever possess, indeed the very opposite to a childlike temper of mind. They would not part with their knowledge of the world, and of the ways of bad as well as good people, and return again to the guilelessness and simplicity of little children, even for the sake of regaining the innocence which they lost in attaining to their present condition. Whether they will own it or not, they, in reality, feel a kind of contempt for the innocence which arises from an ignorance of the pleasures of vice ; and regard those who seem possessed of it as feeble and pitiable. They do not perhaps directly congratulate themselves on having known by their own experience what the pleasures of sin are, but they think there is something more manly and dignified in adhering to the right course with a knowledge of the temptations which tend to distract us, than in doing so from what they consider a blind prejudice, from a person having always done as he was taught from the first, and consequently having little inclination to seek forbidden pleasure. They have a higher admiration for those who act right in spite of temptation, than for those who feel no temptation to act wrong.

Such feelings and notions are certainly not con-

sistent with the literal and obvious meaning of our Saviour's words, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." But as long as men feel a great reluctance to admit the obvious meaning, they are sure to find ways enough of evading it, and finding out one more in accordance with what they think the suggestions of common sense. As long as they have notions of what is fine and manly, which lead them to despise a simple childlike purity of mind, they will never believe that it is of these qualities our Lord is speaking when He tells us to become as little children.

It may be as well then to consider what are the grounds on which people get into this way of thinking; and first, how far it is consistent with the notions and feelings which common sense suggests to us for the regulation of our every-day conduct; that is, whether in our ordinary dealings with one another we measure manliness and strength of mind by the same rule which we measure them by in the case of our religious duties; and esteem those persons more highly who act right in the face of temptation to act wrong, or those to whom it never occurs to do any thing but what their conscience approves. For example; what is the temper and conduct which a father esteems most highly on the part of his son? for this is the comparison by which the Bible brings home to us the manner in which our tempers and conduct are re-

garded by God. Is a father more apt to be pleased with and to esteem a son, who from having been disobedient in the early part of his life, has contracted tastes and ways of thinking inconsistent with his father's wishes, but who on coming at last to a sense of his duty, makes a strong effort to obey, while he is all the while hankering after a different kind of life? Is it with such obedience as this that a father is best pleased, and does he put much value on the manliness and strength of mind which his son has shown by overcoming his inclinations? If his feelings are not very different from those of people in general, he will always feel distressed and uncomfortable about such a son; perhaps even more so after his apparent repentance than before, while he continued in courses more glaringly undutiful. The more strength he believed his son to exert in order to act as he wished, the more he would regret the existence of inclinations in him which made the exertion of such strength necessary. And more especially so, if the son showed any signs of self-satisfaction, and appeared to value himself on the superior energy of mind which enabled him to conform to his father's wishes, although he was alive to the great pleasures he lost by doing so. Yet such filial obedience is not very unlike the temperance and religion of a man who values himself on not being insensible to the feelings which cause others to be debauched and irreligious, but on making a sacrifice of his inclinations to a sense of duty. If,

then, when the Bible calls God our Father, and us His children, it means that God will be pleased by such behaviour on our part, as we reckon dutiful from children towards their parents, it is not likely that He will regard our obedience more favourably for its requiring an effort and a struggle.

Whatever we may think of ourselves, for our manliness and strength of mind, our heavenly Father, one would think, must be better pleased that we should take delight in His commandments, than in all the efforts which could possibly be required in following them. He would wish that we should do His will, but still more that we should love it. Such is the notion we are led to form of the character with which God is well pleased, by putting ourselves in the situation to which He compares His own in relation to us, by reflecting on feelings with which earthly parents regard their children, and in what dispositions they take most delight.

We shall be led to the same conclusion by following up another comparison to which the Bible directs us, and by which it assists our common sense in understanding the true nature of sin and of goodness. Great pains are taken in many parts of the Bible to make us connect the idea of sin with that of filthiness. It was with a view to this that many of the Jewish institutions were framed; touching an unclean thing was among them considered a sort of religious pollution; and sin also itself was considered a kind

of bodily pollution, which required external purification.

Again, the language by which great sin is described generally expresses the sort of disgust with which we are affected by filth and impurity. For instance; God warns the Israelites on entering Canaan, that they *defile* not themselves with the sins of the nations which were to be cast out before them, "that the land spue not you out, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations which were before you¹." And afterwards, when they had neglected this command, it is said, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." And it is in the same spirit that Christians are called on by St. Jude to "hate even the garment spotted with the flesh."

A comparison, such as this, so much dwelt on and so often repeated, can scarcely have been intended for nothing; and the conclusion which arises from it is so obvious, that it scarcely needs being dwelt upon. If it is indeed true that the feelings with which we regard bodily impurity resemble those with which God looks on sin, it scarcely need to be asked which character He will regard more favourably, the one which avoids sin though sensible of its pleasure, or the one which shrinks from it in the simplicity of ignorance. In this point of view, the knowing what the pleasures of sin are is so far

¹ Lev. xviii. 28.

² Is. lxiv. 6.

from being a set off to virtuous actions, that it would seem to defile and debase them altogether. Mere external impurity affects us with but slight disgust compared with that which we feel for those who take a pleasure in it; and so too will it be in the case of vice. It is not the bad actions that men do, so much as the relish they have for doing them, that makes them abominable in the sight of the Lord.

Such is the conclusion all must come to, if they will think any thing of the appeals which the Bible makes to our common sense, and will judge of the ways of God and of the manner in which He regards us, by the comparisons to which He refers us in our dealings with one another. If we would be obedient sons of our heavenly Father, if we would be clean in His sight, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, we must endeavour with all our might, not only to obey, but to love His commandments, not only to avoid sinful actions, but to hate and erase from our minds all relish for sinful pleasures.

Now, if this be the case, it becomes very plain what our Saviour intends by calling on us to “become as little children, that we may enter into the kingdom of heaven;” it is plain that we are to understand these words in the full sense which they literally convey, that we are not to find out partial explanations of them, but to believe that we really must aim at becoming again as little children; that

before we can enter into the kingdom of heaven, that is, become disciples of Jesus Christ, we must make up our mind to despise and hate much of the knowledge on which we pride ourselves; that we must aim not only at following His commands, but at cleansing our hearts from every thought which is contrary to them; at following them with the simplicity of children who have not yet learned to disregard their parents, nor have yet defiled their minds by tasting the pleasures of disobedience.

Such is the disposition with which our Heavenly Father is best pleased; and unless we bow ourselves to it, and love it, and strive after it, we can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This truth is well worth the consideration of those who are conscious of indulging pleasures which they do not quite approve, with the intention of giving them up by and by, and leading a stricter life. These persons may not perhaps be mistaken in thinking that they shall have the power to change their habits when they set about it in earnest; in this they may not, perhaps, be over-rating their strength. But they are greatly mistaken in supposing that the mere change of their habits will make them acceptable to God. If what has been said is true, they will have, not only to refrain from, but to hate those ways in which they now oppose their Heavenly Father. They will have to regard as filth what they now set their affections on, and to

vomit from their minds every pleasant recollection connected with sin.

Now let them seriously ask themselves what chance they have of doing this. Let them reflect on the very ungovernable nature of their thoughts and feelings, and they will see it is no easy matter to be disgusted at what they have been in the habit of admiring, or to admire what they have always regarded with contempt. They will perceive that these feelings do not spring up at once or die away at once, but they grow up by slow degrees, and, as it were, get to be part of ourselves. A man can no more hate what he wishes to hate, and admire what he wishes to admire, than he can throw off a disease which has long fastened on him, or straighten his limbs when they have grown crooked. Indeed, the expectation that we shall be able to become good, that is, return to a healthy and vigorous state of mind as soon as we leave off the bad practices in which we may now indulge ourselves, is just about as reasonable as that of a man who wishes to fit himself against a certain time for performing exploits of strength and activity, but in the meantime continues to live on in idleness, eating and drinking the most unhealthy food, or neglecting all the exercises which tend to strengthen the body, with the hope that all will come right at the last, and that when he takes to living strictly, he shall be able to make up

for his former carelessness. The situation of this man, when he comes at last to the trial of his strength, will not be worse than that of him who indulges in deliberate sin, and expects that all will be well with him when he at last desists from it. He will find his bad tastes and bad thoughts stick to him, as the other finds his bodily diseases. He will return to his father, not as a little child, but as a diseased and deformed man.

This is a train of thought which the text may well suggest to those who are now indulging in deliberate sin.

On the other hand, it is full of consolatory reflection to those who approach their Father with a broken and contrite heart, who are conscious of a stedfast purpose to lead a new life, and of endeavouring, however ineffectually, to make themselves such as God approves. Such persons may and often must feel grieved, and intolerably burdened at the recollection of all the bad thoughts and deeds in which they have opposed the will of their Heavenly Father; they may be forced to observe in themselves with disgust and anguish the traces of those bad pleasures in which they have unhappily indulged themselves. But they may be assured, that their Heavenly Father regards these things with different eyes. He does not expect of them that strength and dignity of character which they have now lost the power of acquiring; He does not require of them that they should show themselves

men in His service, and do the great things which they might have done, if they had served Him perseveringly from the first.

This they have lost the power of doing; the opportunity was once given them, but it is gone for ever. To rank with the great Saints of God, with the glorious company of the Apostles, and the noble army of Martyrs, is indeed no longer theirs. But it is still given them to sit at meat at their Master's table; their sins have not utterly excluded them from His presence, if they will acknowledge their abject condition, and seek Him as little children. Their safety now rests on their humility; they must humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will yet extend it to protect and deliver them.

SERMON XIV¹.

RELUCTANCE TO KNOW OUR DUTY THE EFFECT OF
DISOBEYING IT.

EZEK. XX. 32.

“That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.”

THE state of mind which is here described by the prophet Ezekiel is indeed most surprising and deplorable; it is the last state of God's chosen people in their last state of degeneracy. Throughout their history they had shown themselves a disobedient and gainsaying people, a rebellious house; but we here see them going still farther in folly. They not only refuse to conform their conduct to the will of their Almighty Governor and Protector, but actually endeavour to forget His existence. They turn away their eyes from the contemplation of those glorious truths which had been held up to them from generation to generation, and endeavour to forget the inestimable privileges which the knowledge of these truths conveyed to them. They say,

¹ [Written in 1830.]

We will be as the heathen; as the families of the countries to serve wood and stone. And this their temper of mind is still more surprising, if we take into consideration the circumstances in which they were placed at this period of their history. They were now suffering those very calamities which God had so long threatened to bring upon them: the long suspended judgments, which had been so often foretold by Jeremiah, were now in the very act of being executed. Their nation was in a state of captivity; the greatest part of them had been carried off from the land of their fathers, and the inheritance of Israel was in the hands of the king of Assyria. Such was their present miserable condition, to which they could not blind themselves whether they would or no. And one would think that they could hardly conceal from themselves, what was equally evident, that it was their own obstinacy and hardness of heart which had brought all these things upon them. Yet, instead of owning their transgressions, and bowing before God's chastisements, they chose voluntarily to forget the reason of their sufferings, and the Gracious Father, who even yet held out to them prospects of a return to His favour. They preferred regarding themselves as heathens, rather than as the seed of Abraham, and the inheritors of the promises.

Now, if we inquire the reason of this infatuated conduct, we shall see that they wished to forget God, because the thought of Him was necessarily

uncomfortable to them as long as they continued their sinful and idolatrous practices ; and these they loved so well, that neither the fear of punishment, nor the prospect of reward, could induce them to abandon them.

They were determined to continue in sin, and wished to get rid of those unsatisfactory feelings which attend the consciousness of it ; and this they thought they could effect, if they could bring themselves to disbelieve or forget the God of righteousness.

This it was which came into their mind, and which the Prophet declares to them shall not be at all. Do what they would, they could not reduce themselves to the condition of those who had not known these things. Whether they would believe or not, God was still their Lord and Master ; they had heard His commands, and would not be permitted to forget them with impunity.

“As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you, face to face ; like as I pleaded with your Fathers, in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.”

Thus they were to have monuments of the truth which they hated kept constantly before their eyes : they had once known that they were God's people, and they could never after that be like the heathen.

Such was the wretched state of these hardened Jews ; and, from the consideration of it, we may derive warning and instruction ourselves.

There are unhappily among us too many to whom the foregoing description applies ; who will not obey God, and, because they will not obey Him, endeavour to forget Him. It is to be hoped, indeed, that the number of those is but small who are driven by this process into downright unbelief, though it is but too certain that even in this Christian country there are such persons to be found ; persons who have in a manner convinced themselves that the Bible is an imposture, and that those who are wicked here, have nothing to dread hereafter. Now the text would suggest to such persons, the propriety of considering whether the wretched state to which they have reduced themselves is really the same as that which was the lot of unenlightened heathens. They should ask themselves the question, whether, in the event of those things turning out to be true, which so many believe, and which even themselves cannot prove to be false, whether, if these things do turn out to be realities, they shall find themselves in the same condition as persons who never had any opportunity of knowing the truth. The answer of the Bible is fearfully

opposite to such a notion : “ Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hands, and no man regarded ; But ye have set at nought My counsel, and would none of My reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.”

This is the fearful sentence of wilful unbelievers ; and they ought, therefore, to be very certain indeed that the Book which contains this sentence is a falsehood, before they can, in common prudence, act in defiance of it. They ought not to be contented in themselves, because they fancy they see objections to its truth, or even because they see reason to think it ever so improbable ; but they must be absolutely certain that it cannot be true. And this they cannot be, do what they will to deceive themselves ; so that even in this life, whenever they think at all, their thoughts must be wretched. That which cometh into their mind, shall not be at all, saying, We will be as the heathen.

But these are not the only persons to whom the warning in the text applies : there are very many indeed who are guilty of the same kind of folly in inferior degrees. Indeed it might with more truth be said, that scarcely any are altogether free from it. One set of persons, chargeable with it in no

inconsiderable degree, are those who allow themselves to go on in courses which they know not to be conformable to the rule of the Scriptures, on the plea that they do not profess a religious character: "We are obliged," say they, "to live in the world, where a very different rule is acted on, we have to engage in business, to get on in our professions, to provide for our families, and have no time for such serious reflection as is required, in order to conform to a higher standard. Were we clergymen, we should think it incumbent on us to pursue a very different course; or had we been brought up in habits of religion from our youth, we should have thought it wrong to deviate from them; but, as it is, we can never be expected to act on notions so different from those to which we have been accustomed, and which we see all around us pursuing." Now this is saying, in other words, we know in what direction to look in order to learn God's will, but because we have not been forced to turn our eyes there, we think ourselves quite excusable in remaining ignorant. Whereas, the text would suggest to such a person, that, as long as he knows in what direction to look for truth, his ignorance can never be regarded in the same light as the ignorance of those who have not this knowledge. The ability to find out the path of duty, constitutes an imperative obligation to examine into it; and whether we have been educated in religion or not, whether our professional duties lead us to consider it or not, still

the mere circumstance that we know there is such a thing, will be a witness against us, unless we exert ourselves to the utmost in learning and obeying what it teaches.

Another fault still more common, perhaps almost universal in some modified form or other, is the attempt to remain at peace with our own consciences, by refusing to examine ourselves how far we discharge our duty: such self-deceit as this is, in kind, exactly like that which Ezekiel reprehends in the Jews, and, like that, is never effectual. Indeed, when one comes to think of it abstractedly, it seems hardly conceivable, that any person should be so blind and absurd as to expect peace of mind from such a course. But it is one which it is very hard indeed to avoid falling into; and scarcely a day passes but what one may see instances of it either in the conduct of other persons or ourselves. It is a feeling of the same sort as that which makes persons, who believe their money concerns to be in a bad way, unwilling to examine their accounts: these dread the disclosure of an unpleasant truth, of which they would much rather remain in ignorance, though they know very well that the time must come, sooner or later, when they will be forced to look the truth in the face, and that the longer they put this off, the more inextricable their difficulties will become. And, in the same manner, those who feel a suspicion that their course of life in some particular is

not exactly what it ought to be, but still who cannot bear the thoughts of acting differently, are willing to divert their attention from this weak point as long as they can, though they know that, if they really are in the wrong, it never can be ultimately well with them. They are willing to put off the evil day, without considering that if their present conduct is in truth displeasing to God, it is just as much so whether they themselves attend to this or not; and that by continuing their self-indulgence, they are only increasing the difficulty which they must at last encounter, when they come to know how their account stands. These persons, too, as they will never be excused by God for such voluntary blindness, so neither do they at present secure the peace of conscience at which they aim. There is always a restless, dissatisfied feeling at the bottom, which prevents their enjoying the conduct, that they fear to probe; they cannot bring themselves to the condition of persons who know no better. Hence then we see the necessity of constant and close self-examination; an unremitting endeavour to ascertain our duty, and a willingness to look at the truth however unpleasant it may appear.

Another form in which this temper shows itself, is in the views of religion which different people adopt. A temper prevails among us, like that which the prophet Isaiah rebuked of old: "This is a rebellious people, which say to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us

smooth things; prophesy deceits." We are too apt to indulge a feeling like this, in making up our minds on the most important of all subjects; and thus it is that we see in the world so many unhappy dissensions, among those who all profess to be serving the One True God; but these persons cannot all be in the right; and yet one would think, that in a matter put before us in so clear a point of view as our religious duty is, it would be impossible to go wrong, except from wilfulness.

But, whatever judgment we may form in the case of individuals, it is quite evident that, in a general way, each religious sect is more peculiarly calculated to attract some particular temper. The tenets of some give more scope to pride, those of others to vanity. Some look with lenience on moral offences, and place religion in certain feelings, independent of conduct. Some regard form and ceremonies as a substitute for self-denial and obedience; and thus each persuasion offers a temptation to minds warped in some or other of these directions. It is then against temptations such as these, that every one should be especially on his guard when he feels inclined to adopt any peculiarity of opinion on religious subjects. He should narrowly watch his mind, and should feel very jealous of any inclination, which would be indulged by the opinions he inclines to. His having such an inclination does not indeed prove that the views of religion which gratify it must be false; but it will be sure to render him a

prejudiced judge how far they are so, and should therefore make him very distrustful of the judgment he forms. We must all beware of the prophets which prophesy smooth things; for unless these should happen to be at the same time right things, we must be losers in the end by listening to them. We may indeed for a time convince ourselves that we are not under a delusion; we may for a while contrive to elude the reproaches of our conscience, with the vain thought that some favourite self-indulgence is consistent with, or even part of God's service. But whatever we may imagine in our own hearts, God Himself will view our case very differently. For such voluntary ignorance He will never make those allowances which He has taught us to expect in cases where we can know no better. Such persons as this must not expect to be numbered among those servants, who, because they know not their Lord's will, will be beaten with few stripes; they may be very sure that they shall come under the sentence of heavier condemnation pronounced against all who know God's will, and do it not. That which cometh into their minds shall not be at all: God will not regard those, who deceive themselves under the mask of religion, more favourably than any other self-deceivers. They have had an opportunity of knowing the truth, they have heard the call of the Almighty; and whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, they must abide the consequences.

These are some among the instances which are continually occurring around us, of conduct much resembling what seems so justly surprising in the Israelites. In such ways as this, we, as well as they, endeavour to make ourselves like the heathen; to reduce ourselves to the condition of the people that worship wood and stone.

Instead of regarding as a privilege the superior light which God has vouchsafed to us, we would gladly return to ignorance; we would wish not to know those truths, which require of us to forsake our favourite pleasures, to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus. And now that we are forced to know them whether we will or no, we endeavour to hide them from ourselves, some in greater, some in a less degree, in ways such as have been described.

Some cast off their allegiance to God altogether, in open infidelity; some excuse a partial disaffection on the plea that they have not been brought up in religious ways; they will not open their eyes to what they believe their true condition, because then they think they should be obliged to leave off ways in which now they indulge without fear. Others, for the same reason, though they do not disguise from themselves what is required of them, yet do not venture to examine their own lives, and see how far they indeed conform to the rule of duty. Many too carry this self-deceit still farther; they take to themselves false teachers of religion, who

allow them to indulge their inclinations under the plea of serving God.

If then the warning in the text be deemed sufficient to put us on our guard against such states of mind as these ; if we feel satisfied that it is better to know the truth however disagreeable, than to “say to our hearts, Peace, when there is no peace,” we shall not be doing justice to ourselves unless we call our consciences to strict account in all these points. We may, if we wish, ascertain our real condition, and the only safe rule which we can prescribe to ourselves in this matter, is that which was given by our Lord to His disciples,—though that which causeth thee to offend be thy right eye, the thing thou lovest best in the world, “pluck it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is better for thee that one member should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.”

SERMON XV.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

LUKE xvii. 26, 27.

“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark ; and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”

IN these verses and the few following ones that relate to the destruction of Sodom, our Lord describes the state of persons who have been selected as the most signal examples of God's vengeance. Next to the universal destruction of the human race by water, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah occupies the most prominent place in the records of His judgments. And to both of them there is given an additional and fearful interest by the manner in which our Lord here associates them with that last judgment of all : like as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the Son of Man's days.

It cannot, then, but concern us intimately, to examine what was the *peculiarity* in the temper

prevalent among these persons, which rendered them so *peculiarly* offensive in the sight of God ; in what respect *their* guilt differed from that of *other men*, so as to merit such a pre-eminence of punishment. And it may perhaps at first appear a matter of some surprise to us, that in our Lord's account of the occupations in the midst of which their fate overtook them, we should find nothing mentioned which shocks our feelings, either by its uncommonness or enormity. He does not say they murdered, they stole, they worshipped idols, they dealt abominably, nor, which is very remarkable, does He characterise their condition by those crimes which the sacred historian lays to their charge.

The features of their behaviour, which He in both instances selects, are these: "They did eat, they drank, they married, and were given in marriage; they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded."

It is true, indeed, that the condition which these words describe is not insisted on as the *crime* of these most guilty persons, yet surely they are meant to convey some idea beyond that of the mere surprise which attended the lighting down of God's vengeance. If this had been the only thing intended to be impressed on us, the description would have lost nothing of its force by mentioning the crimes which the book of Genesis relates, instead of these seemingly innocent occupations; nor is it at all likely that such fearless abominations would

have been passed in silence, unless our Lord had had a farther end in view, beyond giving force to the picture of unprepared destruction.

We are left, then, to infer that the words of the text convey a deeper meaning; that they are intended to divert our thoughts from what we suppose the crying sins of that guilty generation, to some other feature in their moral condition, some temper in itself especially displeasing to God, however apparently innocent may be the actions which result from it.

Nor, indeed, need we feel much at a loss to discover what this temper was; this additional feature of finished wickedness which fills up the measure of their guilt. Our Lord is evidently describing a state of *religious indifference*, an utter alienation of mind from all serious thoughts, a forgetfulness of every motive but pleasure and interest, a complete surrender of themselves to this world. And as far as we can judge, from the short narrative of the book of Genesis, we may infer this to have been their spiritual condition.

We are told of the generation before the flood, that "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all *that they chose*;" a peculiar emphasis seems to belong to the words "of all that they chose;" they were withheld by no consideration from executing their will, and in consequence we hear that "God

saw the wickedness of man, that it was great in the earth ; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Jesus Christ describes these imaginations in the words of the text, “they did eat, they drank, they married, and were given in marriage :” that is, these were the only objects which they kept in view ; they pursued these as the sole ends of life, and disregarded all restraints which the love of their neighbour or the fear of God could impose on them. Their sin does not seem so much to have consisted in an avowed opposition to God, as in an utter disregard of Him ; it was not so much that they defied His power to punish them, as that the very notion of His exerting it against them seemed absurd and impossible. Of this the history of the destruction of Sodom furnishes a striking example. “Two Angels were sent to summon Lot and his family out of Sodom. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides ? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in this city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord : and the Lord has sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. *But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*” The thing

seemed to them utterly impossible, such as was not worth even the thought of any but a fool.

Such was the temper of the men before the flood, and of the inhabitants of those devoted cities ; and how deeply it is displeasing to God the manner in which He has in these instances dealt with it is sufficient to show. It may not have been of itself enough to draw down the wrath of God so signally ; it may not perhaps have held the first place in the catalogue of crimes, which together constituted their guilt. Yet it holds a place among them sufficiently marked and prominent, to have its proof embodied in the sacred narrative, and to have been alone selected in the comment of our Saviour.

Against such a temper, then, it becomes us to be most seriously on our guard, and we shall do well not merely to watch and examine our own condition with a view to trace its progress in ourselves, but also, as much as we can, to realise to ourselves the situation of those unhappy persons, and see how far we have room to hope that under the same circumstances we might have escaped the same destruction.

The second of these considerations is not less necessary to us than the first. For one of the commonest obstacles to our deriving benefit from the experience of others, especially if they have lived in an age or state of society very different from our own, is the vague and indistinct way in which we are in the habit of regarding all that we

hear of them ; we look on them almost as a different order of beings, and do not associate their feelings, their conduct, or their sufferings, with any thing which we feel, or do, or suffer.

This is the case very generally with regard to all history, but more especially is it so with the history of the Old Testament. We indulge a notion, that a Dispensation so obviously miraculous as this appears *to us* to have been, while we are reading the sacred records, must have appeared so, no less obviously, to those who were actors in the scenes described ; and fancy that such familiarity with divine interpositions must have produced an involuntary effect on the views and feelings of persons even the least disposed to serious thought. Hence instances of virtue appear in such circumstances less praiseworthy, and faithlessness or disobedience seem to deserve less consideration. And the result is, that instead of profiting, as we ought, by applying to our own case, the warnings and the judgments with which their sins were visited, we delude ourselves with the hope that we may be tried by a different standard, and be summoned to a less rigorous account.

Let us see, then, whether in the two cases before us, we have any reason to suppose exaggerating circumstances of this kind, such as would call for more than usual severity.

At the time when the Flood came upon the Earth, a space of 600 years had elapsed since the

last recorded miracle,—the assumption of Enoch ; and even this we have no reason to believe had been made public to the world in general, still less that any certain evidence had been given, such as could convince those who were unwilling to believe.

The conversations between God and the family of Noah were evidently not intended to be generally known ; and the only way in which attention was likely to be called to them, was by the long preparation of the Ark. A work so extraordinary and apparently so useless as this, must indeed have excited very general wonder ; yet it could not be used as a proof of any thing more, than that Noah and his family *believed* they had received an intimation from God. There was nothing as yet to show that their faith had better ground than superstition or enthusiasm. The evidence their conduct gave of the judgment God was bringing upon the earth was neither stronger nor more striking than that which is afforded us concerning our destiny in the world to come, by the existence of the Church visible among ourselves. Whatever excuses we are in the habit of making when we neglect the advice of good men now, we may be sure were equally availing then. They saw, as we do, that it made but little difference to their *outward* comfort and prosperity, whether they tied themselves down by strict and painful rules of duty, or gave free scope to the bent of their inclinations. “They saw the daughters of men, that they were

fair, and they took them wives *of all which they chose.*" And their children became "mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." The offspring of these unholy unions bore no outward marks of God's displeasure against sin;—they were mighty men, the favoured of their race. Surely it might be said, God cannot in truth be so severe a master as He is represented; it cannot be that those whom He blesses with such prosperity, and to whom He gives such favour in the eyes of their brethren, can really be regarded by Him with so stern an eye, can indeed be objects of the vengeance of the Almighty.

This is no fictitious or exaggerated way of talking; it is a way of viewing things which is but too frequent among ourselves. It is the way we excuse our selfish worldly-minded pleasures and pursuits, our *partial* and *inconsistent* attempts to conform ourselves to the pattern which the Bible holds up to us, our *voluntary* submission to a different rule of right and wrong, from that which our Heavenly Father has prescribed:—and such are the very reasonings and excuses which the condition of mankind before the Flood was certain to suggest.

Nor again does it appear that the men of Sodom were without like grounds for self-deceit and security in wickedness: 500 years had intervened between the time when the two Angels came into Sodom and the last great judgment which God had brought; all was ease and wealth around them;

they seemed especially favoured among the inhabitants of the earth. "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was watered everywhere" before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah "even as the garden of the Lord." Could it be that the Lord would all at once alter the course of His Providence; that while their conduct continued only the same as formerly, He would suddenly adopt a new manner of dealing with them; that His anger would be excited at one particular moment, by those very actions and agents whom He had hitherto allowed to pass unnoticed? "Lot seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law."

These few remarks have been made upon the situation of those persons who have afforded the most marked examples of God's vengeance, to show that as far as appears from the sacred history, they were tempted by the same difficulties, and might shelter themselves behind the same excuses, which in these days afford a covering to practical infidelity; and that, therefore, if we would avoid their fate, we must avoid the indifference and worldly-mindedness which brought it on them; we must "take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the earth."

Is it *true*, then, that there exists among us at the present day, a temper such as that which our Lord attributes to the Sodomites? ARE WE such persons as He intended to describe under the terms, “they ate, they drank, they married, and were given in marriage?” The question may be put in a rather different and more definite form: Is our conduct like that of persons who believe the Bible to be in earnest, and who are willing to take God at His word?

I fear it is impossible for any one to look around him at what is going on in the world, or even to question his own conscience with impartiality, without arriving at a most unsatisfactory conclusion on this important point. The aspect of Society is sadly unlike what we should expect from a Christian brotherhood, who own one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all; and as little are the pursuits, the hopes, the pleasures of each individual Christian like those of a stranger and pilgrim upon earth.

But not to dwell on these surprising inconsistencies between the faith we own and the tempers we indulge, let us confine our attention to the open professions which men generally make, the principles which they avow and justify, and we shall find even here how little weight is given to the Bible among those who accept it as the word of God. Men, not only in their actions, show a preference of every other motive before that which their reason tells them to be of paramount impor-

tance; but even in their very opinions and modes of judging, deliberately put by the consideration of it. "Knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them.

For instance, all men know in what strong language our Lord and His Apostles have spoken of the sins of sensuality; yet we know too that many of these sins are systematically indulged by numbers of Christians; persons who profess (when they turn their thoughts that way) to believe the Scripture *records*, and to respect the authority of the Scripture *precepts*. Now, how do these persons explain their conduct to themselves? Is it not their habitual practice to laugh down seriousness, and to look on any argument which is brought against them from the words of Scripture, as on that very account unworthy of attention? It seems as if the mere fact, that the objection turned on religious grounds was with some men a sufficient reason for putting it by, as part of a question into which they do not feel called on to enter.

How plainly do such persons resemble the profligate sons-in-law of Lot! The Bible seems to them as a book that mocketh.

And what has just been said of sensuality, is equally applicable to every other course which men knowingly persevere in against God's command, and yet without a feeling of uneasiness.

No persons, who intentionally put by religious

considerations in the regulation of any part of their conduct, can possibly take the Bible to mean what it plainly says. They must suppose that its statements are somehow or other exaggerated, that it was written for different times, or for persons differently circumstanced from themselves, or that it intentionally overstates the rule of conduct, on the assumption that men will aim at something short of the mark prescribed to them.

These, and other devices of self-deceit, must be systematically cherished by a large portion of mankind. But there is yet a further step of indifference to be traced: we have to observe men not only putting the Bible intentionally out of their thoughts, wherever it is brought to bear upon their own conduct; but, at the same time that they do this, taking God's word into their mouth, praising religious sentiments, expressing the utmost respect for [religion]. "They come unto thee," says the Prophet Ezekiel of the faithless Israelites, "as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

This is the last and most hopeless form of religious indifference; to this, more than to any other

temper, the Bible seems as a book that mocketh ; and those who cherish it would have been the least of all men likely either to follow Noah into the Ark, or to fly with Lot from the fate of Sodom. Yet it is to be feared that a way of viewing things not very unlike this, is sadly characteristic of our times ; at any rate, we cannot doubt that it is very prevalent among us, and that it takes especial hold on refined and educated minds. The two first forms of practical infidelity which have been mentioned, are common to all times and all stages of society. In all the variety of circumstances in which history exhibits man to us, we see abundant instances of wilful sin against a knowledge of the truth, and a deliberate preference for the servants of mammon before the servants of God. But to combine this real contempt of sacred things with a hollow artificial respect which hears the word of the Most High "as a very lovely song," this is a kind of neglect reserved only for days of intellectual cultivation.

In these times we must be most zealously on our guard against such fatal delusions, if we would hope that it may not sometime be with us as in the days of Lot and in the days of Noe. If we would hope that God's third great judgment, the coming of the Son of Man, may not overtake us unawares.

Nor let us suppose it so very certain, that this fearful day is as yet far distant from us. The

course of Nature may indeed seem firm and settled; the thought may suggest itself to us, which St. Peter says shall arise among those who walk after their own lusts, "which say, Where is the promise of His coming; for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But let us remember that this is to be the scoff of *the last days*; and that the Apostle states it in connexion with this solemn warning, "The heavens and earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment. . . . The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward. . . . But the day of the Lord *will* come, as a thief in the night."

Let us be careful that this warning is not treated by us as was the warning of the Angels by Lot's sons-in-law.

What then is the Ark which we are to prepare, or where is the Zoar we must fly to?

"Sell that ye have and give alms; provide for yourselves bags which wax not old; a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. . . . Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord; . . . that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching."

SERMON XVI¹.

MAN'S DEADNESS TO RELIGION THE CAUSE OF THE
FAILURE OF THE GOSPEL.

2 PETER iii. 4.

“ Where is the promise of His coming ? for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

OF all the interpositions of God in the affairs of men, the introduction of Christianity is the one for which the greatest preparation was made, and with which the greatest blessings are associated, as its promised result. From the first to the last, it is, as it were, the burden of the Sacred Volume ; both in the frequency with which it is mentioned, and the terms in which it is spoken of, our attention is forced towards it as the one leading object of the miraculous Dispensation.

When the first man and woman had forfeited God's favour and received His sentence, the condemnation was mitigated by the promise, that at

¹ [The following Sermon has been put together out of portions of three incomplete sermons.]

some future time, the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Above 2000 years after this, when, on account of the wickedness of mankind, God determined to separate to Himself a peculiar people, for the preservation of true religion among men, He connected this determination with a renewal of the promise which He had before given. The chosen people were to fulfil a double purpose : they were called and set apart, not only to preserve the knowledge of the One True God, but from among them was the promised Deliverer to arise. At the death of Jacob, the line of descent was still farther restricted to the tribe of Judah ; who was blessed above his brethren with the assurance that " The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Thus in the three most important revelations which we are informed of in the Book of Genesis, the coming of Christ occupies a prominent place. Our first parents are consoled by it on the loss of Paradise ; Abraham is encouraged by it to forsake his country and kindred ; Judah and his brethren are fortified by it against the afflictions of their long captivity in Egypt.

Again, on the settlement of Israel in the promised land, after their long bondage, we find the same mysterious pledge renewed to them in a most remarkable manner. We find a wicked magician

brought from a far country by a powerful king, and tempted by all the treasures he could offer, to curse and defy the people of God. But a spell is upon him, and he does but proclaim the coming of the mighty and mysterious Person, with whom the fortunes of the seed of Abraham were from the first identified, and directs the expectation, not only of the chosen people, but of other nations to this one great event.

In the days of the prophet David, and succeeding prophets, more light is thrown upon the office and character and triumphs of Him, who was to be of the seed of David according to the flesh; and the prophet Isaiah speaks of the extent of the deliverance which was to be wrought, and the change in human affairs which was to be effected. We are directed to a time when war and strife should be at an end, and the people of God should dwell in rest and quietness; when "Ephraim should not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim;" when "the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid," when "the Lord should comfort His people and redeem Jerusalem," and when He should "make bare His holy arm, in the sight of all people," and "all the ends of the earth should see the salvation of our God."

Such are the blessings which mankind have been led to expect from the coming of our Saviour; and though we may believe that some part of them relate more especially to His second coming, yet un-

doubtedly they were intended in some sense to be understood of the first. For if we pass on, in the Sacred History, to the arrival of that long expected event, we find a new revelation made in an extraordinary manner, as if to identify the birth of Jesus Christ with the commencement of the reign of peace. The Angel of the Lord, who appeared to the shepherds by night, announced "tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people;" and "suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

We are warranted then, by Holy Scripture, in forming very great anticipations of the results of Christ's coming. Let us consider what there is in the present aspect of human affairs to meet such anticipations. Is the state of society in which we live conformable with what we should have expected, if we only knew the glorious promises of His coming, and did not ourselves live in the days of their accomplishment? I think we must answer that it is not; and that, to a superficial observer, the world, as we experience it, must seem a sufficient refutation of those oracles which seem to promise something so very different. It is too true in one sense, that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." On all sides of us we see the same degree of hatred, covetousness, impurity, which have disgraced the earliest

histories. The multitude of men are scarcely in any material respects different from what they would have been had they known nothing of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. There is little even in their external conduct and intercourse with each other, that might not just as well be discharged by a deist or a heathen. Mere natural religion might teach them a far higher standard of honesty, sobriety, chastity, and benevolence, than almost any man acts up to in his daily conduct. And such is the state of things to which the Apostle looks forward, when he gives us the warning in the text. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." And it must be owned that this unholy scoff is not without some appearance of foundation. It is almost impossible for one who does little himself for Christ's sake, not to feel indifferent to what Christ has done for him; nor to get gradually into the notion that the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel can be of no such great importance after all. And perhaps most men have, at some time or other, felt a doubt whether God did really care so much about the affairs of men as the Bible represents; and whether the great promises which the Old Testament contains, may not be understood in a more vague and metaphorical sense, than is generally supposed.

Such a doubt, however, implies great thoughtlessness at any rate; and if indulged, great wickedness.

In the first place; whatever may be the apparent inconsistency between the visible effects of Christianity, and the results which prophecy would lead us to expect from it, it is an inconsistency which the Bible itself, as in the text, teaches us to look for. What we have to reconcile is, not what God has done for us with what we may fancy He has promised to do, but one part of what He has decreed with another part. The contrast which is presented to us, between the actual state of Christians, and that peaceful condition which is dwelt on so much in many of the prophecies which relate to Christ's kingdom, is not more marked than the contrast between those same prophecies, and the warnings which other parts of the Bible give us no less plainly, concerning the little use Christians would make of their privileges, and the obstinacy with which men would frustrate all God's endeavours to benefit them. For instance, let us look at the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, in which the appointment and commission of the Twelve Apostles is related. There Jesus Christ warns them of the effects which they were to expect from their preaching. "Think not that I am come to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her

mother-in-law ; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And again, in the twenty-fourth chapter, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars ; nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And many false prophets shall arise and deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." These are the effects of Christianity which Jesus Christ Himself has prepared us for. If then His words are reconcileable with the rest of the Scripture promises, the face of things, sad as it undoubtedly is, still is no other than what might be reasonably looked for. We see nothing before us more sad than the state of things which this dreary picture describes ; nor have we any pretence for asking "Where is the promise of His coming?" or for complaining that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

[Rather, if we will complain, we must direct our complaint not against God who has given, but against man who has received the Gospel. The blessings which have been promised by God to man, have ever depended on man, in a measure, for their accomplishment. And it will be more just, as well as more profitable, if we turn our thoughts to the picture, which the world and our hearts will present to us, of man's rejection of God's mercies, than employ them in contrasting a portion of the Scripture prophecies with the measure of fulfilment at this day.

If there be discrepancy between the anticipation and the fact, between one part of the promise and another, our own deliberate love of sin, and wilful disobedience, are the real causes of it.]

Every one [indeed] who does not shut his eyes to what is going on around him, must be aware that a large portion of those who profess to believe and receive the Gospel, act deliberately and systematically in opposition to its commands. They not only allow themselves to follow pleasure in opposition to God's will, but even when untempted, when left to make up their mind how they will act in future, without any present pleasure to turn them aside, and merely thinking over the principles on which they intend to shape their conduct, they still with their eyes open determine that they will follow a different rule from that which God has so clearly laid down.

Many men indeed there are, who allow themselves to be carried so far in these desperate courses, as even to indulge in sins which God has forbidden by name, such as drunkenness and fornication, still at the very time they are sinning, acknowledge that the Bible is the word of God, and feel that if they continue till death in their present courses they must perish everlastingly,—acknowledge a future life, as revealed in the Bible, so implicitly, that, inconsistent as their conduct is, they are very far from having given up the hopes of salvation, and console

themselves with the notion that all will somehow or other come right with them at last.

But we need not have recourse to these extreme cases by way of detecting persons, who, in their daily conduct and habit of mind, belie the faith which they profess, and run in the face of God's commandments knowingly and on principle; [who by professing to receive the Gospel, yet not obeying it, lodge with themselves the responsibility of that failure of success which has attended its introduction.] There are many, who by circumstances have been happily preserved from falling into gross and open violations of God's law; who are not drunkards nor adulterers, and yet who live, and intentionally live, in a way which they know to be contrary to the spirit of Scripture; and who would be very sorry to be called to their last account till their character has undergone an entire reformation. I speak of cases which meet us every day; as, for instance, of persons who indulge spiteful feelings towards their neighbours, and allow themselves to speak of them or act towards them in a manner not consistent with that single and well-known maxim of charity, "Do unto all men, as you would have them do unto you," and who do all this not under the influence of temporary excitement only, not only when some ill-treatment, which they either really or in fancy have received, drives them at the moment to act contrary to their judgment, but who, when they think the matter over quietly by themselves, will not look

their duty manfully in the face, and contrive to quiet their conscience by evasions which hardly satisfy even themselves.

The same temper, which thus manifests itself in reference to our duty towards our neighbour, shows itself also in reference to our duty towards God and ourselves. Many persons, who know well enough what is required of Christians in these respects, attempt to satisfy themselves with a standard of duty far short of the highest which is proposed to us. They know the stress which is laid in Scripture on the duty of private prayer. They know that if they would live as St. Paul lived, they must preserve a constant seriousness of mind, and prepare themselves to act the part of martyrs at any moment, when God may think fit to call on them; and yet they cannot bring themselves to determine on leading a life so little to their taste. They go over their prayers in a hasty and negligent manner, as all people must necessarily do who leave God out of their thoughts in the business and pleasures of life; and they silence the thought, which now and then compels them to contrast their own conduct with that of the saintly examples proposed to them, by recollecting that since the times of the Apostles great changes have taken place in the world, and that rules which might have been very applicable to the case of the first Christians, can hardly be considered as binding upon us under such different circumstances. This they are in the habit of saying

to themselves, and this they allow themselves to consider an excuse. But whatever they may say, they are not really at peace with themselves, and would be alarmed indeed to think of meeting their Judge at the last day with their present careless and worldly temper.

Nor are the cases which I have mentioned the only cases in which this disposition shows itself. Almost every fault which is either directly or indirectly censured in Scripture, has, under some plea or other, been indulged in by persons not utterly hardened against religious fear, and who hope that before they die they may come to such a state of mind as to secure them from the terrors of hell. Perhaps, too, there scarcely exists a person who examines his daily conduct without recollecting some instances in which he has indulged feelings, that he would be very sorry not to get rid of before his death. Or, to put the matter more clearly, I believe there are very few persons indeed who would go on in all respects exactly as they do, if they were sure that they should die in the course of the present year.

Such are a few instances of the obstinacy with which men refuse to co-operate in the accomplishment of the gospel promises, and become responsible in consequence of its partial failure. But in order to have still clearer proof that the fault lies with themselves, let us consider the admissions and avowals which they are not unwilling to make

in favour of religion and against themselves. For instance; they profess, one and all, that they are, like the subjects of the Old Dispensation, strangers and pilgrims on the earth; only that they see more clearly than the Jews did the farther country towards which they are journeying. While they "received not the promises," but "beheld them afar off," we on the contrary, who now live, are familiar with them from our infancy. We cannot recollect the time when we supposed this earth to be our final destination, or its pleasures and honours the source of real and lasting happiness. We have professed at heart to believe, whatever our conduct may seem to indicate, that the sole object of our being placed in this situation is for our trial, whether or not we are willing to be God's servants, and to discipline us in the full formation of such habits and tempers as may fit us for another and a better country. This we all admit as a matter of course, and should be startled at having any imputation cast on our sincerity.

We know too by a sad experience, which no blindness or thoughtless indifference can counteract, that the time allotted us for this pilgrimage is necessarily very short, and that it may at any instant come to its termination. Possibly, indeed, we may most of us indulge the notion, that our fated existence will reach the usual term of human life that we shall be spared by disease and accident, and allowed to attain to fourscore years before we

pass away and are gone. We may imagine that we have yet time enough before us, and may reconcile ourselves to the consciousness that our present courses are not such as to fit us for the presence of our Judge, by the hope that all will yet be well with us; that the temptations which now seduce us will not haunt us to the grave; nor the levity which now repels the admonitions of conscience, continue to distract us in our later years. We may hope, notwithstanding the fate which we see attending our neighbours, that we ourselves shall be exceptions; that though their habits seem to strengthen by continuance, and their consciences to be seared by continual neglect, our temper on the contrary may without effort change, and our conscience retain its sensitive purity to the last. We may delude ourselves with the notion that we are not becoming sensual when we act sensually, not faithless while we discharge our office faithlessly.

In some such way all who continue wilfully to act wrong, must reconcile themselves to this want of strictness, till they have ceased to believe rightly. No man could look in the face the fearful prospect of meeting such a God as the Bible describes, and with such a temper as too many of us indulge. We must hope to become different men before we die, or we must disbelieve what we are told will follow death.

Another instance of the dishonest and self-deceiving spirit in which men receive the gospel,

is seen in their notions concerning the nature of repentance. Many men look on repenting as a definite act, which it is in their power to perform at any time, and look forward to a time when the temptations which now beset them will lessen, and when by the performance of this act they shall set themselves right as to the past, and for the future live according to their consciences. They feel that at present their inclinations lead them to a sort of life quite different from that which Apostles have commended to us by their examples, but they hope that, as they grow older, their dispositions will improve, that experience will render them gradually more serious, and that they shall fall, almost without effort, into a sort of life for which they now feel very unfit. Such a change they expect will take place in themselves, because their self-indulgence leads them to wish for it, and because they are not sufficiently in earnest to observe how very improbable it is. And their belief that this change, however late it takes place, will put them on the same footing as if they had been innocent from the first, they even venture to found on an interpretation of the language of Scripture.

But these delusive tales, preposterous as they are, can do but little towards securing the peace of mind of one who weighs well the precarious tenure on which he holds his own life, and the terrible uncertainty which hangs over that day and hour "of which knoweth no man, no not the Angels of God,

nor the Son, but the Father," that day which shall come upon us as "a thief in the night." Even to the most serious and self-denying persons, who are duly sensible of their infirmities, such a prospect cannot but sometimes be a fearful one; they cannot but sometimes shrink with involuntary awe, from the thoughts of His presence, whom they may so soon encounter; and they recollect our Lord's warning, to "take heed lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Yet most people profess to believe these warnings, and yet knowingly play the desperate game of risking a few days of ease and self-indulgence, risking such short and alloyed enjoyment, against the chance of this sudden destruction.

Such is the state of conviction, inconsistency, and self-deceit of the greater number of professed Christians: they believe the gospel, and do nothing more. They engage to provide for the due fulfilment of the gospel, they get it as it were into their possession, and then they trifle with it and betray it. Hence it is, and hence only, that the promises connected with the birth of Christ have failed in the measure they have failed. God provided what ought to have ensured success, man accepted it as sufficient for success, and then proceeded to defeat that design of which he was trusted with the ac-

accomplishment. Thus the partial failure of the promises, while previously announced, has been caused by the sin of mankind.

In answer to these remarks, however, it may be objected, that, admitting fully the agency of human nature itself in defeating the promises of the gospel, it does not appear why those promises should have been given in the glowing language of prophecy, if it was known all the while to Almighty Wisdom that they were to fail; that man's foreseen self-will and obstinacy account for our Lord's announcing that the gospel should fail of its full object, but was a reason why this announcement should not have been attended by announcements more numerous and striking, of a brighter character. Nay, it may be still further said by the wayward heart, "Is there after all any thing so very great in the Christian privileges themselves, supposing them duly fulfilled in us, as to come up to the exaggerated expectations which have been held out? Has God after all done no more for us than to call on us to lead holy and upright lives, and to promise that in case we do so, we shall enjoy rest and tranquillity on earth? Surely even heathens might have known this; and it needed no apparatus of types and prophecies to prepare us for such a communication."

In language like this the scoffer may still indulge; nor will it be sufficient to answer him, that the chief end of Christ's coming upon earth was to

secure us an access to future happiness in the world to come, by making an atonement for our sins; that, therefore, we ought not in reason to look for the effects of Christianity on this side of the grave. This is indeed, in a great measure, true. It is true that this mysterious part of Christ's office is held up to us as that which is of the greatest importance to us, and which deserves our most especial gratitude; but it is not true that no part of the blessings, which were promised on His coming, were to be perceptible during our sojourn upon earth. Peace between God and man Jesus Christ has restored by His death upon the cross; but He has also informed us of truths, and pledged Himself to promises, which if we did our part with even tolerable faith, would ensure the re-establishment of peace between one man and another. And for a knowledge how these truths may assist us, and how these promises are daily accomplished for us, we have nothing to appeal to but our own personal experience. In this important matter every one must form his opinion for himself; and his judgment must necessarily be decided by the benefit which he has himself derived from his Christian privileges,—the use he has himself made of the assistances God extends to him. If we lead negligent lives, and allow ourselves to be swallowed up in the business and pleasures of the world around us, it is quite impossible that we can form any idea of those invisible things with which we are no less

really, though less obviously conversant. If we do not ourselves feel deep sorrow and contrition at our sins¹, we can feel no great thankfulness for the kindness which so tenderly consoles and reclaims us. If we are not conscious of our unceasing tendency to defection from God, we cannot be aware of the support by which He retains our allegiance. Christian knowledge is in fact only to be obtained by Christian obedience; and we must not expect to attain the one without the discharge of the other. Those, however, who in any good measure have ascertained by their own experience the greatness of the blessings which are already given them, will understand that, from their greatness they are, if anywhere given, a sufficient fulfilment of prophecy, even without public display of them, or extended participation.

As often then as we feel assaulted with vexing doubts, and are tempted to distrust God's watchfulness and care for us, let our eye be kept steadily fixed on the truth, that there is but one way as well to know as to serve God; and that the only means of remedying our want of faith, is perseverance in Holy Living. Let us remember that in order to

[¹ Instead of "deep sorrow and contrition at our sins," the Author had written first "a lively sense of that wretched state of defection from God, to which we are daily and hourly tempted;" but made the substitution before finishing the sentence. This repression of his own private feelings occurs in other places in the MS.]

understand, we must use the blessings which have been extended to us; and that by deviating from the path of Christian duty, we run the chance of falling off at the same time from our Christian faith.

SERMON XVII¹.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST A PATTERN OF PATIENCE
UNDER DISCOURAGEMENTS.

[MATT. xi. 11.]

“He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”]

WE are this day met to commemorate the birth of that great Saint and Prophet, of whom it was said by Jesus Christ, that “among those that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than he,” one whom the Jews were to acknowledge as higher than their Patriarch Abraham, or their Lawgiver Moses, and yet one than whom the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater.

It is not my intention now to explain to you in what sense these two things were true of John, or to point out what were the differences between the doctrine which he was commissioned to teach, and the two other doctrines with which it is compared—the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of Christ: all I wish you to observe is this,—that whereas he was to be exalted above all the Saints and Prophets

¹ [Preached on St. John the Baptist's Day, 1833.]

of the Old Testament, by preparing the way for the new and better Dispensation, yet that he at the same time was excluded from that Dispensation himself. He was to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, but in that blessed Kingdom he was to have no part himself; the least in that Kingdom was to be greater than he.

This is a point which I wish you to observe, not because it will tend to throw light on the object of John's mission, but because it seems to throw great light on his character. John was to be called on to lead a life of fasting and penance, and to preach doctrines which were sure to be very disagreeable, to make himself an object of persecution, and which were in fact the cause of his martyrdom; and for what?—to prepare the way for a new doctrine which was to be superadded to his, and in the propagation of which he was to have no part or lot. His heavy task it was to alarm a wicked and self-satisfied age; a generation of vipers which would not be warned to flee from the wrath to come; by telling them that the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every tree that brought not forth good fruit, was to be hewn down, and cast into the fire. He was the messenger of no comfortable and cheering tidings, nothing that would attach people to him as a teacher of smooth things; nor was he to declare any thing new or striking, which would cause him to be admired as wiser than other men; his doctrine was the simplest and most common-place that can

be conceived; exactly what every one had known before, but which they thought too disagreeable to act upon. "And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answered, and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Such was the common-place unpalatable doctrine of John, for the sake of which he was to spend his life in the wilderness, fed with locusts and wild honey, till Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd of him for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison, and at last beheaded him. And why was he to do all this? What was to be his recompense? Was he to be followed by an admiring multitude, and looked up to as the leader of his party? "The people were in expectation, and all mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not: John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am

not worthy to unloose; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

This was to be his reward for all his labours and sufferings; One mightier than he was to come and to take away his disciples from him, baptizing them with a new baptism instead of his; and teaching new and nobler doctrines, for which he was only preparing the way. Nor was this all; not only was he to give place to a mightier than he, but he was himself to be excluded from the blessed Dispensation of which he was the forerunner; his disciples were to leave him for a greater Teacher, but he himself was not to accompany them; he was to announce to the world the Advent of the Lamb of God; he was to baptize Him, and send Him forth on His heavenly mission, but was himself to have no share in it. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and he was excluded. The very least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he.

While the blessed Jesus was going about Judea with His followers, John was not invited to attend Him, but continued preaching his unconsolatory doctrine; frightening obdurate sinners, and urging them to repent. "After these things, came Jesus into the land of Judea, with His disciples, and there He tarried and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim; because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's

disciples and the Jews about purifying: and they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him.”

Such was the situation of this great Saint and Prophet, than whom a greater had not risen among the sons of women, and yet who was less than the least of the disciples of Jesus Christ, in the number of whom he was not permitted to include himself. Unlike Moses, who looked but once from Pisgah on the land of promise, and was then taken away from the world, John lived in the sight of blessings which were withheld from him; the Kingdom of Heaven was within his reach; he had seen Jesus Christ, and heard from His own disciples how He baptized, and all men came unto Him, but was himself shut out from His presence. The remainder of his words on this occasion are very impressive: “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the Bridegroom’s voice: This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

It is this feature in John’s history which seems in an especial manner to demand the contemplation

of serious persons. This single-hearted disinterested zeal in a cause, the success of which he was not to witness, or materially to promote. Other Saints, beside John the Baptist, have lived lives of hardship, and have died martyrs, but they have had likewise the encouragement of feeling that they were themselves acting a conspicuous part as benefactors to mankind, that their labours were not to go for nothing, that they were chosen vessels of the Lord, and that all generations should call them blessed.

The Patriarch Abraham, when he was called to leave his Father's country, "And to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." "He sojourned in the land of promise as a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." But at the same time that he was bid to make this painful sacrifice of all that was dearest to him, of his country and kindred, and of his father's house, the Lord said unto him: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee; and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." These cheering prospects might, in some degree, support the favoured person to whom they were held out, among all the sorrows of his long pilgrimage. Far different was the case of John the Baptist. He,

like Abraham, was to leave his father's house, and dwell in the wilderness; but he was to decrease, while his Master increased.

Again: in the case of Moses, who may seem in some respects to have been tried as John was, yet it is easy to see how much he was borne up in the midst of troubles, by a kind of high and cheering consciousness of the great destinies to which he was leading his people, and by a hope that, through his means, their hard hearts and stiff necks might be brought to bow before the Most High God. How strongly he was animated by this feeling is seen in the keen and vehement disappointment which the failure of his hopes occasioned him; a disappointment so keen, that the manner in which he once expressed it, drew down on himself the heavy punishment of exclusion from Canaan. John, on the contrary, had no hopes held out to him, and expressed no disappointment. He heard that Jesus baptized, and all men came unto Him: "And he answered, and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."

It would be easy to contrast John the Baptist in this respect as well with other Saints as with Moses and Abraham, but enough has been said to point out what is the kind of support that appears to

have been given to others and denied to him. I wish you now to observe how the absence of this support seems to fit him, in an especial manner, to be an example to ourselves.

For it is to be feared that in reading the lives of other great Saints, we in some degree excuse ourselves from following their steps, under the notion that they were very differently circumstanced from us, and that their noble self-denying conduct was much easier to them, than like conduct would be to ourselves. I doubt not but that many persons think that if God had commissioned them to discharge some great duty, they should have shown more zeal and energy in the performance of it, than they now do in the ordinary and uninteresting business of life ;—that if they were endowed with the powers of Apostles and Prophets, they could then summon up resolution to act a high part, and could despise the dangers and difficulties which they now are unwilling to encounter. Or if their notions do not rise so high as this, at any rate they contrast their own situation in life with that of others who they think could do much more good than themselves, and think this is a sufficient reason for hardly attempting to do any good at all. Many there are that think they should be charitable if they had money enough to be of real use to their neighbours, but that, as it is, they should be only depriving themselves, without affording others any sensible relief. Many more are there, as it is to be

feared, who allow bad conversation and bad actions to pass unnoticed before their eyes, because they are not persons of sufficient influence to make themselves attended to: they say to themselves, What good should I do by reproving persons who would be no better for any thing I could say, and would only hate me in return for my good advice? Such persons imagine that if they were more powerful, or older, or more looked up to by their neighbours, they should then find no difficulty in doing what now seems so impossible to them; and, in the mean time, because they have not ten talents, bury their one in a napkin. In the same way there are numbers who think themselves excused in leading idle listless lives, because, forsooth, they are not learned enough or clever enough to turn industry to any great account; they think that because, if they worked ever so hard, they could do only a little, therefore they may be fairly excused for doing nothing.

Now the mistake of all these persons is, that they cannot make up their minds to look only at what it is their own duty to do, at what God requires of them personally: they must be looking forward to the probable *results* of their conduct. It is not enough for them that God has set them their task; they must enquire whether they shall be doing any great thing by performing it, whether they shall be able to see any return for their labours; in fact, if the truth must be spoken, whether they shall exalt themselves by serving God.

Now I do not mean to deny that it is a great help to persons in the performance of their duties, if they can have the satisfaction of finding themselves really useful. I do not mean to find any fault with persons who feel more alert and zealous in attempting to do what seems to them very important and within their power, than what is very trifling or hopeless. These feelings we cannot possibly help; they are infirmities of the same kind as bodily weakness; if they are to be overcome at all, it is only by long training and discipline: but we can certainly help giving way to them; we may certainly force ourselves to act rightly, even where we feel least zealous and alert to do so. And since it is quite plain to any really thinking person, that, in the eyes of Almighty God, it must appear a matter of very small consequence, whether men are able to do little or to do much, so long as we do our best,—for that it is for the sake of benefiting us, and not of benefiting others, that He imposes duties upon us at all,—since this must be quite plain to every thinking person, it becomes also quite plain that poverty, and want of influence, and want of ability, are but very poor excuses for not labouring in every way we can to do kindnesses, however insignificant, and to oppose vice however ineffectually.

To all persons, then, who feel it their duty to use their small means in the cause of God, but who shrink involuntarily from the hopeless, dreary prospect of labouring in vain, to all such persons the

example of John the Baptist may be most bracing and invigorating. He was not like Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, nor like Moses, the Mediator of a covenant between God and man; he had no great doctrine to teach, no great blessing to communicate: he was to prepare the way for another Teacher, who, in his own lifetime, was to take away his disciples, and to increase, while he decreased: he was to declare the approach of the Kingdom of Heaven, and to find himself excluded from it.

Surely the poorest and the meanest among us is not called to undertake a task so discouraging as this. If we do kindnesses, however small, we shall at least have gratitude in return ourselves; if we make bad people feel that we do not approve of their bad deeds, we shall secure the attachment of the penitent as well as the hatred of the impenitent. We may effect very little in comparison with what we wish, we may feel our task in a great degree thankless and hopeless, but we are at least labourers in God's vineyard, heirs of that blessed Kingdom from which John was excluded, and in which those that are least, *i. e.* feeblest, poorest, most unlearned, still as long as they are faithful and diligent, are greater than he.

Let us then dare to face difficulties from which he did not shrink: we have not yet been called on, as he was, to desert our homes, and live in the wilderness;—it has not been our office to draw down on ourselves the hatred of great men, by boldly re-

buking their vices ;—we have not been exposed to persecution ;—the terror and glory of Martyrdom is not held out to us.

Our dangers are less than John's, our prospects less cheerless ; let us then face our duty resolutely and manfully ; let us not give way to repining desponding thoughts, and content ourselves with doing nothing, because our calling is humble, our abilities small ; but, following the steps of him who gave his life for a Kingdom, in which he was to be less than the least, let us look only to what God requires of us, leaving the success and the reward to Him. Meanwhile, in the midst of our seemingly unsuccessful labours, let us look for consolation to the happier efforts of our more favoured fellow labourers ; let us rejoice over their greater powers, and more extended influence, that, when we see them employed successfully, in the cause for which we toil in vain, our joy too may be fulfilled.

SERMON XVIII¹.

THE DUTY OF FOLLOWING THE GUIDANCE OF THE CHURCH.

2 TIM. iii. 14.

“ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”

THE advice which is here given by St. Paul to Timothy, may at first appear to countenance a notion which is very prevalent among ourselves, *i. e.* that the respect we owe to teachers of religion depends on the opinion we have of their personal qualities; that we may make up our minds as to the degree of attention they deserve, and that unless their doctrine, and their manner of inculcating it, agrees with the notions we have formed of what is becoming in a Minister of the gospel, we are justified in withholding from them that deference which we should pay to one whose views accorded with our own. This notion is now very prevalent, and

¹ [Written in 1831.]

in many cases leads people to desert those who had been appointed as their teachers, and to choose others for themselves, who can have no possible authority except that which they derive from the assent of their hearers. On this ground many leave their parish Churches, and join congregations with which they have no regular connexion, in order to place themselves under the instruction of Clergymen of whom they approve more than their own, and happy would it be if this were all;—many even desert Church altogether, and prefer being instructed by men who were never commissioned to teach God's word, only because these persons teach the kind of things which they like to hear, or happen to have some personal qualification, such as reputation for talent or power of speaking fluently, or a striking manner, which inclines others to assent to what they say. This practice of choosing religious teachers, each person for himself, as their own fancies direct them, is what many now allow themselves in; and they do so on principle, they think it right; they not only allow themselves in the practice, but they approve of it.

Now it may, perhaps, appear at first that the advice which St. Paul gives to Timothy in the text affords indirectly, at least, some sanction to this prevailing notion. He tells Timothy to feel confident in the truth of what he had been taught, “as knowing those who had taught him,” “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned

them." It may, perhaps, seem from this, that St. Paul is appealing to Timothy's good opinion of his instruction, in proof of the things which he had learned of them; and that thus by approving of this practice in his own disciple, he authorises us also to make up our minds as to the degree of confidence we should place in any particular minister, and to rely only on those whom we approve of.

Such a notion may at first seem to be countenanced in the text. But if we examine it attentively, we shall not find this to be the case; indeed, the conclusion to which closer observation leads is directly opposite to this. By a reference to the general tenour of St. Paul's writings, we might easily show that he is as far as possible from encouraging people in placing themselves under favourite teachers, and ranking themselves as their followers. But in this case it is not necessary to refer to the general tenour of his writings. An examination of the passage itself will be sufficient for the purpose.

First, we have to inquire who the teachers were to whom St. Paul alludes; and, secondly, what that knowledge of them was to which he refers as a ground for confidence.

On the first point there may, perhaps, exist a doubt whether it is of himself St. Paul is speaking, or of those instructors who had taught Timothy from his youth; we may not be able to ascertain with certainty whether the things here mentioned, which Timothy had learned and been assured of,

were the doctrines of the Gospel which had been taught him by St. Paul, or those more elementary principles of religion which are inculcated in the Old Testament. Yet, let us suppose either to be the case, and it will be very clear what kind of knowledge of his teachers it was to which St. Paul refers, as a pledge for the truth of the things which had been taught.

Suppose that the things spoken of are the truths of the Gospel, and consequently that the teacher from whom Timothy had learned them was St. Paul himself, we then have to inquire what was the warrant to which St. Paul used to refer his converts as a proof that he himself was worthy of credit. Was it then to his great reputation, or to his learning or eloquence, or to the excellence of his doctrine that he referred; doubtless he possessed these advantages in a remarkable degree; but was it on these that he founded his claims to the confidence of his disciples? He says to the Corinthians, "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech and of wisdom; . . . and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." This is the warrant which he shows; he proves that he is a divinely commissioned teacher, by working miracles among them he is sent to teach. He refers them as a proof of

his doctrines, not the character of these doctrines, nor to the arguments with which he had enforced them, but to the authority with which he was invested as a teacher. And he calls on them to believe, not because they were pleased or because they were convinced, but because he was set over them as God's minister to show them His will. Such was the ground he took with his Corinthian converts, as we see by his own words; and such, doubtless, was the knowledge to which he referred Timothy, when he called on him to continue in those things which he had learned, as knowing of whom he had learned them.

Or suppose, which is perhaps the most probable, that the things spoken of are those plain truths of religion which pious Jews had known before the coming of our Saviour, the things which St. Paul reminds Timothy he had known from his youth; still the case is in material points the same.

If we consider who his teachers must in this case have been, it will be evident that St. Paul, in reminding Timothy of his knowledge of them, is appealing not to their personal qualification, but to their commission; that he still grounds their claim to confidence, not on their character, nor their ability, nor their arguments, but on their authority.

Timothy, as we know from the Acts of the Apostles, was a native either of Derbe or Lystra, ignorant and obscure cities, so much given to superstition and idolatry that they were disposed

to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, thinking them gods; and so unsteady in their opinions, that within a few days, at the instigation of the Jews, they drove from their coasts the very men who just before had been the objects of their mistaken worship. Of one or other of these cities Timothy was a native, and it is not probable that in either of them he could have fallen in with any of the celebrated Jewish teachers, who were not in the habit of seeking disciples in distant countries. But he had the advantage, as we know from the Acts, of having a Jewish mother; and the same thing we may collect from the chapter of the Epistle from which the text is taken, where St. Paul reminds him of the faith which dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice. To this circumstance he owed the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which he had been taught from his youth; and it is probable that he had heard them explained by the ruler of some neighbouring synagogue, for we know from the Acts that Jews dwelt in those parts, who knew Timothy and his mother. Such, then, was the instruction from which Timothy had learned, and been assured of those things in which St. Paul exhorts him to continue, as knowing from whom he had learned them. He had learned them as a child from his pious parent; and had been farther instructed in them by the ruler of some obscure synagogue. He had learned them as a child before he could judge of the arguments by which they

were supported; yet this is considered by God's inspired Apostle as a reason why he should have the more confidence in their truth. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

Here, then, we have an authority, which cannot be doubted for stating, that in making up our minds on religious subjects, we are not to trust our own impressions alone; that on points of such importance our private judgments are not sufficient to direct us, but that we are to look in another direction for advice and security.

Of course, what we have ultimately to keep in view, is the *truth* of the opinion we embrace; and if we are once positively certain what is the truth, no deference to the judgments of others, or to their authority, can have any influence over us. But what St. Paul tells us is, that in making up our minds as to what *is* true, we are to take into consideration two things independent of our private judgment, viz. what is the doctrine that we have been taught from our youth, and what is taught by those who are authorized to be our religious instructors. And it will be observed, that both of these considerations are as applicable to our case as to the case of Timothy, or any of those whom St. Paul is speaking to. We, as well as they, have

authority to appeal to in matters of religion. Instruction has been *appointed* for us just as much as for the Jews and first Christians, by God's own ordinance. The question, who are God's appointed ministers, is not one of any vagueness or uncertainty; it is one in which there is no room for difference of opinion, even among those who differ most widely, as to what God intended us to be taught. Every one admits the truth of the history which records the appointment of Christian teachers, and it is well known that to some among these teachers was committed the authority of ordaining successors to themselves. Nor is there any dispute that there exists in the world a set of men, and only one set of men, who derive their commission to teach religious truth, through an uninterrupted succession of persons themselves similarly commissioned, and deriving their first appointment from the Apostles themselves. Such a set of persons there are in the world, and every body knows and admits that this set of persons consists of those who have been ordained by Christian Bishops as ministers of the Catholic Church. This point is clearly established by history; and its truth is in no way affected by the supposed truth or falsehood of the doctrines which these ordained persons teach.

Here, then, are a set of persons who rest their claims to attention on their *authority*, not on their own personal *qualifications*, nor on the nature of their doctrines. Our speech and our preaching is not with

enticing words of man's wisdom, but, as St. Paul's was, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. People may doubt our wisdom or our sincerity, but they cannot doubt that we are persons, and the only persons, who derive our commission to preach from the Holy Apostles, and through them from our Lord Himself.

On these grounds, then, the ministers of the Church claim some degree of confidence and attention from those whom they are appointed to teach; and they claim it on an authority which cannot be disputed, on the authority of St. Paul's own words.

But though the Ministers of the Church are doubtless God's appointed servants, yet it must be admitted that they are not on this account secure from error; and it is also plain, that they may so far err as to forfeit the claims of their commission: in such a case, then, neither the words of St. Paul nor the general tenour of Scripture can be supposed to demand [for them] continued confidence. Now, the *possibility* of this case is what men take hold of when they justify secession from the Holy Catholic Church, and as it is one which certainly may occur; yet as it is equally plain that men are much too ready to suppose, on light grounds, that it has occurred, it may be profitable to suggest a few considerations which may teach caution on a point of so much importance.

It will be observed, then, that in a case in any way doubtful, when persons feel misgiving about the

truth of what they hear at Church, but are not quite certain of the grounds on which they are proceeding, as long as there seems to them a chance that the error may be on their side, and not on that of God's commissioned Ministers, so long the authorized side is clearly the safe side ; for, first, there is at least some degree of probability that the truth, if to be found any where, is to be found where God intended it to be sought. God's ministers, though liable to error because they are men, are surely, in some degree, less likely to fall into it, because they *are* God's ministers. It is not to be supposed that He instituted an Order of men for the preservation of the truth, and yet that He so instituted it that it should have no tendency to effect its purpose, but should be just as likely to fall into mistaken notions, as any self-constituted set of teachers who owned no guide but their own judgment.

To suppose this, is not to deem rightly or reverently concerning God and His ordinances ; a truer wisdom would teach us to believe that whatever could be done to perpetuate a knowledge of the truth, has been done to perpetuate it among God's appointed messengers ; and a pious person of any seriousness, or who had any regard for his best interests, would require very strong evidence indeed before he would believe that the truth was to be heard not at Church, but elsewhere.

In a case then where the arguments seem in any way balanced ; where there seems nearly as good a

chance that one opinion should be right as another; this additional presumption, in favour of what the Church teaches, should be sufficient to decide a prudent man "to continue in those things which he had been taught and assured of; knowing of whom he had learned them." Secondly, we may assist ourselves in conceiving the danger of neglecting God's ministers, in matters of religion, by reflecting how we are ourselves affected by similar conduct in our earthly concerns. Suppose then that a master has given certain instructions to his servants previously to his going a journey, and that he has appointed some, whom he trusted, to overlook the rest, and see that the others adhered to his orders: further; suppose that these servants cannot agree among themselves as to what their master intended them to do, but that the upper servants think one thing, and the under servants another, now how will these men act, if they have any regard for their master's approbation? will not the under servants see at once, that in case their superiors happen to be right, themselves will incur far severer censure by disobeying them, than they could possibly do by obeying them if they were wrong? will they not acknowledge at once, that the reason their master set other servants over them was that they should be obedient, and that it will be a far greater offence in them to neglect right orders than to follow mistaken ones.

Indeed in all common concerns, we must have observed that nothing so much shuts a man out

from the sympathy of his neighbours, as the fact that he has got into difficulties by neglecting advice, and determining to act on his own opinion, while ready allowance is always made for those who have been misled by acknowledged principles of prudence.

Now these feelings, which we entertain one towards another in our ordinary concerns, and which common sense sanctions as reasonable, are constantly appealed to by our Lord in His parables, as illustrating the way in which Almighty God regards the actions of His creatures; and hence we may readily conceive how much more leniently He will view the errors which we may fall into by obedience to His Church, than by secession from it.

The considerations which have just been presented to you through a parallel case, may be illustrated and enforced by a striking example from the thirteenth chapter of the first of Kings. We there hear of a Prophet, who, by a singular and dreadful death, is marked as a monument of God's disapprobation; yet let us reflect what it is that he did to draw down on himself such an awful judgment. Few, perhaps, have read the chapter in which his story is contained, without feeling the thought cross them, as if he had been severely dealt with. His obedience throughout that part of his mission which seemed most beset with temptation, his fearlessness in the presence of Jeroboam, when that wicked king would gladly have destroyed him, and after he had executed his commission, his resolute

refusal to profit by the terrors which he had awakened, seem to mark him out as a sincere and faithful messenger. "The man of God said to the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee; neither will I eat bread, nor drink water in this place: for so it was charged me by the Lord." It seems he was proof against both fear and enticement, and his disobedience at last hardly looks like more than an artless reliance on one who was unworthy of his confidence: The old prophet "said unto him, I am a prophet also, as thou art, and an Angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring, him back to thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water; but he lied unto him: so he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water."

Such was the crime of the disobedient prophet, and for this a lion met him by the way and slew him. Now if we attend to this narrative, we shall see that his offence consisted in giving credit to one who pretended to be God's messenger, and yet gave no proof of his commission: he believed in what was declared to him, though he did not know of whom he heard it. And this offence was aggravated by the fact, that he did himself know the truth of his own commission, both by the manner in which it was conveyed to him, and the miracle he had wrought in attestation of it.

Thus then he allowed himself to disobey a command which he knew to have proceeded from God,

because it was revoked by one claiming a divine commission which he did not prove. He did not “continue in those things which he knew and had been assured of,” although he did “know of whom he had learned them.” He chose his teacher for himself, and God has left his fate as a warning how conduct like his will be dealt with among us: excusable as his conduct may appear in our eyes, God, who cannot err, has pronounced his sentence; and “whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto men more than unto God, judge ye.”

SERMON XIX ¹.

BOLDNESS IN PAIN AND DANGER.

JEREMIAH xii. 5.

“ If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”

IN the present state of society, when the power of law is so fully established, that both our persons and our properties are protected from aggression, and we can calculate on enjoying in peace the fruits of our labour, we are apt to forget, amid the blessings we enjoy, how great and how numerous are the evils from which we are exempted.

Slight reflection, however, must convince us that the condition in which the inhabitants of this country are at present placed, is very different from the average lot of mankind. The ravages of war, the violence of lawless men, the oppression of power, the corrupt administration of justice, and number-

¹ [Preached on Good Friday, 1831.]

less other evils of the same description which we read of in the histories of all times and of all nations, are a kind of trial to which God has thought fit to subject far the greater portion of His creatures, though in His mercy He has seen fit to exempt us from them. The state of things in which we find ourselves is not the natural growth of this world, which we are to look on as a matter of course; on the contrary, it is an exception, and rather a singular exception; and, as far as such external circumstances are concerned in forming the character, we are to consider the state of moral discipline, in which we are schooled, as peculiar.

Now, undoubtedly, we are to consider this exemption as an instance of God's goodness, and we cannot accordingly feel too grateful for it; but still the fact, that it is a singular exemption, should lead us to look about and feel on our guard.

From this circumstance alone, without taking into consideration the tendency of the discipline itself, we might reasonably infer that God judged it to be upon the whole salutary for such creatures as we are, and that especial caution was requisite as a substitute for it.

For in regulating the condition of mankind, it seems to have been the intention of our great Governor, to make that state most common, which, upon the whole, was most likely to be advantageous. Thus the ordinary share of intellectual power, or wealth, seems to be best calculated to assist the

formation of a virtuous character ; while either to be elevated above or depressed below this average standard, seems alike prejudicial. And the same may be observed of every other talent which is bestowed in unequal degrees on men ; bodily strength, personal beauty, and even those features of the mind, which seem most allied to virtue, and which, consequently, we should expect to be least liable to excess, such as animal courage, cheerful spirits, impulsive good nature, all these seem blessings when bestowed in that degree which is most common, and beyond or short of that degree, to be snares to us. And so in the case before us, one might expect beforehand, that the degree of violence and danger, to which so large a number of God's creatures have at all times been subjected, must upon the whole be beneficial to them, and tend, in some way or other, to their moral improvement.

But farther than this, the presumption is greatly strengthened by the apparent fitness of such exposure for disciplining us in habits of hardihood and courage. Persons, who from their way of life are forced often into contact with pain and danger, feel it absolutely necessary to steel and brace their character, and from the immediate evils that attend on effeminate self-indulgence, are, even in spite of themselves, driven to keep their armour bright, and their loins girded ; but to us, who have seldom such demands made upon us, something more than common vigilance is necessary, in order to guard against

the opposite frame of mind. We may become gradually enfeebled, without any thing occurring to force our degeneracy upon our observation, and continue to deceive ourselves in the notion, that when vigour is required we shall be able to assume it, while, in the meantime, our whole moral energy is undermined. And this result is not only possible, but very likely; for we find, that even in those respects, where we have constant opportunities to exercise ourselves, such as benevolence, sobriety, devotion, we fall short, to a melancholy extent, of that standard, which our Master has prescribed to us; how much less then is it probable, that where self-deceit is easier, and our opportunities fewer, we should make any tolerable stand against our natural disposition!

I have dwelt upon this point, in order to show that however little suspicion we may entertain about ourselves on this head, still we ought, in common prudence, to begin by assuming that we are deficient. We should suspect ourselves of pusillanimity, not only when we have experienced its consequences, but, because it is a point in which we are very likely to fail; we should feel apprehensive upon it, till, on the strictest self-examination, we have reason to acquit ourselves. We are not to delude ourselves into the notion that we possess greater energy than we exert, and that when occasion requires, our vigour will rise with the demands on it; but rather should put ourselves the question

in the text: "If ye have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, how can ye contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan."

But, farther than this, the mistake of assuming that all is well, is not the only one, nor the greatest, which impedes our progress towards Christian courage. Many there are who, from a mistaken notion of the duty itself, would review their conduct to little purpose, and rise from a self-examination, "saying to their hearts, Peace, when there is no peace." They observe that in our Lord's discourses, and in the precepts of the Apostles, humility, patience, and meekness, hold a very prominent station, and from a misconception respecting the full import of these virtues, imagine that what passes in the world for courage, and was extolled so highly by the heathen moralists, forms no part of their Christian character. From the precepts alluded to, we may indeed with justice infer, that patience under ill-treatment, and meekness under insult, are essential parts of true heroism; but it is very far from correct to suppose them the only parts. Boldness in facing personal danger, and firm endurance of bodily pain, are just as necessary to please Jesus Christ as to please the world; and if they are less insisted on than other and less admired qualities, it is only because in this respect the doctrine of the Gospel accords with the feelings of society.

It was necessary to insist most on those virtues which were most generally disregarded; and in a world where pride, malice, and contention are the abundant and natural growth of the soil, but where cowardice and pusillanimity, common as they may be, are nevertheless universally despised, He who came to correct our errors, and bring us back to the ways which God approves, would of course appear to lay exclusive stress upon the former, while, in reality, His only object was to prevent their exclusion. It would be easy to show that this was our Lord's manner of teaching in many other particulars, in which He endeavours to check prevalent errors, by contradicting them even in [hyperbolic] language.

But, in the present instance, we have answers still more direct and obvious to the question, "What is necessary to Christian courage?"

Let us look, then, to the lives of those, who, in consequence of our Lord's teaching, enlisted themselves as His followers, and fought under the banner of the Cross; who, like the Saints of the older dispensation, were smitten, were sawn asunder; wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

These persons we are not to look on as visionary enthusiasts, who indulged in heated imagination, by self-sought misery; the misery which they endured was the necessary, and, in some cases, immediate consequence of their profession. Their summons

to follow the footsteps of their Lord, was their summons to take up the Cross; and there was little need to insist on the duty of fortitude, among those, who, to perform their other duties, must necessarily possess it. He, in whose Name they were to glory, and for whose Name's sake they were to be hated, by the very act of calling them, insisted on it most peremptorily: If they would stand fast in the faith, they *must* watch, quit them like men, be strong.

Nor was it only thus that our Lord imposed on His disciples, the obligation to cultivate hardihood of character; the Events, which we this day commemorate, most strikingly remind us how His own sacred example illustrated it. That meekness and tenderness of spirit, which endured the agony of the Cross, had no connection with the softness which sometimes passes under their names; and it is of great practical importance, that we observe the distinction between them. For we are not to congratulate ourselves, as if we were followers of our Lord and Master, because we trace a partial resemblance to Him in one feature of our character: it would be almost as reasonable to rest satisfied with mere courage, uncombined with the greater virtues, as with that meekness and humility which are not compatible with manly vigour. Neither quality is by itself a virtue, and only becomes so when in combination with the other; for it is only then that we can consider either the result of a wish to please God. Many persons are so constituted by nature,

as to slide, almost without effort, into one or the other of these tempers. Some are from their very childhood indifferent to danger, others have little difficulty in controlling anger and severity of disposition, but to those, whose task is easiest in one respect, it is generally most difficult in the other; and each has thus to undergo his peculiar discipline, in following the footsteps of Him, whose example is our law.

It appears, then, that fortitude and personal courage are not the less a part of the Christian character because they are insisted on by the world; and that in nerving ourselves against danger and bodily pain, we are no less truly the soldiers of Jesus Christ, than when summoning our patience to endure contempt and injury. Nor can it be said, that to possess these virtues was indeed necessary to the first Christians, and that when there appears any likelihood that we may be placed in similar circumstances, it will then be time enough to think of acquiring them. If we would resemble our Lord, we must cultivate them on their own account, independent of any such likelihood; and the fact that we are not at present called on to exercise them, instead of lulling us into security, should rather make us apprehensive, lest, when weighed in the balance, we may be found wanting.

Circumstanced, then, as we are at present, it is of the highest importance that we keep these things in view; that we review our conduct on this head,

carefully and with suspicion, and ever remember, that though we now run with the footmen, we may have to contend with horses, and that the land of peace, in which we trust, is not secure against the swellings of Jordan.

With a view, then, to the attainment of a knowledge of our true condition in this respect, as well as to promote our farther advance and moral improvement, the following considerations may prove of service.

First, we must be on our guard against applying too easily to our own case the specious assertion, that mental sufferings are far more acute than bodily, and that though the ordeal, to which we are subjected, is less appalling to the imagination than that in which the martyred Saints approved themselves before men and Angels, yet, that the silent, unobtrusive afflictions, to which we are exposed equally with them, are in reality a severe trial. For, without canvassing the truth of the proposition itself in the mouths of most of us, it would be but little applicable to the point in question. It is indeed very easy to talk of the martyrdom of the spirit, and of its being more exalted than the martyrdom of the body, but it is to be feared that most of us have just as little conception of the one, as experience of the other. We may have been exposed to severe mental distress; we may have imagined, and perhaps truly, that we would gladly have exchanged it for any bodily suffering; but have we

summoned the same energy to meet the blow, which the bearing up against bodily pain requires of us? Have we done any more than submit, with a kind of torpor, to what we had no choice of avoiding, and left it to the natural effects of time, to restore our equanimity? Have we not, in those instances, where God has left us the alternative, often chosen rather to violate our consciences, than stand up manfully against the contempt of our fellow men? Are we not in practice, whatever we may be in speculation, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God? It is both needless and impossible to go into the particulars in which all of us, every day, fall short of our duty; and "weary in the land of peace, wherein we trust." Let us be careful, then, before we apply to ourselves the topic of consolation of which I am speaking, that our lives are such as to make it applicable. Let us be *sure* that our spirit is martyred, before we feel so very comfortable at our not resembling those who suffered in the body.

In the next place, since courageous conduct, when it results from a proper motive, is part, and no easy part, of the Christian's duty, it may be of advantage to us to observe, that in this respect the children of this world are wiser than the children of light; and that the very things which would elevate our Christian character, are accomplished by them on the most ordinary principles. It cannot be denied that many very bad people have attained to a high de-

gree of contempt for personal danger. Courage is a quality, which, rare as it is, in the truest acceptance of the term, yet, in a certain sense, is very common among the most thoughtless and irreligious. And if the love of the world can make the duellist face pain and death, and the prospect of sorrow after death, how shameful is it that the love of God, and the promise of heaven, produce so little effect on the lives of Christians!

Again, it may have some tendency to awaken us from our torpid inactivity, if we reflect on the sufferings which God's providence may have in store for us; and from which our present comfort has no tendency to exempt us; we must recollect that there are diseases as sharp as any torture which man can inflict, and that to all these we are exposed. Some there are, for which man cannot devise a remedy; for some we may have to submit to severe surgical operations, for the support of which, we may stand in need of nerve and fortitude, as well as patience. All of us have at least to face an evil, which is more startling than any, because more mysterious. We have all to die; and what the pain of death may be, no one can inform us. For all this, then, we should, in common reason, prepare ourselves; and though we may hope that God's mercy will think fit to spare us, we are bound to act as if we expected the worst.

These considerations, then, should rouse us to

take up the Cross of our Lord and Master, to regard pain and misery as consecrated by His heavenly example.

I shall conclude, then, with observing on the use which we should make of those demands upon our fortitude, which our condition occasionally admits of; I mean the pains of sharp or lingering disease. They are among the swellings of Jordan, to which we are exposed, and coming upon us, as they often do, amidst a career of thoughtless self-indulgence, bring us back to a sense of what we are, and serve as measures of our moral proficiency. By them we are forced to observe, what light tasks are imposed on us during the greater part of our lives, and how shameful it is to weary of them as we do. They may then become great blessings, as well as great evils; and it rests with ourselves to make them which we please.

Now from the foregoing considerations, it follows as an immediate consequence, that when we have to face bodily pain, we are to look on ourselves as summoned by God, and to face it manfully; as unto the Lord, and not unto men. And this requires especial notice; for, obvious as this may seem, it is not unfrequently overlooked, to the great discomfort, as well as moral disadvantage, of the sufferer. Men have got into a way of regarding such things as almost disconnected with religion, and of looking to pride, or a sense of shame, for their support, instead of hiding themselves under

the shadow of the Almighty. They imagine that all their duty requires of them, is to check any disposition to repining or presumption. As for manly firmness, and that sort of conduct which gives to pain an elevated character, this is supposed to be due, rather to our own dignity and public opinion, than to the will of our heavenly Father.

How great and how sad this mistake is, requires rather to be noticed than proved. For it is obvious how great a difference it must make in the whole feeling with which we summon our resolution. To struggle with our natural disposition for the sake of our dignity, is but a bleak and cheerless contest ; while, on the contrary, we can scarce conceive any topic of consolation more soothing and elevating, than the knowledge that though we are set forward unto death, yet it is under the banner of the Lord, and that the rough paths in which we are treading resemble those in which the Martyrs trod before us.

With such thoughts, we may be allowed to associate the recollection, that in all our acutest sufferings we have the sympathy of Jesus Christ. By them we are, as it were, brought into closer contact with Him, and are enabled, in a way in which nothing else can enable us, to appreciate how great things He underwent for our sakes.

Those who are exposed to such severe trials, may regard Good Friday as a day peculiarly their own, and those whom God yet leaves in the enjoyment

of ease and comfort, should be roused by it to the contemplation of the darker scenes, in which many of us may be sometime engaged, and which we all *must* prepare for, if we would be followers of Jesus Christ.

SERMON XX¹.

RICHES A TEMPTATION TO BE HIGH-MINDED.

1 TIM. vi. 17.

“ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God.”

THE tender anxiety with which St. Paul laboured for the spiritual welfare of his converts, is manifested full as clearly in those parts of his Epistles which relate to the daily duties of Christians, as in those more striking portions which show his zeal for the true faith. To teach the correct doctrines was only one part of the task he proposed to himself; to engraft them on the characters of his disciples was another at least as important, and which seems to have occupied as large a share of his attention. Accordingly, we find in his writings most valuable lessons of Christian practice, and deep-sighted knowledge of the temptations which interfere with it.

¹ [Preached June, 9, 1833. This was the Author's last Sermon.]

In the present instance, he is instructing his assistant Timothy how to follow up the system on which he himself had acted; how to adapt his preaching to the spiritual wants of his different hearers; what were the duties most especially incumbent on each class of persons to whom he would have to address himself; and the dangers against which each ought most especially to be cautioned. Among other classes he notices "the rich in this world;" and the advice he gives to these is, "that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God." From which, of course, we understand that the temper of mind which St. Paul thought it especially incumbent on the rich to cultivate is *lowliness of mind*; the danger against which they ought most carefully to guard, that of *trusting in uncertain riches*.

Now, I suppose, there is no one here present who will not at once assent to the justice of this precept. It seems obvious, as soon as it is stated, that the rich ought not to trust in riches, and equally obvious that no one ought to be high-minded. This is quite plain; perhaps it is no less plain that the persons most likely to transgress this precept are the rich in the world. So far we may seem to have gained little by the statement of a precept so obvious, *on inspired authority*; we may suppose we should have known it intuitively, even though it had never been written in the Bible. Such may seem to be the case when we look at the

text in a vague and general way; but there *are* ways in which we may and must look at it, in which it will assume a very different aspect, and will require all the sanction of Apostolic authority to enforce our assent.

It is, indeed, very easy for us, each person within his own mind, to make pictures to himself of high-mindedness and of trust in riches, such as appear to him most foolish and even wicked; nay, we may even view the matter more practically, and still suppose our own notions to be in accordance with St. Paul's, while in fact they are very far otherwise. We may select from among our *neighbours* what seem to be real instances of this unbecoming temper; and, when talking of them to our friends, and thinking of them to ourselves, we may imagine that we talk and think as St. Paul did, and that we have in our own persons realised his lowliness and contempt for riches.

But this way of satisfying ourselves is a sad species of self-deceit, and it is very melancholy to think how much we are all of us its victims; how readily we believe that we understand and assent to the Sacred Precepts, because we see their applicability, either in cases which we *imagine to ourselves*, or which we witness *around us*: whereas we too commonly overlook the nearer and surer test, which as commonly would lead us to a very different conclusion. Do we *see* their applicability to *ourselves*? This is the only true test whether we

rightly *understand* the Scripture Precepts. Do we *find the want* of them for the regulation of *our own* conduct? Do we recognize in *ourselves* the faults against which they warn us? Do we see the wide difference between the standard in which *we* are tempted to acquiesce, and that which the Word of God prescribes to us?

This mistake, as it is common in all cases, is especially so in the case before us. In order to satisfy ourselves, whether we really understand the precept in the text, we have no need to ask ourselves whether we feel disgust at high-mindedness, such as we *picture it in our thoughts*, or such as we *see it in others*; what we ought really to ask is, whether we *experience* it in *ourselves*. *We*, at least such of us as enjoy the conveniences of life, *we* are the rich of this world; we are those whom St. Paul saw to *need* such an admonition,—the very persons whom Timothy was to charge in the words so often cited, “that we be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God.” The artifices of the Tempter are not so altered since St. Paul’s time, but that those who were liable to be seduced then, are liable to the same seduction now; and depend upon it, if we are not *conscious* of its influence, we are very grievously its victims.

In order, then, to caution you against the effects of this seductive, self-deceit, and to enable you to ascertain somewhat more precisely whether you really understand the warning in the text, and

regulate your lives according to it, I shall endeavour, by referring to other parts of Scripture, to bring together some of the details of that character which St. Paul calls "high-mindedness" and "trust in riches." The description of this character, to which I shall first refer is contained in the Gospel for this day's¹ service; where it is set before us in one of its most fearful forms, a form so fearful that the person in whom it is represented to us, is pronounced by our Lord worthy of that worst destiny which awaits wilful disobedience, the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. "The rich man also died," says our Lord, "and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." In him, then, we are to look for a representation of the very worst effects of the riches of this world: let us examine the description carefully, for it concerns us that, at the last day, that description should not be found applicable to ourselves.

"There was a certain rich man," says our Lord, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried

¹ [First Sunday after Trinity.]

by Angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments; and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

Now, I cannot help thinking that every one who reads this description attentively, must be struck with the total absence of any thing heinous or shocking in the rich man's character. "He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." This is the worst we are told of his manner of living; and afterwards when he had received his fearful doom, the worst charge which is brought against him is this, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." Doubtless, we are left to infer that he was much absorbed in these good things, so much so as to feel little sympathy in the distress of others "Lazarus lay at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Yet let us make the worst of this; let us put on these words the harshest construction of which they admit; let us suppose that he was

totally insensible to the poor man's sufferings, and turned his thoughts away as from some disagreeable object. His sumptuous fare, and his purple and fine linen, unfitted him for scenes of misery and disgust; the sores of the unwholesome beggar were not a spectacle for his eyes to rest upon. More pleasing was it for him to turn to the contemplation of his own good things; to say to his soul, "Soul, thou hast good things laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." The thought of misery ill-accommodated with the general tone of his feelings; it was an interruption to his tranquillity and peace of mind; he turned from it, and forgot it. Such was the rich man in the parable; such, but no worse. He is not represented as in any respects cruel or oppressive; the beggar is not spurned from his gate, all loathsome as he is considered, but is allowed to remain there, if uncomfited, at least unmolested. The rich man kept his good things to himself, and left Lazarus to his evil things; and *for this*, after he had died and was buried, "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

Here, then, is one form, and a very fearful form, of the character against which we are cautioned in the text, that is, of high-mindedness and trust in riches; and let us not suppose too easily, that it is a form to which we bear no manner of resemblance. Our situation in life may not perhaps be precisely such as that of the rich man in the parable. Pur-

ple and fine linen, and sumptuous fare, may not be ours; yet let us not on that account feel so very secure. Such of us as have enough to place them beyond the reach of want, such of us as know where to lay their heads, and to procure food and raiment, all such are in their degree partakers of the riches of the world. He who, in order to supply some fancied want, some refinement which he has at last persuaded himself to be a necessary, thinks it impossible for him to relieve his poorer neighbours; he who exonerates himself from the responsibility of giving to others, because he feels a difficulty himself in maintaining what he calls his station; and he who thinks it so indispensable to dress and to live in the same manner as those with whom he associates, that he exhausts on these unworthy objects what God has given him in trust for the good of his fellow-creatures, be his station what it may, high or low, *he*, in his lifetime, receiveth his good things. Lazarus is at his door, and he turns his eyes away. Is it so very clear that *he* too shall not one day "lift up his eyes being in torments?"

But this selfish reluctance to disturb one's own quiet with the sufferings of others, is not the only temper intended in the text by high-mindedness and trust in riches. Another effect of misused wealth is elsewhere held up to us, as no less displeasing to God, than that which has been just described: "And to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the

Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God : I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. *I would that thou wert cold or hot.* So, then, because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing*, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

The Christians of Laodicea were neither hot nor cold ; they were rich and increased with goods, and thought they had need of nothing. This is the description given of them ; and if we take into consideration the circumstances in which they were placed, it will not be very difficult to see in what their lukewarmness consisted, and how their wealth and comfort would especially tempt them to indulge in it. In the days when the prophecy was uttered, the Church of Christ consisted of a small body of men, thinly dispersed over a heathen world, each separate Christian lived in the midst of unbelieving idolaters ; his neighbours, his partners in business, his nearest relations, might frequently differ from him in that most important of all points, their religion. What a temptation must such a person be under to make as little as possible of a difference of opinion, which, in proportion as it was dwelt on as a matter of importance, must put a barrier between himself and those to whom he was most closely bound by all the ties of affection and

gratitude! How doubly great must this temptation have been, when, from the peculiar spirit of heathenism in those days, though every opinion would be readily tolerated, yet the laying the stress upon any was an unpardonable offence against society! The wretched idolaters, who believed in the whole tribe of Pagan Deities, and saw little distinction between one superstition and another, were ready enough to acknowledge the pretensions of any fresh deity, any rites, any belief, which did not interfere with those already established. Jesus Christ might be taught and believed in with impunity, if His disciples could have regarded this belief as a matter of indifference. But to put forward His Name as the only one under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved, as the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, this was intolerable. Still more intolerable was it to obtrude on others this exclusive claim by grave remonstrance; and in case this failed, to follow it by such serious and reserved demeanour, as interfered with the free and joyous intercourse of society. Such seriousness and reserve, as they were the duty of the early Christians, so were they also the causes of all the persecutions they endured. It was for "hatred of the human race," says the contemptuous heathen historian, that Nero put to death all the Christians of Rome; and he adds, "all men rejoiced at it¹." Was it to be wondered

¹ [Tac. Ann. xv. 44; quoted apparently from memory, and not quite correctly. The "Addita pereuntibus ludibria" were clearly Nero's doing, not the result of any popular feeling.]

at, then, that in such a state of things as this, the Laodiceans should feel in some little degree reluctant, "earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the saints;" that they should endeavour to content themselves with their own belief without interfering with that of others; and if by any artifice they could deceive themselves into thinking that matters of opinion were not after all of such vital consequence, that they should lend a willing ear to so consolatory a doctrine. They were rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. The comforts which they enjoyed unnerved them; they could not make up their minds to forego all, and take up their cross. Their present situation was too comfortable; the alternative too appalling. And surely, if there ever was a time when lukewarmness was more excusable than at another, it was at that time when peace could be bought by so small a sacrifice, and when zeal entailed such bitter persecution. Yet what was the judgment passed on them by Jesus Christ, the Faithful and True Witness? "I WOULD," says he, "that thou wert either cold or hot; so, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." The Laodiceans, then, were not cold. They had not thrown off their Christianity; they still retained their faith and professed it; but they were lukewarm; they did not earnestly contend for it. "I would," says our Lord, "that ye were cold." Even coldness itself was better than that lazy, lifeless attachment to the

Truth, which, loathsome as it was in the sight of God, still served to make them contented within themselves, while they said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knew not that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "Therefore," says our Lord, "I counsel thee to buy of *Me* gold *tried in the fire*, that thou mayst be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: *and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve*, that thou mayest see."

Here, then, is another appearance of that character, which St. Paul describes as high-mindedness and trust in riches; and which is no less odious in the sight of God than that exhibited by the rich man in the parable. And now let us ask ourselves, is there not something *inexpressibly* awful in the circumstance that these characters can be made to appear in such a venial light? The luxurious rich man was neither cruel nor oppressive, only thoughtless of the wants of others. The lukewarm Laodiceans retained the true Faith, though they were not zealous for it. Yet the one were to be spued from God's mouth, and the other "in hell lift up his eyes, being in torments." Can one think of this without feeling, as if one might be oneself not far from the edge of this fearful precipice?

If, then, it be thought worth considering whether we ourselves may not in our degree be chargeable with these fearful faults, whether we ourselves may

not in some sense of the words be "high-minded and trust in riches," and, consequently, if it be worth looking about for some security against incurring the fearful penalty of these vices, let us listen to the concluding advice with which Timothy was to charge the rich in this world. "Charge them," says St. Paul, "that they be not high-minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, *but in the Living God.*" The only security against trust in riches, is trust in the Living God; trust in Him, not merely as an unseen Being of infinite power and goodness,—but this after all is but a vague and indefinite direction,—but a steady practical trust in the wisdom of His Visible Ordinances.

And, truly, the Ordinances which God has established upon earth are such as, in an especial manner, may serve to discipline the rich and high-minded. His Kingdom is one into which if men would indeed enter, they must enter as little children. Let us look at these things as they were in the times of the Apostles, when we are able to perceive, on authority that cannot be disputed, how "God chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of this world, and the things which are despised, did God choose, yea, the things which *are not* to confound the things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." In those days it was plain to the sight of all men

that God had set up a Spiritual Power upon earth, and that He had committed it to men, whose influence was unsupported by rank, or learning, or talent; by any thing, in short, which the great are willing to acknowledge as having a claim upon their deference. It must, indeed, have been a humiliating task for the rich and mighty upon earth to come for instruction to uneducated fishermen, to believe what *they* taught, and still more to *submit* to what *they* ordered; to bow before their authority in the regulation of every private habit, and to tolerate their interference with the free selection of their society. Such persons must have gone far towards entering the Kingdom of Heaven as little children, if they could allow St. Paul to dictate to them such conduct as the following, "If any one that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat;" or if they could accept from St. John such a hard saying as this, "If any come unto you, and bring not this doctrine," that is, the doctrine of Christ, which was both of the Father and of the Son, "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Such submission on the part of the great of this world to their spiritual rulers, must have been an effectual antidote to high-mindedness and trust in riches.

And those who believe that God has to this day kept up a succession of Spiritual Authorities, and

that even now, among us, there are those who derive a power from on high, and power to bind and loose on earth, with an assurance that their sentence shall be ratified in heaven;—those who believe in this will not be at a loss for a test, whereby to show whether they trust in uncertain riches or in the Living God. The trial of the rich consists in submitting themselves to their spiritual rulers, much in the same way as that of the poor does in submission to their temporal rulers. Let them but do this resolutely and manfully, let them but humble themselves before the Most High God in the Persons of His Delegates, and God on His part will secure them from the terrible consequences of high-mindedness.

This, then, is one test of our condition, one discipline for bringing us to a right frame of mind. There is also another equally indispensable. “He who loves God loveth his brother also:” “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” Compassion for our distressed brethren, who are God’s children, and deference to our Spiritual Rulers who are His ordinance, are real and tangible ways of showing our trust in God; and besides these there is no other. However easy it may be to draw distinctions to ourselves between serving God and serving our brethren, between trusting in God and submitting to His appointed Ministers, it

will be difficult to make them good in His presence, [who has said of works of charity,] “ Inasmuch as ye did them not to one of the least of these, ye did them not unto Me;” and who, on sending forth His teachers as lambs among wolves, assured them, for their consolation and support, “ He that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and He that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.”

These, my brethren, are considerations which appear to be in a great degree applicable to our case as well as to those for whose instruction St. Paul charged Timothy. May we lay them to heart, and profit by them.

PORTIONS OF SERMONS.

1. THE INCARNATION.

CIRCUMSTANCES so great and astonishing as [are presented to us in the Gospels,] are, in their very nature, beyond the reach of our faculties. There is something too, in the very familiarity of our acquaintance with them, which prevents our being impressed with them as we otherwise should be. As we cannot recollect [a time] when they were new to us, so we are unable to conceive the feelings they would have excited if we had become at once, and of a sudden, acquainted with them.

But, besides this, we are apt to get into a careless and slovenly way of thinking on sacred subjects, and when we read the Bible, talking of things as matters of course, [which,] if we heard of them from any other source, would excite in us the most lively interest. They seem to have taken place, as it were, in a world different from our own; and it requires some effort to keep in mind how closely and immediately we are concerned in them.

We find it difficult to imagine that, in such a

place as this we live in, and to people like our own acquaintance, God was manifested in the flesh; and, though we talk of it as a real occurrence, we are too apt to look on it as a sort of vision. Otherwise we should see men leading very different lives from what they actually do, and showing their sense of the great things God has done for them, in a very different manner.

Now against this inconsiderate turn of mind, it is our duty to be most especially on our guard; and whenever such occasions as [the Christmas season] present themselves to us, we should try, by every means in our power, to bring home to ourselves the events which we commemorate. We should go over in our minds all the particulars which may help us to appreciate their importance, and personally to connect us with them.

Let us suppose that instead of Almighty God, some stranger of our own species, but of a rank and character vastly superior to our own, was to make his appearance among us, and become our visitor. Let us suppose that, after having been allowed to live familiarly with him, and to regard ourselves as his friends, we all at once discovered that he was some great king or hero, one who had nations and armies at his command, and who, if he pleased, had the power to destroy us as well as to show us kindness. What would be the necessary effect produced by such a visit from such a person? Would not the respect and affection which we

might otherwise have entertained for him, be immediately united with the highest awe and veneration? Should we not look up to him with a deep and silent interest, and try to discover, in all his ways of thinking and acting, indications of that greatness which elevated him so far above ourselves? Surely not even the most trifling points, such as his appearance and manner, would pass unnoticed by us; we should treasure up all his sayings with the most careful attention while he was among us, and take every means of retaining them in our memory when he had withdrawn himself from among us. Even the minutest circumstances of his sojourn among us would be dwelt on by all those who had been so fortunate as to enjoy his company, and stories about him would be handed down to their children, as something which they were to take a pride in remembering.

In the case I have been hitherto supposing, the chief cause of our admiration would be the astonishing condescension of our visitor. But suppose, in addition, that he had also conferred on us the greatest benefits, by information which he communicated to us, that he had taught us the cure of painful diseases, and showed us how to turn to advantage the soil and climate which it was our fortune to enjoy.

Or, to put a case still more analogous, suppose, some obscure tradition had prevailed among us, that we did not originally belong to the country which we now inhabited, but that, like the Jews in the

captivity, we expected some day a glorious return to a better place, and a nobler fortune; now if in these circumstances, the great stranger, of whom I am speaking, was to assign, as the object of his coming among us, his desire to confirm the truth of this tradition, and to instruct us in the modes of living which would be necessary in order to fit us for our higher destiny, I do not imagine that we should, on this account, be likely to feel less interest in his person, or pay less attention to his advice. If, in the first case, a sense of his condescension and an admiration of his greatness, were sufficient to fix our minds upon him, we should hardly be affected less powerfully by the knowledge that our highest interests were involved in what he taught us.

Neither does it make the case so very different, if we suppose ourselves, instead of being ourselves his companions and disciples, to have come to an exact knowledge of all he taught and did, through the instruction of others. As long as we were absolutely certain that he was that great king and hero, still we should be equally interested in knowing all we could collect about his intercourse with our friends. And as long as we believed that we must really fit ourselves for filling a different station in society, and taking up the habits of another nation, we should be equally anxious to make out every thing that he had told us about either, and equally careful to act on his suggestions.

And if we should feel all this, as we most un-

questionably should, in the case of a mere man, differing from ourselves only in rank and dignity of character, in how much greater a degree would the same things be true with reference to the inhabitants of another world? For, not to go at once to the highest case, there have been instances of Angels coming as visitors to men. Let us consider then, what would be our feelings if such guests were to honour us with their society, as those beings who announced to Abraham the future birth of Isaac, or to Lot the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And yet the world has been honoured by a far higher Visitor than these; one who exceeds the highest Angel in dignity, far more than Angels surpass such creatures as ourselves. And He has come into the world, not merely to show us His glory, but to reveal to us that we really are, what was only guessed before, immortal beings, intended for another sphere of existence, for which we are to fit ourselves by following His example. And though He is Himself now removed from the sight of our eyes, yet we know that He is very nigh unto us, and watches all our ways. And, besides, we are possessed of faithful records, sufficient to show us all that is important to us respecting His example and His precepts

It may be of service [therefore] to us, to reflect on the very near and constant relation in which we stand to God, even at this present time. He is at this day as truly God with us, as at the time when

He showed Himself among us in the Person of our Lord. At this moment He is not far from every one of us, for "in Him we live and move, and have our being." Every thing that is going on around us proves that we live in His presence. When we see a tree growing, we may be just as certain that God is at hand to nourish it, as we could have been if we had witnessed the creation of the world. And as often as we offer up our prayers before Him, we may feel as confident that He looks on us, as if we were conversing with Him face to face.

All this we must know if we will think at all about it; and to those who thus think, it cannot but be a painful thought that we are shut out from the light of His countenance. They will be ready to exclaim with Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat. Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, but I cannot see Him." This is the language which might naturally describe the feelings of every one of us; and to those who really experience these feelings, what reflection can be more consoling than that which is now suggested to our minds. This Great Invisible Being, has for once revealed Himself to His creatures; and though He has long ago withdrawn Himself from among us, yet, as I have said, we are

not, even now, left destitute as before. Many Prophets and righteous men have desired to hear the things which we hear and have not heard them. We have in our hands the holy Gospels, written accounts of the way our God lived on earth, handed down to us from those whose eyes had seen Him, and whose hands had handled Him. These are the blessings which we derive from the simple circumstance that God has taken on Himself our nature, and dwelt among us as a man.

We, who have been brought up in a knowledge of what really took place, may fancy that we see little difficulty in what appeared to the Jews so incredible. To us it may seem natural enough that if God could so far condescend as to desire to leave the glories of heaven, He should look on it as a matter of little consequence whether He appeared among us as a king, or as a servant. We may, perhaps, even reconcile with our conceptions, that last Awful Mystery by which our redemption was effected,—the precious Sacrifice which our Lord offered upon the Cross.

Still there is much remaining to excite our wonder and warmest admiration. Among all the peculiarities of our Lord's life, none is more remarkable than its length. We are called on to observe Almighty God, not only taking on Himself the form of a servant, but submitting to all the tedious delays of infancy and childhood, and waiting for the

period at which common men arrive at their maturity, before He entered on that work which was the object of His coming.

These circumstances will seem more strange, the longer we dwell upon them, and the more minutely we consider all the trifling details of life, in which our Lord must necessarily have engaged. We have the Governor and Sustainer of all things, presented to us as an helpless infant, the Being, whose wisdom is infinite, as gradually acquiring knowledge under the instruction of His parents. The subject is indeed too awful to admit of being pursued far, except in thought. But if we give to it the thought which it deserves, and then reflect how easy it would have been (as far as we can see) to accomplish the purpose otherwise, how easily Christ's miraculous birth might have been followed by a miraculous maturity, and His life have been contracted into the narrow space which was necessary for the instruction of His ministers, we shall be disposed both to admire God's inscrutable counsels, and to adore that infinite goodness which endured all this for our sakes

2. THE RESURRECTION.

IF we turn our thoughts attentively to the subject, even the soberest judgment cannot but estimate, as among our highest blessings, those which arise immediately from the circumstance of our Lord's Resurrection.

Viewing it on the coolest principles of reason, and divesting ourselves as much as possible of any feelings which arise out of unpractical speculation on such glorious subjects, we cannot but perceive that the condition in which we now find ourselves differs in many material points from what it could ever have been, unless Christ were risen from the dead; and that though we are so familiar with the privileges which this event has extended to us, as without particular attention scarcely perhaps to be aware of them, still they are privileges, and of the very highest order—privileges which many prophets and righteous men longed for in vain, and the indistinct expectation of which was the consolation of the Saints of old.

And by these privileges, I mean something quite distinct from the general blessings which the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ obtained for us,—something over

and above the assurance that God will accept of our repentance in the place of perfection, and that the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Granting that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world, the Mediator of a new Covenant, the Blessed Son through whom we have access to the Father; granting too that He died upon the Cross for our transgressions; still if His Resurrection had not taken place in the manner it did, if He had ascended up into heaven from the grave unseen by us, and we had known nothing of His Blessed Person from the dark hour when, crying with a loud voice, He gave up the Ghost; if this had been the manner in which the eternal will of God had decreed to consummate our redemption, we should have been destitute of many and great blessings which we now enjoy.

It is on these, then, that I propose to say a few words, and though it is difficult, among the complicated effects of all God's Dispensations, to extricate those which are more especially attributable to any one, and though in the case before us this difficulty is more especially heightened by the unity of the Christian scheme, so that we are in the habit of referring all that is done for us to the Life and Death of Christ as a single cause,—still, by attention to the inspired writers, and to the suggestions of common sense, we shall be enabled sufficiently to distinguish them.

First; then, we have the authority of St. Paul for

looking on our Lord's Resurrection as the very foundation of our belief, that we too shall survive death. To the Corinthians, who doubted of this essential and preliminary doctrine, he argues as follows: "If," says he, "there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen your faith is vain." This is the great and obvious argument to which he appeals, not indeed that there are wanting in our Lord's own discourses sufficient intimations of a future life, but because it has been added as a seal to our faith. It is, as it were, God's warrant for our immortality; it differs from other evidence, not perhaps less cogent, as a legal deed from a mere verbal assurance; and if on such an important point, such a warrant is to be esteemed a blessing, that blessing is strictly one of those which I proposed to speak of.

Now if we would form a correct estimate of the value of this warrant, if we would know how great a blessing we enjoy, in this particular source of certainty on the threshold of religion, we must endeavour to throw ourselves into the situation of those who were without this advantage. We must recollect, that though habit has familiarized us to the prospect of a future life, no less than to the continuance of the present, yet that the prospect is in itself most perplexed and startling. It is perplexed even to the understanding, which in its clearest and most collected moments is unable to do more than show that we have no reason for associating death

with annihilation ; but, to the imagination, it is at times so startling as almost to be inconceivable, and the dreams of poetry, which may picture to us the islands of the blessed, can but ill dispel the gloom of conscious desolation.

There are then two distinct blessings which we derive from our Lord's Resurrection, considered as a proof of our immortality.

For though the doubts which are left on the understanding, after a consideration of what mere nature suggests, must in a great measure be cleared up by the obvious sanction which Jesus Christ always gave to the doctrine of the Pharisees ; yet if we consider how apt even our understanding is to be clouded and perplexed by trying circumstances, we shall feel thankful that God has given us a proof which needs no chain of argument to render it complete ; one which carries its conclusion in itself, and leaves no room for perplexity.

But, next, if we consider the influence of the imagination, we shall see that this proof is not only adapted to our wants by its shortness and perspicuity, but that it is the very one which is most calculated to soothe and strengthen us. It gives us almost the evidence of experience that Death is the entrance on another state of existence ; and leaves on the mind a conviction as distinct from what any mere assurance could effect in us, as seeing is from mere knowing.

In the short history which is handed down to us

of Jesus Christ's converse with His disciples, after He had been exempted from the influence of death, we ourselves too see as it were beyond the tomb, and enjoy what may almost be called an intercourse with that ulterior state of things to which faith looks forward. Such are the blessings derived to us from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as regards our prospects of a future state. Nor are those fewer in number or of less importance through which it immediately affects our present condition.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the manner of His departure from among us, has not only shown to us, that He has overcome death, and opened the gate of everlasting life ; but by showing Himself to His disciples after His passage through the grave and gate of death, such as they had known Him before that great event ; by conversing with them, eating with them, and even suffering Himself to be handled by them ; and last of all, permitting them to witness the ascent into Heaven of that very form which they had been so familiar with upon earth ; He has taught us to lift our eyes to Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom.

The privilege which Christians enjoy in having such an object presented to their adoration, as the glorified Son of Man, the Eternal Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and of truth, is one which deserves fuller and more distinct considerations than the limits of this discourse would admit.

But what I would now more particularly dwell on, is the place which our Lord's Resurrection and subsequent history occupy among the means which God has provided for satisfying our religious affections.

Now, in this point of view, it seems one of those instances of gracious condescension to our weakness, of which so many present themselves in the history of God's dealing with us. For if we consider how great a practical influence imagination exerts over most men, and how almost entirely we are thrown upon it in our intercourse with Him that is Invisible, it will not appear inconceivable that God should have thought even imagination worthy to be enlisted in His service, and have made use of it in raising our affections from the grosser and more tangible pleasures that surround us. And if this be thought correct, it will readily be perceived how much that part of our Lord's converse with His disciples, which took place between His Resurrection and Ascension, tends to strengthen the hold which His human character is calculated to gain over us.

We are by this means informed that such as He was while He dwelt on earth, and was found in fashion as a Man, such He is still in His eternal and glorious kingdom now that His mortal has put on immortality; that though He is no longer conversant among us, still we have in Heaven a Great "High Priest," which can "be touched

with the feeling of our infirmities ;” a no less *real* object of affection, of awful love, than when He wept over the affliction of Martha, or absolved the disconsolate sinner who washed His feet with her tears. Nor does it seem unworthy of our serious thoughts, that during the period of which I am now speaking, our Lord was in the habit of appearing among His disciples in such a manner as to convince them of His personal and immediate superintendence, of the fact that still, as before His death, He took up His abode with them. For though this does in reality convey no new truth to us ; though independent of such knowledge nothing is wanting to the evidence “ that we are all of us, and at all times, in the presence and under the controul of our unseen Governor ;” still if human nature consist of any thing besides mere intellect, if consciousness is different from knowledge, and experience can add to the force of demonstration, that consolation cannot be frivolous or unworthy, which such assurances as I am speaking of are calculated to effect in us. The same Gracious Being, who conversed with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, is with us, and we know Him not, for our eyes are holden. He is with us not in a metaphor, but really and literally. . . .

3. FAITH.

[OUR Lord's] marked commendation [of the Centurion, " Verily, I have not found so great faith ; no, not in Israel "] necessarily attracts our attention to the occasion which called it forth. It cannot but be of great importance to us to know in what that faith consisted which Jesus Christ so approved of ; and to examine our own hearts, whether they more resemble that of this good centurion, or of the unbelieving Israelites.

And, in order to do this the more effectually, it may be of advantage to consider what is usually meant by the word Faith, as used in Scripture ; for in the ideas which we annex to this word, we are too apt to confine our views to a particular branch of it, and to regard some of the peculiarities of our faith as Christians, just as if they comprehended the whole duty, and constituted its very substance.

Faith, then, in that full signification in which it is used, when said to be a duty especially pleasing to God, and in which our Lord appears to use it in [this case of the centurion], implies a *belief* in God as the unseen Governor of the universe, and a *practical reliance* on His power and goodness.

Without belief, indeed, it is impossible that any reliance can exist; and so far it may justly be regarded as the first requisite of Faith. But the acting upon this belief, the practical reliance on God whom we acknowledge, is the part of this duty which is of so great importance, and in comparison of which the other is as nothing.

God may have servants equally faithful, with very unequal degrees of knowledge respecting His moral attributes, and very unequally convinced of the truth of what they believe. The thing that He requires and accepts from us is, that we regulate our lives according to the knowledge we have, and that we do not suffer any misgivings, however they may perplex us, to turn us aside from the course in which religion would direct us.

That this is a correct explanation of this very important word, we may convince ourselves by examining the way in which it is used in Scripture. Let us then look first at the great example of this virtue: The Father of the Faithful. What was it then in the conduct and character of Abraham, that earned for him this high praise? The question is answered by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promises. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God:" and further, "By faith, having received the promise, he offered up his only

begotten son, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead."

This then was the faith of Abraham ; nor is any thing said respecting him, which can lead us to suppose that any peculiar light had been vouchsafed to him respecting God's Mysterious Dispensations, or that his expectations of a future state were less vague and indefinite than those of his contemporaries. What we are told is simply this : he had so firm a trust in God's goodness, that he left his own country, and went out, not knowing whither he went ; in firm persuasion that, because God commanded him so to do, it must be best for him in the end ; and that when he was commanded to offer up Isaac, he was willing, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, to believe that God who had promised was able also to perform ; or, as the Apostle says of Moses, in the chapter which I am speaking of, " He endured as seeing Him who is Invisible."

In accordance with this view of Faith, we find it in the [passage which has led to these remarks] attributed to a heathen ; a Roman centurion, whose knowledge of God was probably nothing more than what natural religion would suggest. And the expressions which call forth our Lord's approbation are simply these : " Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof ; but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed : for I am a man under authority, having soldiers under

me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”

Such a declaration is indeed remarkable, but what we remark in it is, not so much the degree of religious knowledge which it implies, as the calm and rational reliance, which is expressed in it, on the power of Jesus Christ to execute whatever He thought proper. The faith of the centurion, was the practical confidence of one who had been accustomed to look on all things with just and serious feelings, and to collect, from all the ordinary affairs of life, whatever tended to throw light on the unseen government of the world. Instead of being puffed up with pride, at finding himself a man under authority, and at having servants to obey him, this only led him to reflect on that far higher authority which the Supreme Being must exercise over all His creatures, and on the ease with which such a Being might execute His will, by means of those invisible ministers, who doubtless attend on Him and await His commands.

And when he was once convinced that Jesus Christ was a teacher sent from God, and commissioned by Him to work miracles, it became easy to conceive how the mere will of such a Person might effect its purposes, nor did he look for any virtue that might go forth from His body if He came in person to perform the miracle: “Only speak the word, and my servant shall be healed.”

It was of this faith, then, that our Lord said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Simple as was the belief expressed, and obviously as it approves its truth to common sense, yet there was not one who acted in conformity with it; no, not in that nation, who for more than a thousand years had been disciplined in the knowledge of God's ways, and had been instructed by revelations from above.

Such a declaration may surprise us. We may imagine that the perverse dulness of the Jews was a vice from which we at least in this [age] are free; and that whatever may be our defects, we should, on this occasion, have acted like the centurion, and merited the approbation of Jesus Christ.

It shall be my object, then, in the rest of this sermon, to show how far this is from being a true view of the question, and how much more than we may suppose we resemble the Jews in their unbelief too, as well as the other charges that are laid against them.

The features of Jewish unbelief, in which we most resemble them, are those in which the faith of the centurion is most especially contrasted with theirs. I mean quietness and assurance:—that quietness which was contented with our Lord's only speaking the word, which called for no immediate manifestation of power, nor was anxious to inquire into the means by which the expected deliverance should be wrought; and that habitual assurance

which is akin to it, that practical reliance on the things not seen, which made religion such common sense to him, which taught him to recollect that, as he himself was a man under authority, and could say unto one man, Go, and to another, Come, much more could one who was commissioned by God, only by speaking the word, cause his servant to be healed.

In calling to your minds, therefore, how far we all fall short of this centurion's faith, and in holding up his example for our imitation, these will be the points to which I shall attend to; purposely omitting the many other characteristics of Saving Faith, such as humility, self-denial, charity, in which most of us are so lamentably deficient, but which are rather consequences of true Faith than part of it.

Let us consider then, whether there are not many things in the daily trials to which we ourselves are subjected, which may show us what our state of mind is, in these very respects, which our Lord thought worthy of such emphatic commendation, which may enable us to see, though under very different circumstances, how we should have acted in the situation of the centurion. Should we have been contented with our Lord's only speaking the word, and left Him in the full assurance that our servant was healed? The question may be answered by another: Has not our Lord, in words as plain as He could speak, spoken many things to us at this day, with which we are not contented,—of which

we do not feel sufficiently assured, to try steadily whether they are true or no?

To take an instance: Has not our Lord said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you;" and yet where is the man who can say, that this declaration is enough for him?

I do not mean to say that rejoicing and exceeding gladness are, under such circumstances, attainable by any one, or that the absence of it is not compatible even with the highest degree of Faith, but do we try to rejoice? Do we cling to the word of our Lord enough to acknowledge such dispensations as a blessing?

It is to be feared that in such cases we too often lose sight of God's gracious promise altogether, and are not able to keep in mind that those who treat us in such a wicked and unkind way are really His instruments for our good. . . .

4. LOVE.

ARE we not all of us too apt to be dazzled by a display of power and splendour, to feel envious of those who are above us in rank and wealth, and to indulge a wish to raise ourselves in the eyes of others by bettering our worldly circumstances, rather than in the eyes of God by elevating our character?

Neither is it in these points alone that our ways of thinking or judging bear witness against us. The persons that we look up to as brave and noble-spirited, are those who will not allow themselves to be treated with disrespect, who make others dread to do them injuries, and who assert their rights in the face of danger, and will not bow to the opposition even of their superiors. As long as a man is kind and charitable to his friends, and strictly honourable to his enemies, we admire him the more for that unbending disposition which answers scorn with scorn, and never suffers oppression to escape unpunished.

Clearly our Lord would have acted more in accordance with such views as these, if, when laid hands on by the servants of the High Priest, and the train that accompanied Judas, He had called

for the twelve legions of Angels who awaited His command. Or if He had made Pilate feel, what He only warned him of, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above." If we had been left to ourselves to conceive the sort of glory which would have been most suitable to the only begotten of the Father, we should have thought of the destruction of Sodom, and the terrors of Mount Sinai, and, [like the Jews], expected a mighty Prince, who should go forth conquering and to conquer.

Benevolence is an easy and pleasing duty, so long as we have to do with those who are sensible of the kindness shown them ; and perhaps there is no small portion of mankind, who, for the delight of enjoying the affection of their fellow-creatures, would be contented to forego great personal advantages and pleasures. Many there are who for this virtuous satisfaction would even face pain and danger, and in some instances even death itself. But in these cases, however disinterested such a notion may appear to be, and however those who so conduct themselves may deserve the love and admiration of their neighbours, yet this very love is itself a compensation, and one which to generous minds is the highest of all compensations.

If we would wish to know how far our heart is right with God, how far our benevolence is like that of Jesus Christ, we should consider in what manner we feel towards the ill-disposed, the

malicious, the ungrateful; and here the case is very different indeed. The unrequited toil of serving those who will not acknowledge the favours they receive, is the most wearying of all things; and though, as an effort of high principle, some are heroic enough to face it for a time, yet even if their temper is not at last overcome, mere fatigue is enough to slacken their exertions. So painful is such a service, that even a feeling of gratitude and obligation to the person who will not receive our effort to requite him, is scarcely sufficient to maintain our resolution. We excuse ourselves from repaying even what is due to such persons, unless we can by some single act (as it were) wipe out the debt, and release ourselves from the obligation. A single act, however painful, a single sacrifice, however great, would indeed under such circumstances be performed with alacrity. But the endless vexation of continued little annoyances, the joyless attempt to serve those who reject our services, is what would sometimes overcome the most elevated human patience, even in such a case as I am now supposing; and even supposing, in addition to the obligation we were under, we had a real respect for the character of the person who treated us with such austerity.

5. SELF-DISCIPLINE.

ONE reason for supposing that those who put off leading a godly life will find themselves most grievously disappointed in their expectation of finding it easy when they set about it [is this:] That in order to our leading a life such as God is pleased with, much knowledge is absolutely necessary, with which nothing but experience can furnish us; and that a person who sets to work late in life to reform his character, will find himself at a loss how to act in numberless occasions, even when it is his wish to do for the best; and that still oftener he will find himself taken unawares by temptation, and hurried into sin from not knowing the faults which he has to guard against, nor having observed the circumstances in which he is most likely to be misled.

Such a person, like one who takes late in life to a new art or trade, will find himself bewildered and awkward in a situation to which he has been so little accustomed; and even where he has sufficient strength to disregard what he wishes for, and to consult his conscience, he will have to waste time in thinking while others are acting; and after all his thought, will find, in nine cases out of ten,

that he is afterwards dissatisfied with what he has done.

This will be his situation even as respects the knowledge of his duty ; even here he will find that what he has put off the study of to the end of his life, could hardly have been learned properly by him if he had applied himself to it from the first.

But this is not the only reason for which he will have to regret the time he has wasted, and will wish, though in vain, to live his past life over again. He will not only find himself at a loss to know his duty, but even where he knows it ever so well, he will be utterly disinclined to do it. His thoughts and his wishes will not be in his own power ; he may struggle to govern and repress them, but they will be what they are. It will be no more in his power to wish and to think what is right, than it is for a man who has ruined his health by intemperance, to regain the activity and strength which he has lost, and lay aside the diseases he has contracted.

The occupation of charity and holiness is not one of those to which skill and knowledge alone are requisite, and which when once understood may be taken up and laid aside at pleasure. It is one which requires constant practice in order to fit us for engaging in it ; nor is it any more possible for a man to be charitable and religious by merely learning what he has to do and wishing to do it, than it is for a man to be a fast runner, or a strong wrestler, by knowing what quickness and strength

are, and wishing that he had them. A charitable and religious state of mind, like a strong and active state of body, is to be acquired by practice, and only by practice ; and he who puts off the attempt to acquire it with the intention to make up for his negligence at the last, is acting just as foolish a part as a man would who should think to prepare himself for running a race by spending the few last days in over-abstinence and violent exercise, instead of submitting to a long and regular training.

The comparison which I have just made is one which has been made by St. Paul, when he alludes to the training which people used to undergo in preparing for the Olympic games, to enforce on Christians the training they had need of in order to win the prize of their high calling. "He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things ; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

Such are the words of St. Paul, and it would be well for us if we laid them to heart in time ; yet it is evident that the generality of men do not lay them to heart, nor perhaps take the trouble even to understand their meaning. The attempt to train themselves from the first in habits of self-denial, seems to most men something strange and unnatural ; and the state of mind which is brought about by this early training, they do not even wish to attain to.

Purity and innocence of mind are, I fear, re-

garded by many persons as something pitiable and unmanly ; they feel a kind of superiority over those whose goodness seems to arise not from effort, but from simplicity and guilelessness, and think that little credit is due for acting right to persons to whom it does not occur to act wrong. Temperance and sobriety seem to many men more dignified when they proceed from a conviction that the opposite courses ought to be avoided, than from the want of any disposition to be intemperate and violent ; and thus they get to deceive themselves into the notion, that one step towards the most dignified sort of virtue is to know the real nature of sin by experience, and to congratulate themselves as on having got rid of a weakness by attaining to the knowledge of good and evil.

Now, it is very plain that this notion is opposed to the whole principles and to the express words of the Bible ; but these people get hardened by habit. They have been accustomed to hear them, and set them at nought, till at last they get to see but little meaning in them, and to assent to them with unaccountable indifference. . . .

6. COMPUNCTION.

THE question put to John the Baptist by those who came to him to be baptized, that they might flee from the wrath to come,—“What shall we do then,”—is one which must occasionally have occurred to every one of us, even to those who have given but little time to serious thought. There is something in our condition which even in spite of ourselves must render us occasionally uneasy and dissatisfied with the ways in which we occupy ourselves, and the objects which we pursue. God has not permitted us, whether we will or no, to find rest for our souls in those pursuits into which all of us are, more or less, seduced by thoughtlessness, or idleness, or love of pleasure. And though the gate is indeed wide, and the way broad, yet He has left many monuments for those who pass along it, that it is not the way that leadeth to life.

They who make it the great object of life to secure as much pleasure as they can, are sure from time to time to be reminded, that the occupation in which they are engaged is not that for which they were intended, and that however eagerly they toil for pleasure, they make no progress on the way towards happiness. They will have this lesson taught them,

both by their successes and their failures ; for in success they will rarely find enjoyment commensurate with their expectations, and in their failures they will have nothing to fall back on with satisfaction. And in these seasons of mortification or satiety, which the law of their nature entails on them, their hearts will be more accessible to thoughts which are usually excluded from them, the thought of God, and of the direction He has given us for securing happiness.

In this state of mind, the question “ What shall we do then ? ” must occasionally cross the mind even of the most careless.

But more frequently it will suggest itself to persons in an unsettled state of mind, who are endeavouring, but inconsistently, to improve themselves. And such persons constitute the great majority of the better sort of men. Persons in this condition are sure to find themselves frequently reminded how much they have to do before they can be acceptable in God’s sight ; and an anxiety to be very different from what they are, to escape (as it were) from their present selves, and acquire a different set of thoughts and feelings, will often render them restless and impatient.

Or it may be that we are rendered sensible of the worldly and irreligious characters of our tastes and notions, by being thrown into the company of some high-minded and holy person, who places his affections on things for which we have no relish,

and can go on persevering cheerfully in a way of life which to us seems unsupportably tedious even for a very short time.

Such opportunities for discovering our own deficiency are sure at times to occur to all of us ; and the painful consciousness which they will give rise to, can scarcely fail to suggest an eager wish that we were very different from what we are. Even the very best must feel this sometimes, and the generality of us must feel it constantly. It will attend, not only on the first steps of a religious life, but with more or less intermission will haunt us to the end. And the way to turn it to good account, to make that use of it for which God has made us susceptible of it, as it is of the last importance, so it is of no ordinary difficulty. It is the warning voice by which God directs us towards the strait gate and the narrow way. But they are few that obey it. The ways in which most men contrive to elude it are two ; despondency and excitement. They either give the thing up as hopeless, and indulge the notion that there is a sort of fate which prevents their character from being other than it is, or they try to find some short road to improvement, something to change them suddenly from what they are to what they wish to be.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS¹.

CAUSES OF THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF THE POETRY OF RUDE AGES¹.

It seems to be admitted, on all hands, that the best specimens of poetry, are those which have been handed down to us from rude ages.

The question is, whether we are to attribute this to *accident*, or to the *nature of the case*.

The arguments urged against the latter supposition are of this sort :

First [it may be said:]

1. Every other faculty of the human mind, attains its object better from an acquaintance with the degrees and causes of success which have attended the efforts of others in the pursuit of the same object.

2. The distinction which some have attempted

¹ [The Volume being so far advanced, the Essays, &c. are necessarily reserved for future publication.]

² [These remarks are thrown together, out of fragments written in Spring, 1826.]

to draw between the efforts of the Understanding and Genius in this respect is unfounded; the arts of Painting, Statuary, and Architecture, instead of being instances against the analogy, are very strong in its favour. Burke and Reynolds supposed that with respect to these, the attainment, as well as discrimination, of excellence depended on acquirement exclusively.

3. The real distinction is, that the Understanding pursues something which it does not know, by means which it does; while Genius endeavours to effect what it has a previous idea of, by means of which it has to ascertain the use. The first mathematician certainly had no notion of discovering the system of Newton, but he perfectly understood the *principles* on which [Newton] proceeded. The first artist may have had conceptions of ideal beauty from which he derived as great a pleasure as Phidias or Michael Angelo ever did; but he had no idea *how to communicate* these ideas to others. He had to draw something and be disgusted with it; he had to feel his way in the dark, and to stumble over a thousand errors, before he found the real expression which he wanted. It is probably true that fine feeling can neither be acquired nor cultivated; but it is certain that in many cases the means of gratifying it is discoverable only by study.

Secondly:

1. If the force of language is the means through which appeals are made to poetical feeling, it can

hardly be doubted that an acquaintance with the works of admired writers will be a great assistance to a poet. We do not discover intuitively how to express our ideas in the best possible way.

2. Besides, the degrees and occasions in which ornament is admissible, and the length to which metaphors may be carried with good effect, are things on which no single person's judgment can be perfectly relied on. They admit of a conventional standard of excellence, just as much as the analogous qualities in the arts.

3. It is ridiculous to assert, that, because, as civilization advances, scientific and abstract terms are introduced into our vocabulary, therefore a poet is cut off from using those simple and vivid words which previously existed, and condemned to adopt, as his exclusive language, what is intended merely for a supplementary addition.

The conclusion is, that, though we allow the taste for poetry not to admit of cultivation, yet the means of gratifying it certainly do, *supposing the means to be the intrinsic force of language.*

In these last words lies the $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ of the argument.

For first :

1. The intrinsic force of language is an almost evanescent quantity in appeals to feeling. It is neither the vividness of words, nor the force of metaphors, nor the beauty of similes, that can excite

the acute delight, which we feel when we imagine we are talking to a person who sympathises with us.

2. It makes no matter how we become certified of his sympathy; whether by the internal evidence contained in what he says, or by our general and independent impressions of his character.

3. Every day's experience may convince us of this, if we contrast the effects of brilliant conversation, with those of sympathy and friendship. So that if we can obtain any independent knowledge of a poet's character, either from any thing we know of his history, or from the general tenour of his writings, it is no weakness to let it increase or diminish the pleasure we feel from any passage or expression which we meet with.

4. They know very little of the delights of poetry who are determined not to think upon the character of the poet¹.

5. Language is no farther the instrument of poetry than it is the index of feeling.

But, secondly, in this respect it is easy to see that the language of a rude people must be very superior to that of a refined.

1. While civilization offers advantages to men of taste and feeling, it creates the *appearances* of these qualities where they do not exist. It supplies the

¹ [May not *nature* be considered the speaker, (as when Scripture speaks of the "whole creation travailing together,") and thus the character of the individual, if unpleasant, dropped?]

place of one by acquired knowledge, and enables false talent to imitate the effect of the other ¹.

2. We can no longer trust our first impressions about any writing whatever; it is only by attention that we can distinguish the true from the counterfeit; and it requires very unusual discernment and acuteness to do this with accuracy even after great attention.

3. The consequence is that people have no confidence in modern publications; they cannot look upon the poet as a friend; and take for granted he does not mean what he says. Writings of modern days *may* have originated in feelings as fine as those of Homer, but we cannot be certain that they *have*. It is indeed conceivable that some sentiments should carry with them a self-evident genuineness, but such as these can hardly be of frequent occurrence.

4. But in the effusions of uncultivated minds, there is a sort of *transparency* in every word; and we can trace the genuine emotions of the heart in every epithet and simile.

5. There is just the same sort of difference between the poems of dark ages, however rude, and the highest flights of modern genius, as between the caves of Elephanta, or the Pyramids, and the interior of St. Paul's. [The former are works] of forgotten time, which affect us only through the feel-

¹ [Hence a school-boy might write better lines than Virgil's in his own style, and yet not be a poet as Virgil.]

ings in which they originated. It is in these alone that we discover the genuine effects of a desire to associate beautiful forms with religious worship, or trace that great though dismal feeling, "with which kings and princes of the earth build desolate places for themselves." The same account is to be given of those very wild and dreamy feelings which Gothic buildings so peculiarly excite, and which make them so much more interesting than magnificent erections of later days. Sir C. Wren may possibly have enjoyed all the deep poetical feelings of the ancient architects; but we see in him only the judicious imitator of St. Peter's, and the improver on the designs of Michael Angelo, who was himself also merely an improver of his predecessors.

It seems clear, then, that refinement and civilization have no tendency to improve the language of poetry; but that by making the power of expression into a science, they destroy its effects as an index of the feelings.

6. But there is another effect of refinement, which not only destroys the presumption that the feelings expressed by the refined poet are genuine, but amount to a positive presumption to the contrary. Rude people have not learned to speculate on the nature of their affections, or to observe the peculiarities of their own emotions towards any object which is presented to them. They feel, and suppose their feelings to be natural; they have no motive either to display their sentiments from the

hope of being admired, or to conceal them out of disgust at those who do so. Where people have not yet learned to display, there will be no such thing as reserve. For this reason, it is as natural in Homer to express all the melancholy beautiful feelings of his mind, just as much as any other feelings whatever. He saw no peculiarity in these, and expected no admiration from them. But in the present age we must have some strong evidence that a poet had no wish to obtain fame for these parts of his writings, before we can give any credit to their genuineness; else we look on them like a Pharisee praying in the street corner¹. . . .

The beauty of works of imagination may arise from either of two causes, the power with which *Illusion* is produced, or the beauty of the *Objects* it presents to us.

At first sight there appears no reason why these should be disjoined, why the first might not be subsidiary to the second, and powers of *Illusion* be exerted to the utmost in presenting to us the most beautiful *Objects*.

But, in fact, we find these beauties always distinct. The subjects on which *Illusion* has been most successfully attempted are by no means the most beautiful; and those on which we dwell with

¹ [The bearing of all that is here said on morals and religion should be observed. St. Paul displays feelings which religious men now hide, as Homer is undisguised where Virgil is reserved.]

the greatest delight, are presented to us without any attempt at Illusion at all. It is through the means of remote associations, sometimes implied in single words, and generally in insulated expressions, that we are sensible of receiving the highest imaginative delight; while the feelings, in aid of which the artifices of Illusion are most successfully adopted, are rather violent and exciting, than such as we can dwell on with permanent satisfaction. The reason is, that all who are susceptible of the high pleasures of the imagination are ready to take the slightest hint, and to do all the rest for themselves. The idea is not enforced by being put in a clearer light; the fairy imagery is already conjured up before their eyes by sympathy of feeling.

It would be a gross abuse of terms to call this Illusion, in the same sense, as when, by the artifices of fine writing, an image is presented to our mind without any assistance of our own, which rivets our attention involuntarily, and keeps all our feelings in suspense. . . .

In order to believe any one is writing from his feelings, it is necessary, not so much that his words should be *descriptive* of those feelings as *indicative* of them. This is not the same thing. When Hamlet is talking nonsense to the grave-diggers, or calls the Ghost "old mole," we annex to his words a depth of feeling, which, so far from describing, he is endeavouring to conceal. Indeed this may be said of almost every word and action

which is given to that most astonishing character. Are there any feelings to which splendour and perfection of language are contradictory? and are these more likely to be developed in a rude or a refined age? Even supposing the Theory of Reserve to be visionary, and that there is no presumption against a person feeling what he writes, to be drawn from his having written for fame in a refined age, still, in order that a work should gain any tolerable success, it is necessary to satisfy a sort of splendid excitement, which exists to so great a degree at the present time, and which seems the natural consequence, rather than an accidental peculiarity, of a cultivated state of society. And this circumstance is, of itself, a very great impediment to the expression of those feelings in which we are most inclined to sympathize from the heart. . . .

In order to the attainment of this much courted distinction, [of being admired universally,] the feelings of the generality must be excited, or the fashionable cant of criticism complied with.

Now the means of accomplishing this among a rude people is evidently much less destructive of the true character of poetry, than that which must be adopted in any other state of society.

For though there is no good reason to believe that the average of mankind is more poetical at one period than another, or that external circumstances can contribute, in any material degree, either to the repressing or developing feelings of this nature,

it is quite clear that all the habits and associations of a wild and romantic people would tend to make the same sort of things exciting to one class of people as were poetical to the other. And the undisguised manner in which even the kings and heroes gave way to the feelings of the heart, and exposed what would now be considered the weaknesses of their character, made such people as Ajax and Achilles, objects equally for the melancholy of the poet, and the emulation of the soldier. And that constant familiarity with danger, under its most fascinating shapes, among the haunts of wild beasts and the grandest scenes of nature, which necessarily arose out of their manner of life, would make the same imagery productive of excitement and animation, which is most congenial to the true spirit of poetry. "They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."

The effect of this is, that through the works of Homer the true spirit of poetry is hardly ever compromised. He was not necessitated to affect the feelings of others, in order to excite their interest; nor had he any reason to dissemble his own for fear they should not meet with sympathy. And the consequence is, that in every part of his writings we trace that extraordinary mixture of natural animation and unaffected melancholy, which does not seem discoverable in any other writings in the world.

[Moreover,] it is a great mistake to fancy that the pleasure we derive from Homer comes from the same source as that from which most of his contemporaries [derived it], and those who lived just long enough after the things he relates, to have an intimate, yet half superstitious, interest in them, to recognize the exploits of those whom the aged still remembered and talked of with wonder, to hear occasional stories of their own families, (which seems the reason he so often introduces little scraps of family history, to us quite uninteresting, and about people he only mentions once,) to wonder with half belief at the introduction of the gods, to have their emulation excited by deeds of valour, which Homer generally brings home to their minds in similes, by illustrations from hunting, sailing, and other dangerous occupations, in which all had probably been engaged. All his deeper beauties seem to be dropped, as it were, by accident, ἐν παρήργῃ; not to have been intended to give pleasure to his hearers, or gain admiration for himself, but to be put down just because they occurred to his mind naturally, and came in of their own accord. He never enlarges upon them, but just drops an expression which shows what is passing in his mind. This is what makes him so delightful.

But the advantage he had in this respect will be put in a clearer light, by tracing the baleful influence of the alteration of circumstances through the works of Virgil and Milton.

There is a peculiarity in the works of Virgil, which fits them beyond those of any other writer, to illustrate the consequences of the bad taste of the age in which he lived. Perhaps his is the only poetry of which the defects are to be attributed entirely to this, and where the poet stands so fully acquitted of having participated in them, that we do not lose any part of our confidence in the genuineness of beauties which we discover on account of the [inferior matter] with which they are mixed. There is certainly enough in his writings to justify the idea that he had comparatively pure ideas of a Moral Providence, and that in the works of nature, he viewed the hand of an Invisible Power; that in mankind he recognized a fallen and ill-fated race, and sought, among the picturesque scenes of nature and the haunts of the irrational creation, that rest and quietness which the world could not afford him. But what gives such a peculiar force and interest to all the traces of this feeling which we meet with, is the certainty that he did not intend to display them; that they were not the features of his mind by which he expected to excite the admiration of his readers, or acquire for himself the name of Poet. If he had wished to proclaim them to the world, the common artifice of poets was open to him; he had a hero in whom, if he wished, he might have personified himself, and deities to whom he might have ascribed any attribute he pleased; he was not compelled to adopt the mythology of Homer, which he laughed

at, nor to construct his great character on those theoretical principles of heroism, which seem chiefly to have consisted in divesting him of all the attributes of humanity. Nor was there, as far as we can see, any cogent necessity that he should select a story so peculiarly unsuited to his turn of mind, as the succession of rapine, seduction, war, and murder, which constitutes the very miserable substratum of the work on which his fame was to go down to posterity. Surely he was writing for a people who had no sentiments in common with his own, whose admiration he did not court, and whose judgment he did not value.

The whole of his poetry suggests the idea of his having undertaken, at the request of his great patron and friend, a work which he had himself no anxiety to perform; and that conscious of the unsuitableness of his own feelings to those which were the fashion of the times, he wished to conceal them entirely by a close imitation of his predecessors.²

[As to Milton,] it is not perhaps too much to say, that [his] was the most powerful [mind] which ever applied itself to Poetry. The mind of Milton had exerted itself in an endeavour to unite, what

¹ [It was the Author's notion that Horace and others used to (what is now called) *patronize* Virgil, as a man who really had a great deal in him; but who, the pity was, would not conform himself to the habits of society, and so lost opportunities of influence, &c. &c. So they set him upon the *Æneid* to make something of him.]

it is the fashion to call grand poetry with religious feeling. Milton felt that in order to attain any great and lasting reputation in a state of society, where mental cultivation had reached so high a pitch as it had in his day, a work must display deep learning and high intellectual powers; and he probably judged rightly, that such a work as *Paradise Lost* was calculated to display both in the highest possible degree. He constructed it on what are considered to be the theoretical principles of Poetry, and manifested in all his images and allusions, an intimate acquaintance with all those writers to whom the [consent] of ages had assigned the name of Poets. And he made this display of learning¹ the vehicle for giving to the world fully and directly what other Poets had only done by remote and casual allusions, an account of the interference of God in the affairs of men. It is probably only after a deep study of the subject on which he enters, that any one can fully appreciate the immense intellectual power which this work is said to indicate. But it is very easy for any common person to judge how far he has succeeded in exciting any of that beautiful and silent delight, which is the real effect of religious poetry; how far the attempt to introduce the invisible agencies of the other world as characters acting in an epic poem, to supply an invented account of any part of the unknown

¹ ["Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, Pope for want of genius, *Milton out of pride*, and Addison out of modesty."—Warburton, in Johnson's *Life of Pope*.]

scheme of the moral universe, to assign a place for the residence of its Omnipresent Governor, to ascribe a sensible glory to His Spiritual Essence, is consistent with the mysterious and indistinct idea of Himself which that Great Being has impressed on our imagination, an idea which, if it excite any one feeling in us more powerfully than another, makes us shrink back from contemplating it with silent awe, and dread to pollute its sanctity by too close inspection. All this is true, even with regard to the God of Natural Religion, and was felt by the heathen world; ἄς τρέμομεν λέγειν, ἄς παραμειβόμεσθ' ἀδέρκτως, ἀφώνως, was the sentiment which Sophocles thought suitable to the relation of man to God. What is very curious, Milton was himself aware of this, and in the most absurd of all contradictions, makes even an Angel hesitate to reveal what he himself does not scruple to invent.

Surely, it is only when we can abstract our thoughts entirely from the author, and forget the unhallowed arrogance which could exercise its invention on such sacred subjects, that *Paradise Lost* can be considered as good poetry, as a well-directed appeal to the fine feelings of the mind. In this point of view it is about as much like the *Psalms* of David, or even those gleams of rich piety which occasionally burst upon us in some heathen poets, as the wan unwarming ray of moonlight to the sun bursting through a cloud.

I have purposely avoided touching on any of

those defects which arose merely from the peculiarity of Milton's mind, the unspirituality of his notions of heavenly happiness, the paltry petulance which he mistook for the calm equanimity of virtue, and confined myself to those exclusively which seem to have arisen from the subject he undertook, and the nature of the reward he proposed to himself¹.

¹ [If the following statement is true, it both accounts for these defects in Milton's Poem, and makes it no presumption to give utterance to severe remarks upon them. "What Baudius says of Erasmus, seems applicable [in religious matters] to him [Milton,] 'magis habuit quod fugeret quam quod sequeretur.' He had determined rather what to condemn than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants; we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the Church of Rome, he was not of the Church of England. To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and re-impressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet *grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary or with his household; omitting public prayers, he omitted all.*"—Johnson's Lives. It must be added, that the lately discovered work of Milton negatives Johnson's testimony to his orthodoxy. He there maintains that the Son and Spirit are creatures, and advocates not only divorce but polygamy.

It may be a painful satisfaction to the reader to peruse the following extracts from the work in question, his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*. They are made from the Bishop of Winchester's Translation.

“ I cannot enter upon subjects of so much difficulty as the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, without again premising a few introductory words. If, indeed, I were a member of the Church of Rome, which requires implicit obedience to its creed in all points of faith, I should have acquiesced from education or habit in its simple decree and authority, even though it denies that the doctrine of the Trinity, as now received, is capable of being proved from any passage of Scripture. But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the Word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears to me much more clearly deducible from the Holy Scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why any one who belongs to the same Protestant or Reformed Church, and professes to acknowledge the same rule of faith as myself, should take offence at my freedom, particularly as I impose my authority on no one, but merely propose what I think more worthy of belief than the creed in general acceptance. I only intreat that my readers will ponder and examine my statements in a spirit which desires to discover nothing but the truth, and with a mind free from prejudices. For, without intending to oppose the authority of Scripture, which I consider inviolably sacred, I only take upon myself to refute human interpretations as often as the occasion requires, conformably to my right, or rather to my duty as a man.”—Ch. v. pp. 80, 81.

“ ‘ The Word was with God, and was God,’ namely, because He was with God, that is, in the bosom of the Father, as it is expressed v. 18. Does it follow therefore that He is essentially one with Him with whom He was? It no more follows, than that the disciple ‘ who was lying on Jesus’ breast,’ John xiii. 23, was essentially one with Christ. Reason rejects the doctrine; Scripture nowhere asserts it; let us therefore abandon human devices, and follow the Evangelist himself, who is his

own interpreter. Rev. xix. 13. 'His name is called the Word of God,'—that is, of the One God; He Himself is a distinct person. If, therefore, He be a distinct Person, He is distinct from God, who is unity. How then is He Himself also God? By the same right as He enjoys the titles of the Word, or of the Only Begotten Son, namely, by the will of the One God. . . . Another passage is the speech of Thomas, John xx. 28, 'My Lord and My God.' He must have an immoderate share of credulity, who attempts to elicit a new confession of faith, unknown to the rest of the disciples, from this abrupt exclamation of the Apostle, who invokes in his surprise not only Christ, his own Lord, but the God of His ancestors, namely, God the Father; as if he had said, Lord, what do I see? what do I hear? what do I handle with my hands? He whom Thomas is supposed to call God in this passage, had acknowledged respecting Himself, not long before, v. 17, 'I ascend unto My God and your God.' Now the God of God cannot be essentially one with Him whose God He is." Ibid. pp. 111, 112.

"Lest however we should be altogether ignorant who or what the Holy Spirit is, although Scripture nowhere teaches us in express terms, it may be collected from the passages quoted above, that the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as He is a minister of God, and therefore a creature, was created or produced of the substance of God, not by a natural necessity, but by the free will of the agent, probably before the foundations of the world were laid, but later than the Son, and far inferior to Him." Ch. vi. p. 171.

"Marriage, by its definition, is an union of the most intimate nature, but not indissoluble or indivisible, as some contend, on the ground of its being subjoined, Matt. xix. 5. 'They two shall be one flesh.' . . . Great stress, however, is laid upon an expression in the next verse; 'What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' What it is that God has joined together, the institution of marriage itself declares; God has joined only what admits of union, what is suitable, what is good, what is honourable; he has not made provision for un-

natural and monstrous associations, pregnant only with dishonour, with misery, with hatred, and with calamity. It is not God who forms such unions, but violence, or rashness, or error, or the influence of some evil genius." Ch. x. pp. 246, 247.

"It is only enjoined that Elders and Deacons should be chosen from such as were husbands of one wife. 1 Tim. iii. 2. and Tit. i. 6. This implies, not that to be the husband of more than one wife would be sin, for in that case the restriction would have been equally enforced on all; but that in proportion as they were less entangled in domestic affairs, they would be more at leisure for the business of the Church. Since, therefore, Polygamy is interdicted in this passage to the ministers of the Church alone, and that not on account of any sinfulness in the practice, and since none of the other members are excluded from it here or elsewhere, it follows that it was permitted, as above said, to all the remaining members of the Church, and that it was adopted by many without offence." Ibid. pp. 240, 241.

"First, that under the Gospel no one day is appointed for divine worship in preference to another, except such as the Church may set apart of its own authority for the voluntary assembling of its members, wherein, relinquishing all worldly affairs, we may dedicate ourselves wholly to religious services, so far as is consistent with the duties of charity; and, secondly, that this may conveniently take place once every seven days, and particularly on the first day of the week; provided always that it be observed in compliance with the authority of the Church, and not in obedience to the edicts of the magistrate."—Ch. vii. pp. 610, 611.]

CONSIDERATIONS¹

RESPECTING

THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF ENCOURAGING
MATHEMATICS IN OXFORD.

THE following considerations have been suggested by conversations of last and the preceding Term, respecting the projected changes in the Examination Statute. Their immediate object is to point out how the rewards of the University may be best applied to the encouragement of Mathematical Study; but in order to make himself understood, the writer has found it necessary to say something on the general principles on which these rewards should be assigned.

It appears, then, that there are two distinct ends to be answered by academical distinctions; viz. the direction of education, and the advancement of knowledge.

The first end is to be effected by those distinctions which are assigned to a *balance of attainments*, such as is judged most improving to *the mind of the student*. The second, by those which reward some *single attainment* that may promote the *interests of literature or science*. These ends are to a certain

¹ [Published at Oxford, in the Spring of 1830.]

extent inconsistent with one another, since a reward for any single attainment is in fact a bounty on disarranging the best adjusted balance of attainments. They are not, however, absolutely incompatible, since the quickness of some men, and the peculiar turn of mind of others, may enable them to attend especially to some particular branch of knowledge, while at the same time they do not neglect the prescribed course of education. And these cases, as they frequently occur, seem to justify or even require some provision for them.

Now both these ends are in some degree contemplated in the system of this University. The honours of the Schools are evidently intended to direct education, the prizes and scholarships to promote particular attainments. Neither, indeed, are adequate to effect their purpose, but still their general scope is sufficiently intelligible ; and by keeping in sight the distinction between them, we may simplify many of the questions which have lately divided the members of Convocation.

One question which has been much debated relates to the principle on which the names of successful candidates for honours should be arranged. One party maintain, that unless they are arranged in order of merit, no adequate stimulus is given to exertion. The other, that where we can obtain only a rough estimate of merit, no more than a rough principle of classification should be adopted ; and that even superior attainment is not worth

purchasing by the diseased stimulus of rivalry. Now it would follow from what has been said, that a list of distinguished competitors for scholarships both can be, and ought to be arranged in order of merit; because, since their *attainments* in a *particular* subject are the things to be compared, their respective claims may be decided even with nicety; and since the advancement of knowledge is the sole object to be promoted, no stimulus, provided it be innocent, will in reason be disregarded. On the contrary, for those who obtain honours in the Schools, such a classification would be both futile and injurious; for in this instance we have to compare, not *particular* attainments, but *general* mental improvement, of which no examination can afford more than a rough test. And again, we are to consider, not the interest of knowledge, but of the students; and therefore should make use of such incitements, not as much as is possible, but as little as is necessary.

Another subject of dissension is the comparative advantage of oral and written examinations. Now it seems that the first of these methods must be of material use in judging of the men themselves; but a mere incumbrance in comparing their attainments.

Again, it has been thought by one set of persons, that a *separate* class list should be appropriated to each of the subjects which are considered of importance, as Science, History, Scholarship. Others,

on the contrary, have thought that the present *twofold* classification is inexpedient, and that we had better revert to the original system of 1801. Now according to the view which has been taken, the purpose proposed by the first set of persons ought to be effected by the multiplication of scholarships; whereas the introduction of their system into the Schools would be attended with all the ill consequences which the others anticipate. For it would be impossible to raise the standard in *each department* high enough to make a first class respectable, without rendering it hopeless to attain this distinction in *all*; and thus men would actually be diverted from a wholesome, gentlemanlike education, and driven, as is the case at Cambridge, to narrow and confined studies. Of the other opinion more will be said in the sequel.

Lastly, it will readily be seen, that while the honours of the Schools should be confined to those who are concluding their career, and should be regarded as the termination of academical discipline, the scholarships should be open to the competition of all students on their first admission to the University; because the exclusion of junior members is at best an unmeaning restriction, unless it has reference to the regulation of their general pursuits.

In applying the foregoing observations, as was proposed, to the particular case of Mathematics, the writer is happy to find part of his subject preoccu-

pied by the judicious and well-timed pamphlet of Mr. Saunders. The institution of scholarships, which that pamphlet recommends, for the encouragement of Mathematics, “as a distinct and independent study,” is not only desirable on its own account, but because, as Mr. Saunders observes, it would relieve the examiners of the schools from a very perplexing dilemma; they would no longer be called on to adjust the discordant claims of Mathematics as a science, and Mathematics as an instrument of education; but when the former was otherwise provided for, they might bestow undivided attention on the latter.

The distinction on which this remark is founded may, perhaps, appear fanciful; it is of importance, however, from this circumstance, *viz.* that there are two distinct branches of mathematical study, respectively adapted to one or other of these two purposes. The modern system is alone adapted to the advancement of science, but in many respects is less suited than the ancient system to the purposes of education. One of the defects of the modern Mathematics in this respect, consists in the technicality of its introductory studies. The first step towards future proficiency being, not accurate grounding in principles, but dexterity in the application of certain formulæ; dexterity exactly like that of a banker’s clerk in arithmetic, or a sailor in astronomy. Again, even in the more advanced investigations of this department, little scope for

ingenuity is left to the student, the tools with which he is to work are put into his hands ready prepared, and the track which he is to pursue is so clearly marked out for him, that all he has to do is to go straight forward, only taking care "that his machinery does not get out of gear." Nay, this method, in the generality of cases, does not even carry the mind on with it; it makes most persons feel that they are working blindfold; and the subsequent reflection necessary, in order to see how we have been brought to our conclusion, is what few are willing to bestow. On the other hand, the ancient Mathematics are free from these defects; they differ from the modern, as the method of discovery in other cases differs from the method of teaching. They are more cumbrous and indirect; but as they point out the steps which first led the way to truth, so they generally enable us to see our way before us, and in a degree to anticipate our conclusions. In short, to use a phrase of the day, they tend "to open the mind," however rough and incomplete are the results to which they lead.

If then, as was just now assumed, the Mathematics of the Scholarships, and the Mathematics of the Schools may fairly be considered independent, we need not perplex our arrangements by endeavouring to make each contribute to the purposes of the other; and this will farther lead us to two practical inferences. First, that the scholarships should be open to Under-graduates from their

matriculation. Secondly, that in the arrangement of the class list we should revert to the system of 1801; that we should regard the ancient Mathematics as a branch of “*Literæ Humaniores*,” and including it as one element of the General Examination, assign to each candidate his place in the class list, with a reference to his mental progress as a whole.

1. The first of these arrangements is suggested by the very intention of the scholarships, which is inconsistent with each of the two reasons for which Under-graduates could be excluded. Such exclusion might be intended either to deter men from attending to Mathematics till their other studies were completed, or to prevent their attaining their object too soon, and so relaxing their exertions. But the first of these objects is incompatible with the interests of science, for which alone the scholarships are intended; and the latter is quite irrelevant, having reference entirely to education. But farther, in the present state of Oxford Mathematics, this restriction would materially narrow the field of competition; since the attainments of our senior students are seldom such as to insure the failure of their juniors. And even if we look forward to indefinite improvement in this respect, still it will be always possible that some man of genius may attain pre-eminence early, and it is desirable to have the power of marking his case by early distinction.

2. The second of the arrangements proposed is of much greater importance. For,

In the first place, the present double arrangement of the class list is to be regarded as a *deviation* from the original system; it was an expedient adopted in 1807, for the encouragement of Mathematics as a science; it has not been found to answer this purpose, and a better expedient seems likely to be substituted for it; the natural course then is to revert to the system as at first arranged.

Next, the deviation is not an innocent one, for in theory it gives Mathematics an undue preponderance among the branches of education, making it singly equivalent to all the others; and in practice it is attended with the opposite evils of leading some men to give disproportionate attention to this study; while it causes the generality to neglect it altogether. These two statements are easily made out by referring to the University Calendar: we see, in the first place, that out of 103 men who, in the last ten years, have obtained the first classical distinction, only twenty-three are mentioned at all in the Mathematical list. Of these it is curious to observe that twenty obtained the first class; which shows how very little is effected by the inferior Mathematical distinctions. Again, of the remaining fifty-four who in the same time gained the highest honour in Mathematics, twenty-five obtained no classical distinction at all.

So that the present distribution of honours in

the Schools, so far from directing education; appears to divert it from its natural course; it opens the first class alike to men who neglect Mathematics for other studies, and other studies for Mathematics; and, with unhappy want of foresight, leaves each to pay most attention to the branch which he likes best, and therefore needs least.

These evils the proposed alteration is calculated to remedy; and it will be observed, that their reality and extent is independent of any such distinction as has been drawn between ancient and modern Mathematics. This may or may not be deemed subtle and refined, without affecting the necessity of such a change as shall give some Mathematics or other a part in education.

In conclusion, supposing it admitted that some portion of Mathematics should be introduced into the General Examination; a question may still arise as to the stress which should be laid on it. Of this persons will judge differently, as they attach more or less importance to the discipline of mind it affords; on such a point each of course will trust his own experience. The writer's belief is, that most persons engaged in education have had occasion to regret, in many of their pupils, a disinclination to these studies, which they had no means of overcoming; and he feels no doubt that the supposed incapacity for Mathematics in persons highly qualified for most other studies, is in reality little better than a fancy. With these impressions, he

would wish to see the first six books of Euclid considered indispensable to a first class; and would regard high attainments in the philosophy of Mathematics, just in the same light as great proficiency in logic or history.

A difficulty will of course suggest itself as to the selection of Examining Masters, which obviously arises from the bad system we have hitherto pursued; for in consequence of the disconnection between Mathematics and Classics, which has so long prevailed, we find very few persons at once qualified to judge of proficiency in both. Yet it will be observed, that this difficulty is of a temporary nature, and only partial extent. There are very few persons of any attainment who do not understand the six books of Euclid; and there is generally one at least on the board of Examiners who could appreciate much greater proficiency. So that Mathematical merit, even at present, would be liable to no other disparagement, than that which any other merit is occasionally exposed to, when it happens to be drawn out by an incompetent Examiner.

But to say more on a point of detail such as this, does not fall within the range of these considerations. Their object will have been sufficiently answered, if they assist the discussion of the two points, which have been principally dwelt on, viz: The expediency of opening the scholarships to *all* Under-graduates: and of acknowledging Mathematics as a constituent subject of the General Examination.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE¹.

PART I.

IT is well known, that previous to the introduction of the arch, the leading features of ornamental architecture exhibited a very remarkable similarity. In the caves of Elephanta, and the temples of Upper Egypt, we may discover almost all the leading characteristics of the classical remains in Greece

¹ [These remarks on the history of the pointed arch, which are reprinted from the *British Magazine* of 1832, 1833, were originally read at one of the meetings of the Oxford Ashmolean Society on April 22, 1831, before the Author had met with Mr. Whewell's observations on the same subject, in his "Architectural Notes, &c." As both writers professedly derive their theory from the same source, (*Archæol.* vol. xvii. Art. 1.) there is of course much similarity of view between them. The principal differences are these: that the writer of these pages assumes without remark Mr. Saunders's opinion that Canterbury Cathedral was the first English building in which the pointed arch was used, which Mr. Whewell in a note, page 39, (ed. 2.) condemns as untenable; and that he derives it and the groinings from the *unskilful attempts of Gothic architects to imitate skilful Roman models*, but Mr. W. *from an inability common to them and the Romans to construct the vaulting formed by the intersection of a cylinder and cylindroid*. Mr. W. accordingly has been obliged to modify his theory, p. xxi. (ed. 2.) on finding that "this problem had been solved by the Roman masons," a fact of which the Author was perfectly aware, and mentions, as in no way interfering with his hypothesis.]

and Sicily. The column, the capital, the architrave, and the cornice, appear very unequivocally in these early and curious relics ; and the modifications which the different features afterwards underwent, are little more than what might be expected from the united influence of economy and skill ; the one transferring men's attention from the magnitude of the materials to the quality of the workmanship ; the other inducing them to seek for the greatest effect with the least expense of labour. Thus, in the progress of the art, we find the shaft of the columns gradually lengthened, and the capitals and cornices more elaborately worked ; but no form was introduced which could claim to be a decided novelty.

Now, when we consider how remote from one another in time and situation were the persons in whose designs we trace such uniformity, it is inconceivable that an arrangement so universally adopted can have been merely arbitrary. It must in some way approve itself to uninstructed taste, from an inherent propriety,—a propriety belonging to it, not in common with other imaginable arrangements from which it has been selected, but as its distinguishing feature. And thus the respect we owe to such a composition as the Parthenon, cannot fairly be measured by the impression it produces on our own minds. Its claims on our admiration are, not only what we feel them to be, very great, but in a manner exclusive. We see in it the perfection of a very ancient system—the most

polished specimen of an arrangement, which, as far as experience goes, may be called *the* natural one.

It was not till after this high refinement had been attained in the ancient style, that the principle of the arch was discovered. Here, then, a new element was all at once introduced, just at the time when its introduction seemed precluded. Every thing had been settled without reference to it. What place remained for it to occupy in a system which had been completed?

It will be the object of the following remarks to trace the process by which this introduction was effected, and the modifications which the previous arrangement underwent, as the arch gradually found its proper place, and was at last completely blended with the architectural system.

It is obvious, at first sight, that such modifications must be very considerable, and that, under the most favourable circumstances, to effect them must be a work of time. As a matter of fact, they were not perfected in less than twelve centuries, dating from the first application of the arch on a large scale at Rome, to the time when it assumed its proper place in architecture in Salisbury cathedral. However, we must not suppose that the process of adjustment occupied the whole of this period. The interval between the Augustan and dark ages may be considered as entirely lost in a hopeless attempt, which led to no results. The time from which the beginning of a new system

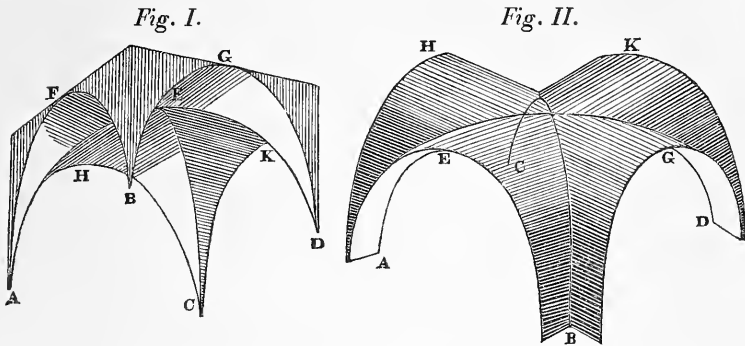
should be dated, is the latter end of the ninth century, when the crypt of St. Peter's church, Oxford, was built by Grimbald ; and it is from that time that we shall attempt to trace its development.

But, first, it may be as well to mention some of the peculiarities of the early arched buildings in Rome, and to point out the ease and simplicity with which they met the difficulties which the architects of the middle ages were so much perplexed to evade. By-and-by it will be our endeavour to show how these difficulties operated in suggesting the peculiarities of the Gothic style.

We may observe, then, that it was the object of the Roman architects to avail themselves of the great additional power with which the arch furnished them in extending their *general* designs, and yet to preserve the *details* of the Grecian system. To effect this amalgamation of new and old principles was their constant effort ; but their success does not appear to have been progressive ; they arrived almost immediately at that sufferable mediocrity which they never passed ; and they have left us nothing to admire but the size of their works, and the dexterity of their execution.

These remarks will be illustrated in those singular structures, the Temple of Peace and the Baths of Diocletian ; and of these it will be necessary to give a somewhat minute description, with a view to contrasting them by-and-by with the happily unsuccessful imitations of after times. First, then,

the reader must be at the trouble to impress upon his mind the form resulting from the intersection of two equal cylinders, whose axes cut one another at right angles; of this form, and others which are akin to it, we shall have frequent occasion to speak in the sequel; and by describing it here, we shall consult expedition as well as clearness.



The above figures will convey some idea of its appearance,—*Fig. I.* on the concave surface, *Fig. II.* on the convex.

It will be observed, that the points A, B, C, D, stand in the four corners of a square, and that three distinct arches spring from each; from B, for instance, there spring the arches B F A, B G D, B E C; of these B F A, B G D, are semicircles, being direct sections of the two intersecting cylinders. But B E C being an oblique section, is an ellipse, of which the long axis equals the diagonal of the square A B C D, and the short axis its side. This elliptic arch is the line in which the two cylinders cut one another, and is called *a groin*.

The whole figure, consisting of the four circular arches A F B, B G D, D K C, C H A, and the two elliptic groins A E D, B E C, is, in architectural language, called a *bay*. Such a *bay* as has been here described is the simplest form which can be adopted for the stone roof of a square building; two such *bays*, in juxta-position, will form the roof of a building twice as long as it is broad; and a succession of them may be always used when the length of the building to be roofed is any exact multiple of its breadth. Such a succession of *bays* is called a *groined vault*.

If the bay represented in *Fig. I.* was one of such a succession, then of the two semi-circular arches which spring from the point B, one (say B F A) would rest flat against the wall; the other (B G D) would cross the building at right angles to the wall. In this case B F A would be called a *longitudinal* arch, B G D a *transverse* arch; and thus each bay would consist of two transverse arches, two longitudinal, and two diagonal, or groins.

It will be seen at once that such a groined vaulting is only applicable where the length of the vault is a given multiple of its breadth; where this is not the case, it will be necessary to use bays of a less simple form: *e. g.*, if the length of a building is twenty-one feet, and the breadth ten, it will be impossible to cover it exactly by two bays, such as that represented in *Fig. I.*, where the longitudinal and transverse arches are of equal dimensions. In

this case we must employ three bays, of which the *longitudinal* arches are seven feet in span, and the *transverse* ten. However, the height of each must still be the same, in order that the cylinders, of which they are sections, may, as before, cut one another in the point E, and form the groin.

Of this species of groining, the Temple of Peace and the Baths of Diocletian are magnificent specimens. Each consists of three bays, of which the longitudinal and transverse arches differ in span. In the Temple of Peace all the three bays, when perfect, were exactly alike; and as the breadth of the building was less than a third of its length, the *longitudinal* arches were necessarily of greater span than the *transverse*; but that their height might be equal, while their span was unequal, the former were built *semicircular*, the latter *elliptic*, with the long axes vertical. Thus the bay was formed, not of the intersection of two cylinders, as is *Fig. I.*, but of a cylinder and a cylindroide, the cylinder forming the longitudinal arch, and cylindroide the transverse.

The Baths of Diocletian exhibit a more complicated arrangement. The vaulting of this remarkable structure is still perfect; its central bay differs from the extremes, being nearly square, whereas their breadth very materially exceeds their length. The cylinder is studiously avoided in all three; even in the central bay, where the longitudinal and transverse arches are nearly equal, and where consequently there was very little to deviate from the

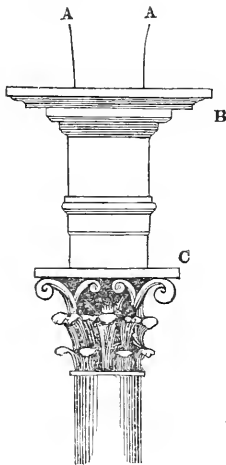
semicircular form, the ellipse, with its long axis vertical is wantonly substituted, and the bay itself formed by the intersection of two cylindroides; in the two extremes the arrangement is such, that the form of the *groins*, which, in ordinary cases, would be elliptic, with the long axis horizontal, is here accurately *semicircular*. This arrangement is worthy of notice, as it is frequent in our finest cathedrals.

From what has been said, it is evident that the architect who constructed these vaultings must have been acquainted with *practical methods of describing on a large scale* almost every variety of ellipse; and of determining *à priori* the exact curve in which cylinders and cylindroides would intersect each other. Without such knowledge, and that too in such a compendious form as to enable workmen to apply it, no architect could have undertaken a work of this magnitude: for though on a small scale an accurate eye may sometimes stand in the place of rules, yet the case is widely different with a structure like the Temple of Peace, where the span of each arch is *more than double the breadth of St. Paul's Cathedral*. In a scientific point of view, then, these works have no ordinary merit.

As works of taste, their claim to admiration is much more questionable, combining as they do the details of the pure Grecian temple with a new feature to which these have no reference. For instance, the vast roof of the Baths of Diocletian is apparently supported on four Corinthian columns,

in a combination as little according with their original design as any of Horace's *ægri somnia*. (1.) At a first glance it is obvious that if the parts of a Grecian building have any reference to one another, and are not put together at random, the position of these columns must be an egregious solecism. If the beauty of a Corinthian temple arises in any degree from the proportion of column and intercolumniation, that beauty must of course be lost where the column is an exact copy and the intercolumniation magnified nearly six times. (2.) Again, if the dimensions of the Corinthian column are designed with reference to the weight it apparently sustains, it is sadly incongruous to throw the whole apparent weight of such a roof on four columns which, according to their original design, would have supported nothing beyond their own portion of the architrave and cornice. (3.) Again, one great beauty of the Greek temple arises from the simplicity of its leading lines. It has often been remarked that the unbroken line of the architrave sets off to peculiar advantage the alternating effect of the series of columns which terminate in it. Indeed, one can scarcely conceive that these two features were designed independently of one another,—that any architect could have hit on either without having the other in his mind at the same time; yet the artifice by which the Roman copyist has contrived to adapt the old column to the support of his arch has entirely obliterated this effect. He

has adhered, as long as he could, to the exact form of his model, and, endeavouring to retain as much of it as possible, has preserved the profile of the architrave and cornice. But these, losing their character of unbroken straight lines, assume the shape of a quadrilateral solid on the top of the column, and give the extremely awkward effect of a second capital.



- A Springings of the arch.
- B Pseudo-cornice.
- C Pseudo-architrave.

Here, then, are three essential defects in the Roman method of adapting the received Grecian details to their new designs—defects which arose from an ill-judged, yet natural reluctance to deviate unnecessarily from the approved system. This was the principle with which the Roman architects set out, and which was not likely ever to be abandoned by men who had before them models of acknowledged beauty to contrast with any crude innova-

tion of genius, or sufficient skill to copy accurately what they had not courage to reject altogether; and for this reason the Roman architecture, with all its defects, continued unchanged in every essential point till it lost itself in the ignorance of the middle ages. Up to this time, the arch seems rather to have been tolerated for its convenience than admired for its beauty; no attempt was made to render it subservient to the general effect of the buildings for which it was used, but rather it was studiously kept out of sight;—the great object was, not to make it as *ornamental as possible, but as little offensive.*

As soon, however, as the spell was broken which bound men to a servile imitation of Grecian models,—as soon as a taste for architecture began to display itself among persons removed from the sight of what their predecessors had effected, and without skill to imitate exactly even what they saw,—then began a new era, in which the arch was to claim a very prominent share of attention. A feature capable of such exceeding beauty was sure to assume, under the hands of experimentalists, some shape or other which would attract the attention of genius; and the Gothic architects were by circumstances forced to be experimentalists, as is sufficiently attested by the awkwardness and variety of the expedients to which they had recourse. It is to these expedients, and to the ideas which they suggested, that we owe the original and splendid style which

gradually sprang up with the return of civilization ; and which seems to deserve the same exclusive pre-eminence in arched architecture, as had been conceded to the Grecian Temple while the arch was unknown.

These expedients we shall endeavour cursorily to sketch out in the following pages, and to group together the different styles which resulted from them ; and, in doing this, we shall follow the division adopted by Mr. Saunders, in the 17th volume of the *Archæologia*.

First, then, let us suppose an architect of the ninth century—Grimbald, for instance—returning from Rome to England, with an indistinct, yet strong impression on his mind of the Temple of Peace, or the Baths of Diocletian ; and suppose his patron Alfred, so far impressed with his description of them as to encourage an attempt to imitate them in England. On endeavouring to recall exactly what he had seen, he might possibly recollect that the vault was divided into different compartments or bays, and that each of these consisted of six arches, two longitudinal, two transverse, and two diagonal, [*i. e.* what we have called groins,] but what reference these bore to one another would seem a mystery to him ; he would attempt to clear his ideas by drawing, or, perhaps, if so homely a thought occurred to him, by carving a turnip ; and after much pains might arrive at the notion that the intersection of two cylinders would produce

something very like what floated before his memory. As to the cylindroide, that would be quite beyond his comprehension ; but the simple bay, such as we first described, would at any rate be the first thing he hit upon, and to execute that would be his first endeavour.

When he had determined on this, he would have to construct what are called the centerings, *i. e.* the wooden framework on which to turn his stone arches. And as this must be made the full size of his projected work, he would find his turnip model but an inadequate direction to his carpenter. He must stand by himself, and watch the look of the frame as it assumed its shape, trying the effect of each piece before it was fixed to the rest, and probably not discovering many partial defects till his eye was assisted by a view of the whole at once. Even with the most intelligent assistance, such a process would be wearisome, and on a large scale actually impracticable. Accordingly, Grimbald would be driven, as in fact he was, to abandon any ambitious conception he might have formed, and content himself with a most diminutive undertaking. How he effected the centerings for St. Peter's crypt, it is impossible to say ; yet if one may judge from what has been curiously discovered in a vaulted room under the White Tower, London, he contented himself with obtaining only a rough resemblance of the form he wanted in wood-work, and then throwing over it a thick coat of mortar or clay, moulded

this till it satisfied his eye, and then proceeded to erect his masonry.

And now a fresh difficulty would await him : how was he to shape the stones of which his vault was to be formed ? Those which belonged to the longitudinal and transverse arches of each bay might indeed be easily drawn with the aid of ruler and compass, so that any mason might copy them with accuracy ; but the form of the groin was ascertainable by no simple rule, and the alternative which offered itself was either to fit each stone to its place as the work proceeded, or to abandon the notion of cut stone altogether, and content himself with what is called rubble masonry, *i. e.* irregular rubble fitted roughly together, and joined with a great quantity of mortar. The latter was the expedient he adopted, and accordingly we find in the crypt of St. Peter's, that the longitudinal and transverse arches are formed of cut stone, but the rest of the vault put together at random ; the same thing is observed in Grimbald's other work, the crypt of Winchester Cathedral, and, we believe, in all the earliest works that are now extant, both in England and Normandy.

On this principle, then, we class together as the *first period* of Gothic architecture all buildings of which *the vaultings are formed by the intersections of cylinders, and executed in rubble masonry.* Buildings of this class are evidently intended for imitations of the Roman style in its simplest form, and deviate

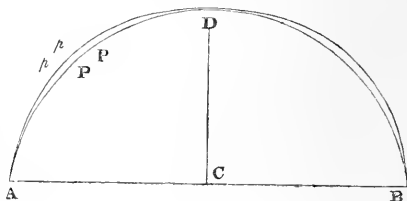
from that style just in such a way as one should have expected beforehand. The columns on which the vault rests are much shorter, and more naturally proportioned to the weight which rests on them. Of the pseudo-cornice and architrave, the absurdity of which has been noticed, not a vestige is retained; and the capital preserves just such a semblance of the Grecian form as one might expect an unskilful architect to carry in his eye, after having superficially caught a notion of it.

A *second period* commences with an attempt to substitute cut stone for rubble masonry in the side aisles of the Chapel in the White Tower, and the transepts of Winchester Cathedral. In these buildings the first courses of the arches are regularly cut, and disposed with the precision usual in straight work; but after this they gradually become more irregular, and at last lose all vestige of arrangement, as the attempt to carve each stone when it was laid became too laborious to persist in.

It was fated, however, that this attempt should not prove altogether abortive, though it took a turn very different from what the designer contemplated. The width of the transept of Winchester proved too great for the strength of rubble masonry. When the centerings were removed it began to give way, as is evident from its present appearance, and it was found necessary to give it some additional support, especially at the groin. This support was given by diagonal ribs of cut stone, which were put

up after the other work had been completed; and it is worthy of notice, that these ribs (instead of following the exact line of the groin, which, as has been already stated, would be an ellipse with its long axis horizontal) are in fact portions of circles; arcs less than a semicircumference, such that their chord equals the diagonal of the bay to which they are applied, and their versed sine its height; and as these arcs could not exactly fit the groin to which they were applied, the interstices, which would be considerable at the haunch of each arch, were rammed hard with slate and plaster, so as to afford a solid bearing¹. A similar application of the diagonal rib may be seen in Iffley Church, and in the chancel of St. Peter's, Oxford, which is evidently of a much later date than the crypt. In these instances it does not appear that the ribs were put subsequently to the other work, but it is quite clear that they constitute its main supports. At Iffley, particularly, the rubble masonry has so completely given way that it has lost all traces of the cylindrical form, and seems now only a shapeless mass suspended by the ribs, which are remarkably massive.

¹ A B diagonal of the bay; C D its height; the line A p p D is the real form of the groin; A P P D that of the rib fitted to it; the interstice, p p P P, is filled with slate and plaster.



At St. Peter's the case is not so indisputable, yet even here the unsupported parts of the vault are so bulged and misshapen, that one would be very sorry to stand under it while the ribs were removing. In both cases the character of the rib is very peculiar; the ornaments of each are of a character which we do not remember to have noticed elsewhere, and, in buildings less venerable, might almost be called clumsy. Instead of the continued and graceful lines into which the rib is ordinarily moulded, we have, in the case of Iffley, the heavy Saxon zig-zig, and, in St. Peter's something that resembles a massive chain,—forms which would never have been adopted by one who had volunteered the rib for its architectural effect, but might suggest themselves, in lack of better, to hide a necessary blemish.

The rib when once introduced was not afterwards abandoned, but it was long before the manner of using it was systematized; for some time, the greatest latitude was given to the caprice of different architects, and it was more than a century before any one method had a decided preference conceded to it. In settling this question of precedence, the second period of Gothic architecture was occupied; and we shall proceed to describe some of the varieties which it struck out.

We have already observed that the ribs in the transepts of Winchester follow the line of a circular arc much less than a semicircle, and that this form was chosen so as to coincide as nearly as possible

with that of the groin, which was giving way. In Iffley and St. Peter's their course is, as nearly as may be, semicircular, and in most other instances this form is preferred. But after the course of the rib itself was settled, still much remained to be done. The semicircular groins in the end bays of the Baths of Diocletian were formed by the intersection of two cylindroides, which the Romans had no difficulty in constructing; but the cylindroide was a form to which the architects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were strangers. They knew not how to construct a regular arch, the height of which should exceed its semi-diameter; and unless they could effect this somehow or other, they could never form the longitudinal and transverse arches of a bay, of which the diagonals were semicircles. Unable to obtain a regular arch, they had recourse of necessity to irregular shapes of different sorts. In the aisles of Christ Church, Oxford, they evaded the difficulty in two distinct ways; the first thought which occurred was to stand a semicircle on perpendicular props, so as to increase its height without affecting its span, and this arch they adopted for the transverse arches in the aisles of the chancel and transept. The effect of this, which is certainly far from pleasing, seems to have dissatisfied them; and in the progress of the work they had recourse to another form. It struck them that by cutting a bit out of the crown of a semicircular arch, and then bringing its sides nearer to one another, they

might contract the span as much as they pleased without much diminishing the height; thus they hit upon the famous *pointed arch*, which seemed to its inventors just worth trying, when they were tired with the elongated semicircles. This celebrated form had indeed been introduced much earlier, and for the very same reason, in the transverse arches of the chancel of St. Peter's, which can scarcely be dated much later than the Norman conquest; but the time when it was first introduced is a question comparatively of little interest; it had certainly been long in use as an expedient, before its beauty attracted general notice, and, during this period, is to be considered only as one among many substitutes for the Roman ellipse, which would have obtained a ready preference from any architect who knew how to construct it. However, about the latter end of the twelfth century, the claims of the pointed arch began to be acknowledged, and architects gave it a systematic preference. This revolution in taste was going on during the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral, which happened to be burnt down just at a time when immense funds were at hand to restore it. The sensation caused throughout civilized Europe by the death of St. Thomas, had caused an influx of splendid offerings from all quarters to the Convent of St. Trinity; and the monks, whose hold on the affections of the people depended in a great degree on their public munificence, now made use of the

treasures at their disposal in outdoing their predecessors. The cathedral was burnt down in 1174, and architects were collected from all quarters to consider the best method of restoring it. Among these, William of Sens was selected for his well known ability, and obtained permission from the Convent to deviate from the design of the ancient structure in a novel and daring manner. The roof of the old cathedral had been formed of wood, and ornamented with paint and carving; he ventured to suggest the possibility of throwing a groined vault over the chancel itself, similar to those which were already common in narrower buildings, *e. g.* the chancel of St. Peter's, and the aisles probably of Canterbury itself; and such was the confidence his ability had inspired, that he was allowed to attempt this, as it seemed, bold project. He seems to have felt his way by degrees, and to have acquired confidence and struck out new ideas as he proceeded. We have a curious and minute account, from Gervase, a monk who watched the progress of the work, of the steps by which he advanced each year; and Mr. Saunders states (*Arch.* xvii.), that to a practised eye, the bays which he built last are a perceptible improvement on his first plan. The account itself may be worth extracting for the benefit of those who have not access to Twysden's collection of English historians.

“Convocati sunt igitur artifices Franci et Angli, sed et ipsi in dando consilio dissenserunt, . . . ad-

venerat autem inter alios artifices quidam Senonensis, Willielmus nomine, vir admodum strenuus, in ligno et lapide artifex subtilissimus. Hunc cæteris omissis propter vivacitatem ingenii et bonam famam in opus susceperunt. Huic et providentiæ Dei opus perficiendum commissum est. Hic cum Monachis per plurimos degens dies, muri adusti superiora et inferiora, interiora et exteriora solícite circumspectans, *quid esset factururus aliquando conticuit, ne eos pusillanimes effectos acrius trucidaret. . . .* [Tandem] confessus est pilarios [the pillars] igne læsos, et omnia superposita debere dirui, si opus tutum et *incomparabile* monachi vellent habere; consenserunt tandem ratione convicti, opus quod promiserat et maximè securitatem habere cupientes. In acquirendis igitur lapidibus transmarinis opera data est. Ad naves onerandos et exonerandos, ad cementum et lapides trahendos, tormenta fecit valde ingeniosè. *Formas* [models] *quoque ad lapides formandos his qui convenerant sculptoribus tradidit. . . .*

“In istis primus annus completus est. Sequenti anno ante hyemem quatuor pilarios erexit, id est, utrinque duos: peractâ hyeme duos apposuit, ut hinc et inde tres essent in ordine: super quos et murum exteriorem alarum [aisles] arcus et fornix [vault] decenter composuit, id est, tres claves [bays] utrinque [in each aisle]. In istis annus secundus completus est.

“Anno tertio duos utrinque pilarios apposuit, in

quibus appositis clavibus et fornice factâ, [having extended to these the vaulting of the aisles,] a turre majore usque ad pilarios prædictos, triforium inferius multis intexit columnis marmoreis; super quod triforium aliud quoque ex aliâ materie, et fenestras superiores aptavit; [i. e. he completed the side walls of the chancel up to the springing of the intended vault.] Deinde *fornicis magnæ* tres claves, [the three first bays of the *vault over the chancel.*] *Quæ omnia nobis et omnibus ea videntibus, incomparabilia et laude dignissima videbantur.*"

William of Sens was unfortunately prevented from completing what he had so successfully began; he was mortally injured by a fall from a scaffold while they were removing the centering from the three bays already constructed; and, though he was able, by the assistance of a young monk, to direct the work till two more bays were finished, he was then obliged to retire. The choir was opened 1180, and we are thus intimately acquainted with the date of every part of it. Mr. Saunders says, that it carries with it the evidence of being a novel attempt, and that in the bays first erected, the pointed arch is introduced only as an expedient for the purpose noticed in our description of the aisles of Christ Church; but that afterwards it was gratuitously and systematically chosen. And for this reason he gives credit to William of Sens as the originator of the pointed style.

Whether or no this praise is justly bestowed, we

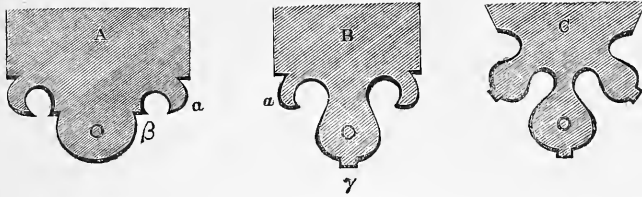
cannot attempt to decide; but, at all events, it is abundantly evident that this striking change was introduced about the time we speak of. Here, then, we enter upon *a third period*, in which architects no longer were occupied in overcoming difficulties or inventing expedients, but in turning to the best accounts those which had already suggested themselves.

The thought of recurring to the Roman models was now no longer entertained; the Temple of Peace and the Baths of Diocletian no longer bounded the architectural horizon; in the fruitless endeavour to reach it, a new direction had by accident been given to men's thoughts; among the various shifts to which they had been driven, it so happened that they had lighted upon two, which gave taste a new material to work upon—*the rib and the pointed arch*.

These were very marked features; even we, who are familiar to them, cannot fail to perceive their importance, when we contrast the effect of vaulting in which they occur with the plainness of the smooth elliptic vaults of the Romans; and especially of the remarkable one to which we have so often alluded—the Bath of Diocletian. In these buildings, the architect has not attempted to avail himself of the arch for purposes of ornament; the manner in which he has used it is studiously unobtrusive,—indeed, his great wish seems to have been to keep it out of sight: above the pseudo-

cornice he has suppressed every feature which could attract the eye, and seems to have intended this for an apparent finish. But such a suppression was obviously unattainable in vaulting accomplished by the *rib* and the *pointed arch*. From these marked lines the eye could not possibly be diverted: they must give a prominent character to the part of the building in which they occurred; and, unless they were rendered ornamental, were sure to be deformities.

These marked features, then, which at first were introduced necessarily, and ornamented almost at random, as was observed in the case of Iffley Church and St. Peter's, by degrees familiarised themselves to the minds of those who were constantly looking at them; and it began to strike people that they were susceptible of what we may call a pleasing expression. Among various attempts, that particular character was soon hit upon, perhaps accidentally, in the development of which the third period of Gothic architecture was occupied. The Saxon zig-zag of Iffley, and the chain-like ornament of St. Peter's, soon gave way to the smooth, continuous, and decided lines which characterize the rib of the thirteenth century. In the aisles of Christ Church chancel, for instance, the *diagonal rib*, introduced, as it is, for the sake only of strength, and awkwardly as it adjusted with the other parts of the bay, is nevertheless the prototype, though a clumsy one, of the ribs used in Cologne Cathedral.



A, rib in the aisles of Christ Church chancel. B, rib in aisles of nave ditto. C, rib in the chancel of Cologne Cathedral.

A and *B* are tolerably correct sections of the diagonal ribs used in the aisles of Christ Church Cathedral. *A* belongs to the chancel, is very massive, and occurs in combination with a semicircular transverse arch, heightened, as has been already described, by perpendicular props. *B*, which is taken from the nave, is considerably later, much less massive, as the section shows, and occurs in a bay of which the transverse arches are pointed. Its section is obviously suggested by that of *A*, though its effect in the building is very different. The increased dimensions of the portion marked (*a*) the soft effect produced by obliterating (β), and the clear outline given by the introduction of (γ), are all features which give the copy a decided advantage over its type. What the copyist intended by these alterations is, perhaps, doubtful; but their effect is clear to any one who sees the rib itself: it brings to one's mind three parallel *elastic rods*, bent so as to follow the line of the groin. Next, *C* is a section of the ribs used in the chancel of Cologne Cathedral; no one can doubt that the idea it is intended to express is precisely that which, whether by design or accident, was struck out in *B*; for the

portion of *B*, marked (*a*), it substitutes a repetition of the middle form (*o*) on a smaller scale, and in each preserves the feature (γ), which gives decision to the whole effect. Here, then, we have the unequivocal section of three similar rods, which seems to be the most elegant form of which the rib is susceptible; and this form, in all probability, suggested by another which had been hit upon in the very infancy of groined vaulting.

The *elastic* character of which we have sketched the progressive development in the *rib*, seems to have been caught at, very early, in the column. One of the differences between the old Cathedral at Canterbury and that which was designed by William of Sens, consisted, as Gervase informs us, in the introduction of *slight marble shafts clustered* round the main pillars, and, as it were, *tied* together by the capital, each forming a continuation of a corresponding rib. Thus the elastic rods, which in the roof seemed bent so as to follow the sweep of the groin, were apparently straightened out by being attached to the pillar, and the eye was enabled to follow their almost unbroken line from the very centre of the vault, where they met one another, down to the ground from which they sprung.

The successive steps by which the idea of *elasticity* made its way into other parts of the system may be bracketed together as the third period, occupying the intervals between the reigns of the two Richards, or more properly between the times of William of Sens and William of Wykeham.

These steps deserve more space and attention than we have now opportunity to bestow upon them; we shall reserve their consideration for a future Number. But before we conclude, it may be as well to recapitulate briefly what has been already stated.

The points, then, in the history of arched architecture, to which we have been desirous of calling the attention of our readers, are the following:—

1. That in Roman buildings, the arch was used only for convenience, and instead of claiming admiration, shrunk from notice.

2. That the architects of the middle ages *did* not imitate the Romans only because they could not.

3. That the rib and pointed arch were introduced, not as ornaments, but as necessary deformities.

4. That it was the unavoidable prominence of these features which, by giving taste a compulsory direction, as it were, drove men into the peculiarities of the Gothic style.

Thus the credit of having originated this remarkable system is due to those sage artificers—necessity and fortune. Here, as in other instances,

Τέχνη τύχην ἔστρεψε, καὶ τύχη τέχνην.

Had it not been for the well-timed ignorance which gave scope to the ingenuity of chance, a row of Corinthian columns might, at this day, have lined the chancel of Cologne, and the Canons of Salisbury might have seen over their heads the smooth cylindroid of the Baths of Diocletian.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE.

PART II.

IN a preceding number I directed my readers' attention to the following facts:—

1. That in the Roman buildings the arch was used *only for convenience*; and instead of courting admiration, shrunk from notice.

2. That the architects of the middle ages *did* not imitate the Romans only because they *could* not.

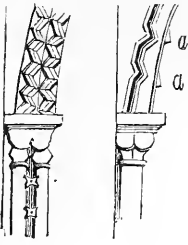
3. That the rib and pointed arch were introduced, *not as ornaments, but as necessary deformities.*

4. That it was the unavoidable prominence of these features which, by giving taste a compulsory direction, as it were, drove men into the peculiarities of the Gothic, or rather Catholic, style.

This last assertion I illustrated in the history of the rib, which, on its first introduction, was ornamented almost at random, as will readily be perceived in the following specimens (see Plate): No. I, fig. 1, a rib in Iffley church; fig. 2, a cluster of ribs in St. Peter's Church, Oxford; fig. 3, a rib in the north aisle of Romsey Abbey. The designers of these ribs seem to have been feeling their way in the dark; yet, if I am right in fancying that these attempts succeeded one another chronologi-

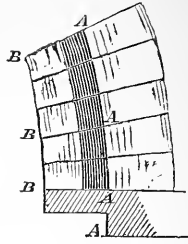
No. I.

Fig. 1. Fig. 3.



No. II.

Fig. 3.



No. II.

Fig. 7.

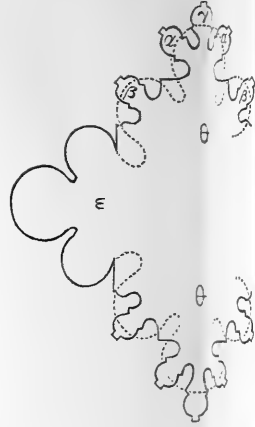


Fig. 2.

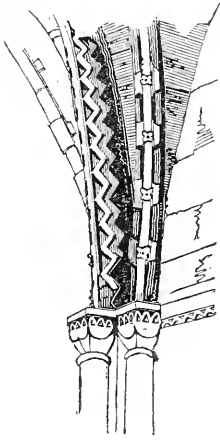
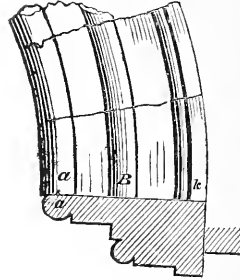


Fig. 4.



No. III.

Fig. 1.

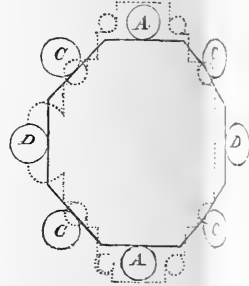
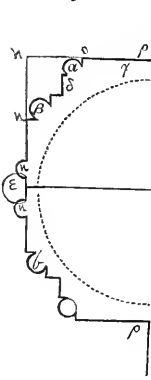


Fig. 5.



No. II.

Fig. 1.

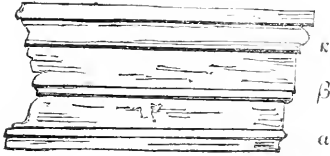


Fig. 2.

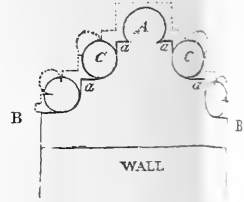


Fig. 6.

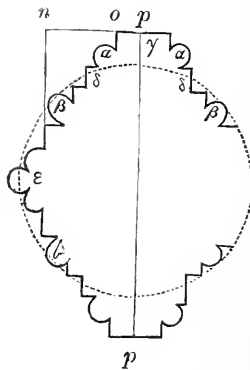


Fig. 2.

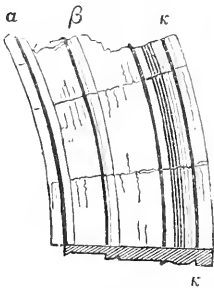
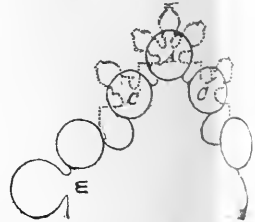


Fig. 3.



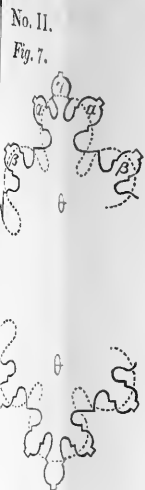


Fig. I.

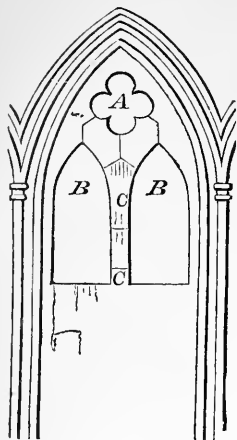


Fig. II.

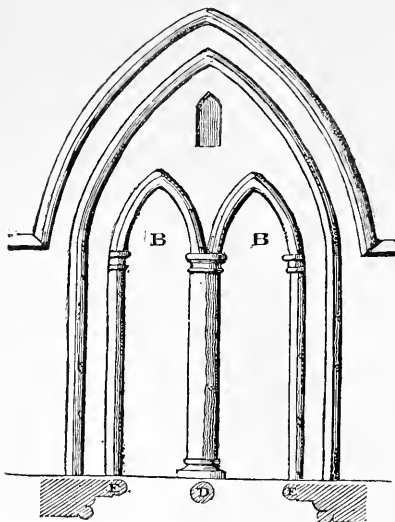


Fig. IV.

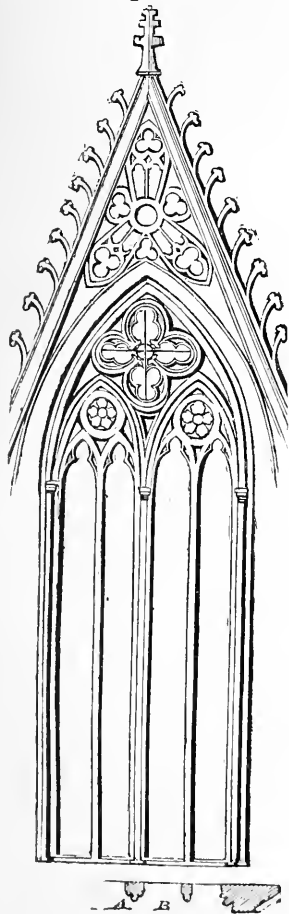
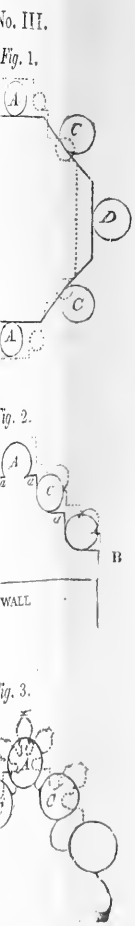
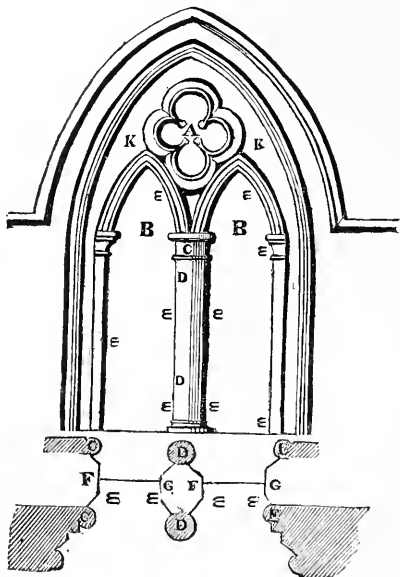


Fig. III.





cally, in the order I have assigned to them, even here we may discern a tendency towards the character which ultimately prevailed, the section of fig. 3, if taken half-way between the points, *a, a*, being not unlike that which I took from the aisles of Christ Church chancel. In the progress of the works at Christ Church, the *elastic* character of which the rib was susceptible seems to have occurred distinctly to the architect, and was sufficiently brought out by him in the aisles of the nave, to approve itself afterwards as a pattern. Fig. *B* (in my last article) is the section which prevails throughout that most elegant structure, the Christ Church chapter-house; and fig. *C*, which, in effect, differs but little from it, is perhaps the most exquisite of the forms which has yet been devised for this purpose.

This I stated more in detail in the concluding part of my last article: in the present it will be my object to trace the steps by which the idea of what, in my last article, I called *elasticity* found its way into other parts of the system.

And first, as regards the mouldings of the inter-columnar arches.

When the Romans substituted the arch for the epistylum, they did not attempt to ornament it *appropriately*, but gave it the appearance of a *bent architrave*. No. II., fig. 1, is the common Grecian architrave; fig. 2, the Roman misapplication of it. This device is obviously unmeaning; indeed, its

defect is acknowledged by the practice of modern architects, who, for the sake of relief, frequently have recourse to a *second arch*, (as in fig. 3,) parallel to the first, and *receding behind it*. A relief of the same kind was sought in the middle ages, by modifying the form of the Roman architrave, Fig. 2 was turned into fig. 4; the recess detached the line α from β , and thus gave the effect of a *second receding arch*.

With a slight modification of the form κ , fig. 5 represents a horizontal section of two arches, such as fig. 4, resting back to back on the same pier, and branching in opposite directions: the dotted line represents the pier, or rather column, on which they rest. This fig. is taken from the nave of Christ Church; (ϵ) is the section of a perpendicular shaft, which apparently supports the vaulting, and which terminates in some fanciful ornament, where it comes in contact with (κ) (κ). I shall not be very wrong in ascribing this specimen to the last few years of the reign of Henry I. So far, then, I find the treatment of the Gothic intercolumnar arch corresponding closely with the Roman, indeed deviating from it only in that respect in which modern imitators of Roman architecture have allowed themselves to deviate from it.

Fig. 6 is a corresponding section taken from the work of William of Sens, at Canterbury. It is evidently a modification, and by no means a violent one, of fig. 5; but the striking thing about it is

this,—that it differs from fig. 5 and fig. 3 just in those respects in which figs. 5 and 3 differ from fig. 2. The rods (α) (β) are still farther enlarged, and the recess δ deepened, as if William of Sens had recognized in Christ Church or some similar building, an approximation to the form which his eye felt the want of, and was encouraged to feel his way a step farther. By these two changes he made so great a difference in the ratio of the line NO to OP , that the interval between a, a , became insignificant, and the four rods a, a, β, β , were thrown into a single group.

And now let us suppose each of these rods to undergo the change which metamorphosed fig. *A* into fig. *B* in the last article; and we shall have a form not materially differing from fig. 7, which is taken from Cologne cathedral.

Such, then, are the successive changes through which the Roman architecture passed into the most approved Gothic moulding,—and these all proceed on the same principle. The two things aimed at in each change are force and lightness,—the first of which was attained by deepening the recesses, so as to cast darker shadows, and the other by giving the rods (α) (β), &c., a more absorbing consequence. These changes, together with the transition from the round to the pointed arch, and the parallel changes which I shall proceed to trace in the column, contributed jointly to produce that *elastic* effect which I have before noticed, and which seems not

so much to have arisen from the happy thought of any individual architect, as from the nature of the arch itself. It seems that this striking feature refused to blend with the previously arranged system, but gradually remodelled the whole on a new principle. To use rather a harsh metaphor, it acted, as it were, chemically on the other elements of architecture, dissolving their old combinations,—taking up some, and depositing others,—combining them in new proportions, and crystallizing them in a new form.

I observed, that while the changes above noticed were taking place in the intercolumnar arch, the column itself underwent parallel changes. These, however, were not quite so regular in their progress. It seems for a long time to have been assumed by architects that a column must be something round; and, till the latter end of the twelfth century, the utmost latitude they allowed themselves in deviating from this form, was now and then to substitute an octagon for it.

On the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral, 1174, William of Sens ventured on a farther innovation: after he had completed some part of his work, and had been able to observe the effect of the slight clustered shafts, by which he had given apparent support to the vaulting, he conceived the novel idea of clustering the column itself. This he did in the manner represented, (fig. 1, No. III.) by attaching the slight marble shafts *A*, *C*, *C*, to the sides of an

octagonal column. In the summer of the fourth year, says Gervase, “A cruce incipiens decem pilarios erexit scilicèt utrinque quinque,—quorum duos primos *marmoreis ornans columnis* contra alios duos principales fecit;” and afterwards, contrasting the new cathedral with the old, he says, “Ibi columna nulla marmorea, hic innumeræ.”

The result, however, was not entirely satisfactory: these shafts did not sufficiently correspond in position to the bent rods which formed the moulding of the arch, as will be seen on comparing the shaded part of fig. 1 (No. III.) with the dotted line which represents the section of the arch above the column. *A* and *D* are the only shafts which refer *C, C, C, C,* project too far; and, except when seen directly in front, would never look like continuations of the rod which seems intended to spring from it.

Yet one step had certainly been gained by the experiment: it suggested to succeeding architects the possibility of deviating with advantage from what had hitherto been the received form of the column, and set them on devising some remedy for the awkwardness which, in this instance, could not fail to be perceived. As long as the cylindrical or even octagonal form was adhered to, the eye had not been attracted to any particular defect; the general air was indeed flat and unsatisfactory, yet there was no especially weak point to arrest attention. On the other hand, the attempt of William of Sens, which evidently tended to improve the

general tone of the building, at the same time betrayed its own weak point.

Accordingly we find, that after this time the cylinder was disused, and that another form succeeded it, of which we shall proceed to trace the origin.

The architects of the twelfth century, though they adhered pertinaciously to the round column, felt at liberty to devise any form they liked for their pilasters : and whenever an arch, instead of resting on columns, abutted against the walls, the pilaster which would be required on each side, as its apparent support, was always so shaped as to correspond to the moulding of the arch itself; *e. g.* under the tower of Christ Church Cathedral, there are four arches abutting against the main walls of the transepts, chancel, and nave, and apparently supported on ornamented projections or pilasters, of which the section was given in fig. 2. Here, as before, the shaded part of the figure is the section of the pilaster, the dotted line the section of the arch resting on it; the correspondence between the two is obvious, and the good effect which such correspondence produces could not fail to strike those who had felt its want in the design of William of Sens. We may readily suppose, then, that a pilaster, such as that described in fig. 2, might suggest the idea of a novel column. Two such pilasters, placed back to back, would at once answer the purpose, and if an additional shaft, the size of *A*, was

applied on each side to the flat surfaces, $B B$, the whole would become symmetrical: indeed, the resulting section would closely resemble that of fig. 3, differing from it in nothing but the angles (a, a .)

But fig. 3 is the column of Cologne Cathedral, the dotted line giving, as above, the section of the arch.

On comparing fig. 3, No. III., with fig. 7, No. II., it will be seen that the dotted line in the latter corresponds to the shaded part of the former, and *vice versa*, but that the group (ϵ) is the same in each; in fact, the shafts of which this is the section run in an unbroken line from the vault to the very base of the cathedral. Thus the columns of Cologne exhibit a perfect development of the idea which was first indistinctly apprehended by William of Sens; their shafts may be arranged into three groups, two of which (θ, θ) support the intercolumnar arches, and represent stems, from which $\alpha \beta \gamma$, &c. branch off—the third (ϵ) rising far above these arches, branches off into three ribs, two diagonal and one transverse.

Here, then, is a second series of changes, tending towards the same end as the former, and terminating in the same building.

I now come to the feature which, of all others, imparts to the architecture of the 13th and 14th centuries its character of elasticity—*window tracery*.

The origin of this remarkable feature is involved in some obscurity. If we begin, as we have hitherto

done, with the Roman forms, and trace them through their successive modifications, we arrive at nothing like it. We do indeed trace a series of changes in the *window*, parallel to those which have been noticed in the *rib*, *arch*, and *column*, but this presents us with no link that looks even like the germ of tracery. It begins with the *single-lighted round-headed window*. We then find this single light supported, as it were, by two small *blank windows*, one on each side, as in Christ Church. Afterwards, these also became *lights*. Then all three were *pointed*. At last they emerge as the many lighted *lancet window*, such as that in the Christ Church Chapter-house. And here we come to an abrupt termination, which, indeed, we acknowledge as a natural one. The choice specimen of architecture, to which I have just alluded must approve itself to every one as complete (τέλειόν τι) by the evident harmony of its parts, the identity of character exhibited in its vaulting, its clustered pilasters, and its windows. Here, then, we might suppose that taste would have rested satisfied, and that none but puerile lovers of novelty would have attempted any thing beyond.

Yet, if we turn to the style which immediately succeeded, we find starting at once into sudden existence a form totally new, yet unquestionably the right one,—the true note to complete the chord. Fig. IV. is a window in Cologne Cathedral, designed about 1250, one of the earliest, as well as most

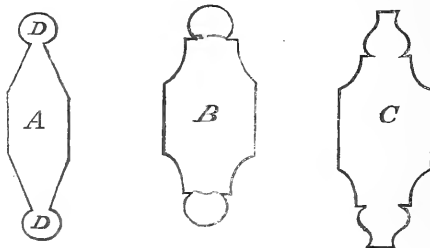
beautiful, specimens of tracery. We shall now attempt to suggest a process, by which it may have occurred to its designers.

As far back as the reign of Stephen, when the windows of churches were beginning to assume the lancet character in its rudest form, we find occasionally in their towers what looks like the germ of a different style. A very rude specimen occurs in the tower of Christ Church Cathedral: *vide* fig. I. This is obviously a blank window, with three openings cut in the back to admit light to the belfry. My second specimen, fig. II. is taken from the tower of St. Giles's Church, Oxford; its date is not historically known, but can scarcely be fixed much later than the middle of the 12th century. It looks like an imitation of Christ Church, and is clearly an improvement upon it. It will be observed that this window, in its present form, is not adapted for the reception of glass, which, if introduced in the position *D E*, would destroy the relief of the shafts, by cutting them in two, and showing only half on each side. In order to fit such a window for this purpose, without injuring its effect as seen either from the inside or the out, it would be necessary to adopt some such plan as that represented in the section fig. III., where there is a duplicate of section fig. II., inside the casement *F G*, and the same work which connects the counterparts is so arranged as not to interfere with the circular appearance of the shafts.

With the exception, then, of the quatre foil, fig. III. is fig. II. just so far altered as to adapt it for the body of the church instead of the belfry. An instance does not at this moment occur to us, in which the quatre foil is so introduced in a window of this character, but the variety would certainly suggest itself to any one that had seen Christ Church and St. Giles's.

Now fig. III., inelegant as it is, resembles, in many respects, the most elegant specimens of early tracery, especially in the following three, which are critical, as they distinguish the early tracery, from that which succeeded it.

1. The mullion in early tracery is made up of two shafts, as *D D*, connected in such a manner as



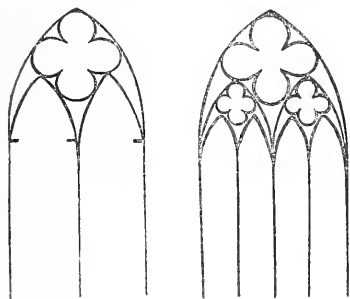
to leave them apparently free, and not to interfere with the simplicity of their effect by introducing other lines; in this respect it materially differs from *B*, and still more from *C*, the forms which afterwards superseded it: *i. e.* when viewed either from within or without, it much more resembles the simple shaft of St. Giles's than they do.

2. In early tracery, the bending lines at the head

of the window are not continuations of the straight shaft, but are separated from it, as in the window of St. Giles's, by a capital. This was afterwards dropped.

3. In the early windows, the points *p p* are detached from the sides of the main arch, and each compartment is similar to the whole, as in fig. *A*. Afterwards this leading form was superseded by that of fig. *B*.

These three characteristics of the early tracery seem to indicate an origin something of the kind which we have assigned to it. They are all points of resemblance between figs. III. and IV., or, indeed, II. and IV. Still, however, the chasm which separates these specimens is a wide one, and we must be content, for the present, to leave it so. In the mean time I would suggest that it is not so wide in reality as in appearance.



thing very simple. The step from the first to the

If we leave out of consideration the minor details, proportion of mullions, &c., and look only to the bending lines, the difference between the two forms reduces itself to some-

second of the annexed figures is not a very bold one, and if made at all, would be made at once. But, whatever may have been the process that suggested the first conception of tracery, there can be no doubt that its introduction added greatly to the harmony of Gothic architecture, that its substitution for the lancet window was not capricious, but natural, and in an especial manner promoted that very effect, towards which all the changes which we have noticed had for a long time been tending,—*elasticity*.

N. B.—It will be observed that the writer of these articles has assumed the date of Coutance Cathedral to be unknown; he does not profess to have examined the question with minute attention, but of this he is certain, that the evidence commonly put forward, *viz.* the record quoted in Mr. Cottman's Normandy, does not of itself warrant a conclusion so inconsistent with every well established fact in the history of architecture.

A THOUGHT FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO SHORTEN THE PRAYER BOOK ¹.

“ I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it
away.”

THE point I would suggest for consideration is serious. Gladly would I see it treated by a fitter person ; but as no one else speaks, I must.

- The feature of our Church Services which has been most generally disapproved is their length. This is supposed to exhaust attention unnecessarily, and so to put a stumbling-block in the way of devotion. Now I admit the fact that they do exhaust attention, but I very much question whether the fault is in the length of the Services. I am far from saying this in a spirit of censure ; the subject is too painfully humiliating for such thoughts to find place. But really it does seem much too generally assumed, that those who are unable to pray attentively in the language of the Church of England, would be able to pray attentively in any language whatever. It does seem much too generally left out of sight that to pray as we ought is one of the most difficult of

¹ [Part of this Tract, which was written in 1833, will be found in Tracts for the Times, No. 9.]

human duties ; that whether the Services of the Church are wearisome or not, prayer is itself wearisome ; and that without very distinct self-examination no one has any right to attribute his own weariness to any thing but his own deficiencies.

Let it not be thought that to speak thus of prayer betokens a cold or gloomy disposition ; many will doubtless recoil from the statement, yet let them not condemn it hastily. I think it will be found to have been the opinion of persons whom we cannot well suspect either of gloom or coldness. If prayer is the easy, the cheerful service which it is now generally supposed to be, I am at a loss to account for the practice so frequently mentioned in Scripture of combining it with another service, the very reverse of easy and cheerful. To little purpose were it, in this case, that the knees of holy David were “ weak through fasting, and his bones dried up for want of fatness :” to little purpose that holy Daniel “ was in mourning full three weeks, and ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into his mouth, neither did he anoint himself at all till three weeks were fulfilled ;” that “ he set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes ;” to little purpose that Nehemiah “ sat down and wept and fasted,” when “ he prayed before the God of heaven ;” or that blessed Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, “ departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Will it be said that all this was Judaism? the fruit of a cold creed and formal ritual? Be it cold and be it formal,—it is a coldness and formality which Jesus Christ did not fear to encourage among His disciples. “They said unto Jesus, Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees, but Thine eat and drink? But He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” After the death of Jesus His disciples likewise were to fast; in this point at least they were to resemble the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees.

Thus the practice of combining prayer and fasting is Scriptural, and is sanctioned in the New Testament as well as the Old. I shall not attempt to argue from this; it has been thrown out for each man’s private consideration: yet one thing I would suggest, that it must have some meaning, and that an important one; and that those who have not very distinct ideas what it means, should not take for granted either that they understand the real difficulty of prayer, or have taken the necessary steps to remedy it.

For these and other reasons, which conscience will enforce better than argument, I would press upon members of the Church of England, that the diffi-

culty they experience in attending to our Forms of Prayer, may turn out to be not remediable by any alteration in those Forms; that persons who are cold in repeating long prayers cannot be sure they would repeat short ones earnestly; and that if the thoughts with which they have associated old prayers are undevotional, they might possibly associate no better thoughts with new ones. It may be safely said that the appetite for expedients to make duty easy is no symptom of a healthy state of mind. The man who has a pain in his right shoulder thinks he should bear it better in his left, and he who is dying of the gout fancies he would gladly exchange it for the stone. And so it is with the diseases of the soul.

“ In life’s long sickness evermore
Our thoughts are tossing to and fro,
We change our posture o’er and o’er,
But cannot rest nor cheat our woe.

“ Were it not better to lie still;
Let Him strike home, and bless the rod:
Never so safe, as when our will
Yields undiscerned by all but God.”

[But to proceed:] As it seems at least doubtful whether any good would arise from shortening our Services, so it seems at least possible that evil might. These Services, as they now stand, are but a very small part of the Ancient Christian Worship; and though people now-a-days think them too long, there can be no doubt the ancient Christ-

ians would have thought them too short. Now, I am far from assuming that the ancient Christians were right, and that people now-a-days are wrong: but I think others may fairly be called on not to assume the reverse. On such points it is safest to assume nothing, but to take facts as we find them: and the facts are these.

In ancient times, Christians understood very literally all that the Bible says about prayer. David had said, "Seven times a day do I praise Thee," and St. Paul had said, "Pray always." These texts they did not feel at liberty to explain away, but complying with them to the letter, praised God seven times a day, besides their morning and evening prayers. Their hours of devotion were, in the day time, 6, 9, 12, and 3, which were called the *Horæ Canonicæ*; in the night, 9, 12, and 3, which were called the *Nocturns*; and besides these, the hours of daybreak and retiring to bed¹. Not that they set apart these hours in the first instance for public worship, this was impossible; but they seem to have aimed at praying with one accord, and at one time, even where they could not do so in one place. "The Universal Church," says Bishop Patrick, "anciently observed certain set hours of

¹ [The daily Services may be enumerated in several ways. Vid. Tracts for the Times, No. 75, the idea and groundwork of which was the Author's, but the MS. containing it in too imperfect a state to publish.]

prayer, that all Christians throughout the world might at the same time join together to glorify God; and some of them were of opinion that the Angelical Host, being acquainted with those hours, took that time to join their prayers and praises with those of the Church." The Hymns and Psalms appropriated to these hours were, in the first instance, intended only for private meditation; but afterwards, when religious societies were formed, and persons who had withdrawn from secular business lived together for purposes of devotion, chanting was introduced, and they were arranged for congregational worship. Throughout the Churches which used the Latin tongue, the same Services were adopted with very little variation; and in Roman Catholic countries they continue in use, with only a few modern interpolations, even to this day.

The length of these Services will be in some degree understood from the fact, that in the course of every week they go through the whole book of Psalms. The writer has been told by a distinguished person who was once a Roman Catholic Priest, that the time required for their performance averages three hours a day throughout the year.

The process of transition from this primitive mode of worship, to that now used in the Church of England, was gradual. Long before the abolition of the Latin Service, the ancient hours of worship

had fallen into disuse; in religious societies the daily and nightly Services had been arranged in groups under the names of Matins and Vespers; and those who prayed in private were allowed to suit their hours of prayer to their convenience, provided only that they went through the whole Services each day. Neither is it to be supposed that this modified demand was at all generally complied with. Thus, in the course of time, the views and feelings, with which prayer had been regarded by the early Christians, became antiquated; the forms remained, but stripped of their original meaning; Services were compressed into one, which had been originally distinct; the idea of united worship, with a view to which identity of time and language had been maintained in different nations, was forgotten, the identity of time had been abandoned, and the identity of language was not thought worth preserving. Conscious of the incongruity of primitive forms and modern feelings, our Reformers undertook to construct a Service more in accordance with the spirit of their age. They adopted the English language; they curtailed the already compressed ritual of the early Christians, so arranging it that the Psalms should be gone through monthly instead of weekly; and carrying the spirit of compression still further, they added to the Matin Service, what had hitherto been wholly distinct from it, the Mass Service or Communion.

Since the Reformation, the same gradual change

in the prevailing notions of prayer has worked its way steadily but generally. The Services, as they were left by the Reformers, were, as they had been from the first ages, *daily* Services; it was reserved for the last three centuries to adopt the notion of a *weekly* Service. Are they not in a fair way to become *monthly*?

This, it will be said, is an argument not so much for retaining the present form of the Prayer Book, as for reverting to what is older. To my own mind, it is an argument for something different from either, *for diffidence*. I very much doubt whether in these days the spirit of true devotion is at all understood, and whether an attempt either to go forward or backward, may not lead our innovations to the same result. "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE EXISTING LITURGIES¹.

ALL Liturgies now existing, except those in use in Protestant countries, profess to be derived from very remote antiquity. So likely is it, however, that in the lapse of ages, considering the extreme ignorance in which many parts of Christendom have been immersed, interpolations almost to any extent should have crept into the formulæ of the different Churches, that little weight seems at first sight due to them as traditionary depositories of ancient doctrine. Judging from the opinions and character of those to whose custody they have been committed, one would be disposed to treat them rather as accumulations of every kind of superstition, than relics of ancient evangelical simplicity, to examine them rather as exhibitions of the gradual decay of Christianity, than as monuments of what it was.

Unlikely, however, as it might appear beforehand, learned men, who have undertaken the laborious task of examining them, have been led to form a different estimate of their value. Certain,

¹ [The following was drawn up in 1835 for the Tracts for the Times, of which it forms No. 63.]

indeed, it is that they have been much interpolated, and in parts corrupted; but it seems to be admitted at last, after long and patient research, that much likewise has been handed down from the first uninterpolated, and that means exist for ascertaining what parts are interpolated and what pure and genuine.

Among many remarkable facts, which have been brought to light respecting the antiquity of existing Liturgies, the following is among the most striking:—

There exists at the present day, scattered through Judæa, Mesopotamia, Syria, and the southern part of Asia Minor, which formerly made up the Patriarchate of Antioch, a sect of heretical Christians, called Jacobites or Monophysites, who were anathematized 1383 years since, at the council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. This ancient sect has from that time to this persisted in its separation from the orthodox Church, and no communion has subsisted between the two; each regarding the other as heretical. For a long time each preserved their separate establishments in the different churches and dioceses, and each their own patriarch in the metropolitan city. By degrees, however, the Orthodox became the inferior party, and on the Mahometan invasion, finding themselves no longer able to maintain an independent existence, fell back on the support of the patriarch of Constantinople, whose dependents they acknowledge themselves at the pre-

sent day. The Monophysites, on the contrary, were patronized by the invaders, and having been thus enabled to support their ancient establishment, remain in undisturbed possession of their sees, and represent the ancient patriarchate of Antioch. Now these Monophysites use at this day a Liturgy in the Syriac language, which they ascribe to the Apostle St. James; and the remarkable fact about this Liturgy is, that a great part of it coincides with a Greek Liturgy used once a year by the orthodox Church at Jerusalem, expression for expression. So that one must evidently be a translation of the other.

A coincidence of this kind between the most solemn religious rites of two Churches, which have for 1383 years avoided all communion with each other, of course proves the parts which coincide to be more than 1383 years old.

Another remarkable fact, not indeed so striking as this, but perhaps as essentially valuable, is exhibited to us in the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The history of the Monophysites and Orthodox in that country, is much the same as in the Patriarchate of Antioch; except, indeed, that the depression of the Orthodox has been still more complete. In this Patriarchate the Monophysites still profess to use the ancient Liturgy of the country, which they ascribe to St. Cyril, one of the early patriarchs. It is in the Coptic language, but appears to be a translation from Greek, and is sometimes spoken of

as “the Liturgy of St. Mark which Cyril perfected.” Now it cannot, indeed, be said in this instance, that any thing resembling this Liturgy is still in use among the Orthodox in Egypt; however we know, that as late as the twelfth century a Liturgy was in use among them which bore the title of St Mark’s: and very curious it is that in a remote convent of Calabria, inhabited by oriental monks of the order of St. Basil, a Greek manuscript has been found of the tenth or eleventh century, entitled the Liturgy of St Mark, evidently intended for the use of Alexandria. It contains a prayer for the raising the waters of the Nile to their just level, and another for “the holy and blessed Pope,” the ancient style of the Alexandrian patriarchs: and, on comparing it with the Coptic Liturgy of the Monophysites, it is at once recognized as the same rite, except, indeed, that in a few points it approximates to the Liturgy of Constantinople.

If then it should be thought that St. Mark’s Liturgy, as given in this manuscript, is the same St. Mark’s Liturgy which was once in use among the Orthodox of Alexandria, we can hardly doubt that so far as it coincides with that now in use among the Monophysites, both are anterior to the separation of the parties, *i. e.* more than 1383 years old.

Other Liturgies there likewise are, besides those of Antioch and Alexandria, to which we may safely assign very great antiquity. One of these, which

bears the name of St. Basil's, and is now universally adopted by the Greek Church, "from the northern shore of Russia to the extremities of Abyssinia, and from the Adriatic and Baltic Seas to the farthest coast of Asia," is believed to have undergone very little alteration, from times still more remote than even the era of the Monophysite schism. A MS. of this Liturgy was found by Montfaucon in the Barbarini Library at Rome, which that profound antiquary pronounced to be above 1000 years old at the time he wrote, *i. e.* 124 years since, and which, consequently was written about the time of the Council in Trullo, A.D. 691. Now, at the time of this council, we know that not so much as a doubt existed of the genuineness of the text, as it was cited by 227 Eastern Bishops, as an undoubted record of St. Basil's opinions. Their decree opens thus:—*Καὶ γὰρ Βασίλειος ὁ τῆς Καισαρειῶν ἐκκλησίας Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος, οὗ τὸ κλέος κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην διέδραμεν ἐγγράφως τὴν μυστικὴν ἡμῶν ἱεροουργίαν παραδεδωκότες, κ. τ. λ. . .* If then we possess the text of St. Basil's Liturgy, such as it was when appealed to on a controverted question only 310 years after it was written, and that too by an assembly so likely to be well informed respecting its value, we may perhaps admit its genuineness without much hesitation.

Another Liturgy, which can be traced back with tolerable certainty to very remote times, is the Roman Missal. Mr. Palmer has shown that we

have abundance of materials for ascertaining the text of this Liturgy, as it stood in the time of Gregory the Great, patriarch of Rome, A.D. 590, by whom it was revised and in some parts enlarged. There also seems to be good reason for believing that one of the MSS. which has been preserved, exhibits it to us in a still earlier stage, such as it was left by Pope Gelasius, its former reviser, about 100 years before the time of Gregory. This ancient MS. was found by Thomasius in the Queen of Sweden's library. It is divided into several books, as the Gelasian Sacramentary appears to have been, and in other respects differs from that of Gregory just where history informs us the Gelasian did. It appears to have been written during, or not long after, the time of Gregory the Great, but in some remote province to which the additions and alterations introduced by that prelate had not yet penetrated. Nay, farther, learned men appear to agree that there exists a MS. still more ancient than this, from which the canon of the mass may be ascertained as it stood before the revisal of Gelasius, even so long back as the time of Leo the Great, *i. e.* as early as the Monophysite schism. This MS. was found in the library of the Chapter of Verona, and its merits have been very minutely canvassed by the most learned antiquaries. It also deserves to be noticed, that at the time when the Roman Liturgy was undergoing these successive revisals, a tradition all along prevailed attributing to one part

of it an apostolic origin; and that this part does not appear to have undergone any change whatever. Vigilius, who was Pope between the times of Gelasius and Gregory, tells us that the “canonical prayers,” or what are now called the “Canon of the Mass,” had been “handed down as an apostolical tradition.” And much earlier we hear the same from Pope Innocent, who adds that the Apostle from whom they derived it was St. Peter.

On the whole, then, it appears that of the existing Liturgies one, *viz.* that of St. Basil, can be traced with tolerable certainty to the fourth century, and three others to the middle of the fifth; and that respecting these three a tradition prevailed ascribing one of them to the Apostle St. James, another to St. Mark, and the third to St. Peter.

But curious as these results are, those which follow from comparing the above Liturgies with others now existing, and with one another, are still more curious. The Liturgies of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, differ so materially as compositions, that neither can with any reason be supposed to have been taken from the other; it is however true, with a singular exception, to be presently noticed, that no Liturgy either exists now, or ever appears to have existed, which is not a copy from one or other of them. The Liturgy of St. Basil, striking as are some of the features in which it differs from that of Antioch, is, nevertheless, evidently a super-

structure raised on that basis: the composition of both is the same, *i. e.* the parts which they have in common follow in the same order. The same may be said of the Constantinopolitan Liturgy, commonly attributed to St. Chrysostom, of that of the Armenian Church, and of the florid and verbose compositions in use among the Nestorians of Mesopotamia. So that the Liturgy of Antioch, commonly attributed to St. James, appears to be the basis of all the oriental Liturgies. In the same manner a remarkable correspondence subsists between the Liturgy of Ethiopia and the Alexandrian Liturgy attributed to St. Mark. And so likewise the ancient Liturgies of Milan, and of Roman Africa, which last indeed has not been preserved, and can only be collected from the writings of the Fathers, are characterized by the marked peculiarities of the Roman Missal of St. Peter. The exception, which I above noticed, is the ancient Gothic Liturgy of Gaul and Spain, which, from the fragments that have been preserved of it, appears to have agreed in composition with neither of the three, but to have been an independent rite; and this Liturgy, Mr. Palmer, by a very curious argument, traces to the Apostle St. John. Here, then, we arrive at one remarkable result: it appears, from all we can learn, that throughout the whole world, there neither exist now, nor ever have existed, more than four independent forms of Liturgy; a circumstance which,

of itself, gives some credibility to the supposition otherwise suggested, that these four were of Apostolic origin.

The confirmation of this supposition, which results from comparing the four independent rites, is, if possible, still more remarkable. For while, on the one hand, the diversity of the compositions proves that their authors, whoever they were, did not feel bound to copy, either from the other, or from any common original; so the identity of the matter proves that they were exactly agreed in sentiment, and intimately conversant with each other's habits of thought. Had these Liturgies resembled one another less, we might have attributed them to sources wholly independent, to the influence of any four great minds, which may have arisen at different times, and acquired ascendancy in their own regions of Christendom. Had they differed less, it might have been supposable that some single Saint, though not an Apostle, some Ambrose or Athanasius, or Cyprian, might gradually have extended his religious influence still more universally. Though, even so, great difficulties would have attended either supposition. As it is, however, we have to look for four persons, each with predominating influence in distinct and distant portions of the world; yet all so united in thought, as to make it certain they had been educated in the same school. Nothing less than this will account at once for the resemblances and differences of the four ancient Liturgies; and

this it would be vain to look for after the Apostolic age.

Such is the general character of the argument resulting from a comparison of these curious documents, each of which can independently be traced back to the middle of the fifth century, and which appear, at that time, to have commanded the same exclusive respect as at present.

To institute the comparison here in such a manner, as to enable the reader to judge for himself, is, of course, out of the question, involving, as it does, very minute and extensive researches. The following particulars, however, may perhaps be not altogether uninteresting, however incomplete.

1. It appears from Mr. Palmer's valuable work, that all the ancient Liturgies now existing, or which can be proved ever to have existed, resemble one another in the following points:—

(1.) All of them direct, that, previous to communion, those who intend to communicate shall exchange "the kiss of peace."

(2.) In all of them, the more particularly solemn part of the service, commences with words exactly answering to the English, "Lift up your hearts," &c. as far as "Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God."

(3.) All contain the Hymn, "Therefore with Angels and Archangels," &c. with very trifling varieties of expression.

(4.) Also, they all contain a Prayer, answering in substance to ours “for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant :”

(5.) Also likewise another Prayer (which has been excluded from the English Ritual) “for the rest and peace of all those who have departed this life in God’s faith and fear,” concluding with a Prayer for communion with them.

(6.) Also a commemoration of our LORD’s words and actions in the institution of the Eucharist, which is the same, almost word for word, in every Liturgy, but is not taken from any of the four Scripture accounts.

(7.) A sacrificial oblation of the Eucharistic bread and wine.

(8.) A Prayer of consecration, that God will “make the bread and wine the Body and Blood of Christ.”

(9.) Directions to the Priest for breaking the consecrated bread.

(10.) The Lord’s Prayer.

(11.) Communion.

2. These parts are always arranged in one of the four following orders ¹.

¹ The English Reformers prefer an order different from any of these ; viz.—

ENGLISH ORDER.

3. Prayers for the Church on earth.	5. Commemoration of our Lord’s words.
1. Lift up your hearts, &c.	11. Communion.
2. Therefore with Angels, &c.	9. The Lord’s Prayer.
4. Consecration.	6. Oblation.

ST. PETER'S LITURGY.

Roman, Milanese, African.

1. Lift up your hearts, &c.
2. Therefore with Angels, &c.
3. Prayers for the Church on earth.
4. Consecration Prayer.
5. Commemoration of our Lord's words.
6. The Oblation.
7. Prayers for the dead [in Christ].
8. Breaking of bread.
9. The Lord's Prayer.
10. The kiss of peace.
11. Communion.

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

Egyptian and Ethiopian.

10. The kiss of peace.
1. Lift up your hearts, &c.
3. Prayers for the Church on earth.
7. Prayers for the dead [in Christ].
2. Therefore with Angels, &c.
5. Commemoration of our Lord's words.
6. The Oblation.
4. Consecration Prayer.
8. Breaking of bread.
9. The Lord's Prayer.
11. Communion.

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

Oriental.

10. The kiss of peace.
1. Lift up your hearts, &c.
2. Therefore with Angels.
5. Commemoration of our Lord's words.
6. The Oblation.
4. Consecration Prayer.
3. Prayers for the Church on earth.
7. Prayers for the dead [in Christ].
9. The Lord's Prayer.
8. Breaking of bread.
11. Communion.

ST. JOHN'S LITURGY.

Gallican, Ephesian, and Mozarabic.

3. Prayers for the Church on earth.
7. Prayers for the dead [in Christ].
10. The kiss of peace.
1. Lift up your hearts, &c.
2. Therefore with Angels, &c.
5. Commemoration of our Lord's words.
6. The Oblation.
4. Consecration Prayer.
8. Breaking of bread.
9. The Lord's Prayer.
11. Communion.

Thus it appears that the four original forms from which all the Liturgies in the world have been

taken, resemble one another too much to have grown up independently, and too little to have been copied from one another.

3. On a comparison of the different forms of Oblation and Consecration, it will be seen that in each of the four original Liturgies, the Eucharist is regarded as a Mystery and as a Sacrifice.

THE ROMAN FORM.

(This is translated from the Missal now in use in the Church of Rome.)

THEREFORE, O Lord, we beseech Thee graciously to accept this oblation of our bounden service, from us and from thy whole family. Dispose our days in thy peace, and command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the congregation of Thine elect, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Which oblation
do thou, O God, we beseech Thee,
vouchsafe to render,
in all respects, blessed, approved, effectual,
reasonable, and acceptable;
that it may be made unto us
the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who, the day before He suffered,
took bread into His holy and venerable hands,
and lifting up His eyes to heaven,

to Thee, His God and Father Almighty ;
giving thanks to Thee ;
He blessed it, brake it,
and gave it to His disciples,
saying,

Take and eat ye all of this :
for this is My body.

In like manner, after He had supped ;
taking also this glorious cup
into His holy and venerable hands,
giving thanks likewise unto Thee,
He blessed it, and gave it to His disciples,
saying,

Take and drink ye all of it :
for this is the cup of My blood,
of the New and Eternal Testament,
the Mystery of Faith ;
which shall be shed for you and for many,
for the remission of sins.

As often as ye shall do these things,
ye shall do them in remembrance of Me.

Wherefore, O Lord, we, Thy servants,
and also Thy holy people,
having in remembrance
both the blessed passion
of the same Thy Son Christ our Lord,
and also His resurrection from the dead,
and likewise His triumphant ascension into the
heavens,
offer unto Thy glorious Majesty,

of Thine own gifts and presents,
a pure Host, a holy Host, an immaculate Host,
the holy bread of eternal life,
and the cup of everlasting salvation.

Upon which vouchsafe to look
with a propitious and serene countenance,
and accept them
as Thou wert pleased graciously to accept
the gifts of Thy righteous servant Abel,
the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham,
and the holy Sacrifice, the immaculate Host,
which Thy high-priest Melchizedek
offered to Thee.

We humbly beseech Thee, O Almighty God,
command these things to be carried
by the hands of Thy holy Angels
unto Thy High Altar,
in the presence of Thy divine Majesty,
that as many of us
as by the participation of this Altar
shall receive
the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son,
may be replenished with all heavenly benediction
and grace,
through the same Christ our Lord.

THE ORIENTAL FORM.

(This is taken from Dr. Brett's translation of the Liturgy of St. James, used at the present day by the Monophysites throughout the Patriarchate of Antioch; and by the Orthodox at Jerusalem on St. James's day.)

IN the same night that He was offered,
yea offered up Himself
for the life and salvation of the world,
taking bread
into His holy, immaculate, pure, and immortal hands,
looking up to Heaven,
and presenting it to Thee, his God and Father,
He gave thanks,
sanctified and brake it,
and gave it to His disciples and Apostles,
saying,—

Deacon.—For the remission of sins and for everlasting life.

Take, eat :
this is My body
which is broken and given for you
for the remission of sins.

R.—Amen.

Likewise, after supper He took the cup,
and mixed it with wine and water,

and looking up to Heaven,
and presenting it to Thee, His God and Father,
He gave thanks,
sanctified and blessed it,
and filled it with the Holy Ghost,
and gave it to His disciples,
saying,
Drink ye all of this ;
this is My blood of the New Testament,
which is shed and given for you and for many,
for the remission of sins.

R. Amen.

Do this in remembrance of Me.
For as oft as ye eat this bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth the death of the Son of Man,
and confess His resurrection,
until His coming again.

R.—O Lord, we show forth Thy death,
and confess Thy resurrection.

Wherefore, having in remembrance,
His life-giving passion,
salutary cross, death, burial, and resurrection,
on the third day from the dead ;
His ascension into heaven,
and sitting at the right hand of Thee,

His God and Father ;
 and His second bright and terrible appearance,
 when He shall come with glory
 to judge the quick and dead,
 and shall render to every man
 according to his works :
 We sinners offer unto Thee, O Lord,
 this Tremendous and Unbloody Sacrifice,
 beseeching Thee not to deal with us after our sins,
 nor reward us according to our iniquities :
 but according to Thy clemency
 and ineffable love to mankind,
 overlook and blot out
 the handwriting that is against Thy servants,
 and grant us Thine heavenly and eternal rewards,
 such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard,
 neither hath it entered into the heart of man to
 conceive ;
 even such as Thou hast prepared
 for them that love Thee.
 And reject not this people
 for me and my sins, O Lord.
 (*Then is repeated thrice,*)
 For this people and Thy church
 make their supplication before Thee.

R.—Have mercy upon us,
 O Lord God Almighty Father.

Have mercy upon us,

O God the Almighty,
have mercy upon us,
O God our Saviour.

Have mercy upon us, O God,
according to Thy great mercy ;
and send down upon these gifts
which are here set before Thee,
Thy most Holy Spirit,
even the Lord and Giver of life,
who with Thee, O God the Father,
and with Thine only begotten Son,
liveth and reigneth

a consubstantial and co-eternal Person :

who spake by the Law,

by the Prophets, and by the New Testament :

descended in the form of a dove

upon our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan,

and rested upon Him,

and came down in the shape of fiery tongues

upon Thy Apostles,

when they were assembled on the day of Pentecost,

in an upper room of holy and glorious Sion.

Send down, O Lord,

this Thy most Holy Spirit, upon us,

and upon these holy gifts,

here set before Thee.

That by His holy good and glorious presence,

He may sanctify and make this bread

the Body of Thy Christ.

R. Amen.

And this cup
the precious blood of Thy Christ.

R. Amen.

That all who are partakers thereof
may obtain remission of their sins,
and eternal life.

THE EGYPTIAN FORM.

(This is taken from Dr Brett's translation of the Liturgy of St. Mark, used by the Monophysites at this day throughout the Patriarchate of Alexandria, and by the Orthodox so late as the eleventh century.)

IN the same night
wherein He delivered Himself
for our sins,
and was about to suffer death for mankind,
sitting down to supper with His disciples ;
He took bread
in His holy, spotless, and undefiled hands,
and looking up to Thee, His Father,
but our God and the God of all,
He gave thanks,
He blessed, He sanctified, and brake it,
and gave it to them
saying,

Take, eat.

Deacon.—Attend.

For this is My body
which is broken and given
for the remission of sins.

R.—Amen.

In like manner
He took the cup after supper,
and mixing it with wine and water,
and looking up to Heaven,
to Thee, His Father,
but our God, and the God of all,
He gave thanks,
He blessed,
He filled it with the Holy Ghost,
and gave it to His holy and blessed Disciples,
saying,
Drink ye all of this.

Deacon.—Attend again.

For this is My blood
of the New Testament,
which is shed and given
for you and for many,

for the remission of sins.

R.—Amen.

Do this in remembrance of Me.
For as often as ye shall eat this bread
and drink this cup,
ye show forth My death,
and confess
My resurrection and ascension
till My coming again.
Showing forth, therefore,
O Lord Almighty, heavenly King,
the death of Thine only-begotten Son,
our Lord, our God, and Saviour,
Jesus Christ,
and confessing His blessed resurrection from the
dead on the third day,
and His sitting at the right hand of Thee,
His God and Father;
and also looking for His second terrible appearance,
when He shall come in righteousness
to judge both the quick and dead,
and to render to every man according to his works.

We, O Lord,
have set before Thee Thine own,
out of Thine own gifts ;
and we pray and beseech Thee,
O Thou lover of mankind,
to send down from Thy holy heaven,

the habitation of Thy dwelling,
 from Thine infinite bosom,
 the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth,
 the Holy One, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
 who spake in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the
 Apostles ;

who is every where,
 and fills all things ;
 sanctifying whom He pleases,
 not ministerially, but according to His own will :
 simple in nature, but various in operation.

The fountain of all divine graces,
 consubstantial with Thee,
 proceeding from Thee,
 and sitting with Thee in the throne of Thy kingdom,
 together with Thy Son our Lord,
 our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Send down Thine Holy Spirit upon us,
 and upon these loaves and these cups,
 that the Almighty God may sanctify and thoroughly
 consecrate them ;
 making the bread the Body.

R.—Amen.

And the cup,
 the Blood of the New Testament
 of our Lord himself,
 our God and Saviour, and supreme King,
 Jesus Christ.

Deacon.—Descend ye Deacons.

Priest.—That they may be to us
 who partake of them,
 the means of faith,
 sobriety, health, temperance, sanctification,
 the renewing of our soul, our body, and spirit ;
 the communion of the blessedness of eternal life
 and immortality ;
 the glorifying of Thy Holy Name ;
 and the remission of sins.

The Egyptian rite contains elsewhere the following words, resembling a part of the Roman oblation, which would otherwise seem to stand by itself.

Receive, O Lord,
 unto Thy holy heaven, and intellectual Altar
 in the Heaven of Heavens,
 by the ministry of Archangels,
 the Eucharistical praises of those
 that offer sacrifices and oblations to Thee. . .
 Receive them as Thou didst the Gifts of Thy
 righteous Abel,
 the sacrifice of our Father Abraham,
 the incense of Zacharias,
 the alms of Cornelius,
 and the widow's mite.

THE GALLICAN FORM.

(The following fragment was translated by Dr. Brett, from Mabillon's edition of an ancient MS. in the Queen of Sweden's Library.)

O JESUS,
the good High Priest,
come and be in the midst of us,
as Thou wast in the midst of Thy disciples ;
sanctify this oblation,
that being sanctified,
we may receive it
by the hand of Thy holy Angel,
O Holy Lord and Eternal Redeemer.
Our Lord Jesus Christ
in that night in which He was betrayed,
took bread,
and giving thanks, He blessed and brake it,
and gave it to His disciples,
saying,
Take, and eat :
this is My body
which shall be delivered for you.
Do this as oft as ye eat it
in remembrance of Me.
Likewise also the cup,
after He had supper
saying,
This is the cup of the New Testament,

in My blood,
which shall be shed for you, and for many,
for the remission of sins.
Do this as oft as ye drink it
in remembrance of Me.
As often as ye eat this bread,
and drink this cup,
ye shall show the Lord's death,
till He shall come in brightness
from the Heavens.

R. Amen.

We, O Lord,
observing these Thy gifts and precepts,
lay upon Thine Altar
the Sacrifices of bread and wine,
beseeching the deep goodness of Thy mercy,
that the holy and undivided Trinity
may sanctify these Hosts,
by the same Spirit
through which Uncorrupt Virginity conceived Thee
in the flesh :
that when it has been received by us
with fear and veneration,
whatever dwells in us
contrary to the good of the soul
may die ;
and whatever dies,
may never rise again.

We, therefore,
observing these His commandments,
offer unto Thee
the holy gift of our salvation,
beseeching Thee
that Thou wouldst vouchsafe
to send Thy Holy Spirit
upon these solemn mysteries,
that they may become to us
a true Eucharist,
in the name of Thee and Thy Son,
and of the Holy Spirit,
that they may confer eternal life,
and an everlasting kingdom on us,
who are going to eat and drink of them
in the transformation of the Body and Blood of our
Lord Jesus Christ,
Thine only-begotten Son.

Such is the view taken of the Consecration and Oblation of the Eucharist in the four independent Christian Liturgies. It is well worth the consideration of such Protestant bodies as have rejected the Ancient Forms.

Further information may be found respecting these remarkable documents in the valuable works, already quoted, of Dr. Brett, and Mr. Palmer. It is, however, much to be wished, that correct editions of the original documents were in the hands of

every one. It may, perhaps, be said, without exaggeration, that next to the Holy Scriptures, they possess the greatest claims on our veneration and study¹.

¹ [Of the six Liturgies, portions of which are collated in the pages which now follow, five belong to the Oriental stock, and the sixth is the Alexandrian, or (as it is commonly called) St. Mark's, as used both by Monophysites and Orthodox since their separation. The other five are, first the Clementine, as it exists in the Apostolical Constitutions, viii. 12. which is attributed, but without foundation, to St. Clement Bishop of Rome, and agrees very closely with the Liturgy of St. James. That of St. James, which stands next, or the Liturgy of Antioch, is used by the Jacobites in Syria and its neighbourhood, and by the Orthodox of Jerusalem once a year. The Liturgy of St. Chrysostom is that used at this day in the Church and Patriarchate of Constantinople. Of the two Liturgies ascribed to St. Basil, one is the present Greek rite, as now existing in Russia, Greece, the furthest Asia, Abyssinia, and used in the Patriarchate of Constantinople on certain days, and as contained in an extant MS. of the date of the Council in Trullo, which council quotes it as St. Basil's. The other is the same form, modified on its introduction into parts of Egypt, which Mr. Palmer attributes to St. Cyril in the beginning of the fifth century. Three only out of the six are described in the preceding Essay, St. Mark's, St. James's, and the Greek or Constantinopolitan form of St. Basil's.—This opportunity may be taken to give Archbishop Wake's judgment of the value of these venerable monuments. "Since it can hardly be doubted," he says, "but that these Holy Apostles and Evangelists" [St. Peter, St. Mark, and St. James] "did give some directions for the administration of the blessed Eucharist in those Churches" [Rome, Alexandria, and Jerusalem] "it may reasonably be presumed, that some of

these orders are still remaining in those Liturgies which have been brought down to us under their names ; and that those passages wherein they all agree, in sense at least, if not in words, were first prescribed in the same or like terms by those Apostles and Evangelists. Nor would it be difficult to make a further proof of this conjecture from the writings of the ancient Fathers, if it were needful in this place to insist upon it." *Dissert. on Transl. of Apost. Fath.*]

FORMS OF CONSECRATION

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

IN the same night
that He was betrayed,

taking bread
into His holy and immacu-
late hands,
and looking up
to Thee, His God and
Father ;

and breaking it,

He gave it to His disciples,
saying,

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

IN the same night
that He was offered,
yea, offered up Himself,

for the life and salvation
of the world,

taking bread,
into His holy, immaculate,
pure, and immortal hands,
looking up to heaven,
and presenting it,
to Thee, His God and
Father ;

He gave thanks,

sanctified,

and brake it ;

and gave it to His disci-
ples and Apostles,
saying,

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

IN the same night,
when He delivered Him-
self

for our sins,
and was about to suffer
death

for mankind,

He took bread
into His holy, spotless, and
undefiled hands,
and looking up,

to Thee His Father, but
our God and the God of
all,

He gave thanks,

He blessed,

sanctified,

and brake it,

and gave it them,
saying,

IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S LITURGY.

IN the same night,
wherein He was delivered
up,
yea, delivered up Himself,

to suffer death

for the life of the world,

He took bread,
into His holy, spotless,
undefiled hands,

and brake it,

and gave it to His disci-
ples and Apostles,
saying,

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY *(At Constantinople).*

FOR when He was just
going out to
His voluntary, glorious,
and life-giving death,
in the same night,

wherein He gave Himself
up

for the life of the world,

taking bread
into His holy and immacu-
late hands,

and presenting it
to Thee His God and
Father,

and brake it,
*(The Priest bows down his
head, and devoutly hold-
ing up his right hand,
he blesses the holy bread,
saying with a loud voice)*

He gave it to His holy dis-
ciples and Apostles,
saying,

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY *(At Alexandria).*

WHEN He was about

to deliver up Himself

for the life of the world,

People. We believe.

taking bread
into His holy, spotless, and
blessed hands,
and looking up to heaven,

to Thee His Father, our
God, and the God of all,

He gave thanks,
People. Amen.

He blessed it,
People. Amen.

He sanctified it,
People. Amen.

He brake it,

and gave it to His holy,
disciples and Apostles,
saying,

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

Deacons. For the remission of sins, and for everlasting life.

(Then the Priest says with a loud voice)

(exalting his voice,)

This is the Mystery of the New Testament ;

Take of it ;

Take, eat,

Take, eat,

Deacon. Attend.

(The Priest with a loud voice,)

This is My Body,
which is broken for many,
for the remission of sins.

This is My Body,
which is broken and given
for you,
for the remission of sins.
People. Amen.

For This is My Body,
which is broken and given
for the remission of sins.
People. Amen.

Likewise, also,
having mingled the cup
with wine and water,

and blessed it,

He gave it,
to them,
saying,

(Then he takes the cup and says)

Likewise after supper
He took the cup,
and mixed it with wine
and water,
and looking up to heaven,
and presenting it
to Thee His God and
Father,

He gave thanks,

sanctified and blessed it,

He filled it with the Holy
Ghost,

and gave it
to His disciples,
saying,

(The Priest praying, says,)

In like manner He took
the cup after supper,
and mixing it with wine
and water,
and looking up to heaven,

to Thee His Father, but
our God, and the God of all,

He gave thanks,

He blessed,

He filled it with the Holy
Ghost,

and gave it,
to His holy and blessed
disciples,
saying,
(exalting his voice,)

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S
LITURGY.

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Constantinople*).

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Alexandria*).

(*The Priest bows his head,
and devoutly lifting up
his right hand, blesses
the holy bread, saying
with a loud voice,*)

Take, eat,

This is My Body,
which is broken for you,
for the remission of sins.
People. Amen.

(*The Deacon taking hold of his Orarium, points together
with the Priest to the Holy Patin; the same is done
afterwards to the cup; this is done in like manner
when the Priest pronounces the words, Thine own of
Thine own.*)

(*The Priest with a low
voice,*)
Likewise the cup after
supper,

saying,

(*The Priest devoutly lifting
his hand, and blessing
it, says,*)

Take, eat,

This is My Body,
which is broken for you
for the remission of sins.
People sing. Amen.

(*The Priest with a low
voice*)

In like manner taking,
mixing,

giving thanks,

blessing,

sanctifying,

the cup of the fruit of the
vine,

(*The Priest holding up his
right hand, and blessing
it, says with a loud voice*)

He gave it
to His holy disciples and
Apostles,

saying,

Take, eat,

This is My Body,
which is broken and given
for you and for many,
for the remission of sins ;

do this in remembrance of
Me.

Likewise the cup after
supper,
and having mixed it with
wine and water,

He gave thanks,
People. Amen.

He blessed it,
People. Amen.

He sanctified it,
People. Amen.

He tasted it,

then gave it
to His holy disciples and
Apostles,

saying,

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

Drink ye all of it ;

This is My blood,
which is shed for many
for the remission of sins ;

Do this in remembrance of
Me :
for as often as ye eat this
bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth My
death,

till I come,
Wherefore having in re-
membrance His passion,
death, and resurrection
from the dead, His return
into heaven, and His fu-
ture second appearance,
when He shall come with
glory and power to judge
the quick and the dead,
and to render to every man
according to his works :

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

Drink ye all of this ;

This is My blood of the
New Testament,
which is shed for you and
for many,
for the remission of sins ;
People. Amen.

Do this in remembrance of
Me :
for as often as ye eat this
bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth the death
of the Son of Man,
and confess His resur-
rection,
until His coming again,
Wherefore having in re-
membrance His lifegiving
passion, salutary cross,
death, burial, and resurrec-
tion on the third day from
the dead, His ascension into
heaven and sitting on the
right hand of God the Fa-
ther, and His second bright
and terrible appearance,
when He shall come with
glory to judge the quick
and the dead, and shall
render to every man ac-
cording to His works :

We sinners

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

Drink ye all of this,
Deacon. Attend.
(Priest with a loud voice,)
for This is My blood of the
New Testament,
which is shed and given
for you and for many,
for the remission of sins ;
People. Amen.
*(The Priest goes on pray-
ing, thus :)*

Do this in remembrance of
Me :
for as often as ye shall eat
this bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth My death,
and confess My resurrec-
tion and ascension,
till My coming again.
Showing forth, therefore,
O Lord Almighty, and
Heavenly King, the Death
of Thine only begotten Son
our Lord, our God, and
Saviour, Jesus Christ, and
confessing His blessed re-
surrection from the dead
on the third day, His as-
cension into heaven, and
His session on the right
hand of Thee, His God and
Father, and also looking
for his second terrible and
dreadful appearance, when
He shall come in righte-
ousness to judge both the
quick and the dead, and to
render to every man ac-
cording to his works :

We, O Lord, have set be-
fore Thee Thine own out-
of Thine own Gifts ;

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S
LITURGY.

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Constantinople*).

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Alexandria*).

Drink ye all of this ;

Drink ye all of this ;

Drink ye all of it,

for This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins ;
People. Amen.

(*The Priest bowing his head, says with a low voice,*)

Do this in remembrance of Me :

In remembrance, therefore, of this command of our Saviour, and all those things which He did for us, His cross, his burial, and His resurrection on the third day, His ascension into heaven, His sitting down at Thy right hand, and His second coming with great glory :

(*With a loud voice*)

[We] through all and in all things offer to Thee Thine own out of Thine own gifts.

People. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee, O Lord, and supplicate Thee, O our God.

This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins ;
People. Amen.

(*The Priest bowing down his head, says with a low voice,*)

Do this in remembrance of Me :

for as often as ye eat this bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth My death,

and confess My resurrection.

Wherefore, O Lord, having in remembrance those things which He suffered for our salvation, His life-giving cross, His lying in the grave for three days, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His session at the right hand of Thee, His God and Father, and His glorious and terrible second appearance :

[We] through all and in all offer to Thee Thine own out of Thine own Gifts.

People. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee, O Lord, and make our supplications to Thee, O our God.

This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins ;

Do this in remembrance of Me :

for as often as ye eat this bread,
and drink this cup,
ye do show forth My death,

and confess My resurrection and ascension,
till My coming again.

In remembrance, therefore, of His most holy sufferings, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His sitting down at the right hand of Thee, His God and Father, and His glorious and terrible second appearance :

We for all, through and in all, offer to Thee Thine own out of Thine own Gifts.

People. We praise Thee, we bless Thee.

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

We offer to Thee our King and our God, according to His institution, this Bread and this Cup, giving thanks to Thee through Him, that Thou hast thought us worthy to stand before Thee and to sacrifice unto Thee ;

offer to Thee, O Lord, this tremendous and unbloody Sacrifice ;

and we beseech Thee that Thou wilt graciously look on these Gifts now lying before Thee, O Thou All-sufficient God, and accept them to the honour of Thy Church.

beseeching Thee not to deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities, but, according to Thy clemency and ineffable love towards mankind, overlook and blot out the handwriting that is against us Thy servants, and grant us Thine heavenly and eternal rewards, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, even such as Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee, and reject not this people for me and my sins, O Lord, *(then he says three times)* for this people and Thy Church make this supplication before Thee :

People. Have mercy upon us, O Lord God, Almighty Father.

(The Priest says again)

Have mercy upon us, O God the Almighty, have mercy upon us, O God our Saviour, have mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy great mercy,

and we pray and beseech Thee, O Thou lover of mankind,

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S
LITURGY.

*(The Priest bowing down
says with a low voice)*

We offer to Thee this
reasonable and unbloody
worship,

and beg, pray, beseech
Thee

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(At Constantinople).

*(The Priest bowing his
head prays with a low
voice,)*

Wherefore, O Most Holy
Lord, we sinners, Thine un-
worthy servants, to whom
Thou hast vouchsafed the
honour to minister unto
Thee, not upon account of
our own righteousness, for
we have done nothing
praiseworthy, but accord-
ing to Thy mercies and
compassion which Thou
hast liberally bestowed
upon us, approach Thy
Holy Altar, and laying
before Thee these symbols
of the Holy Body and
Blood of Christ,
and we pray and beseech
Thee, O Thou Holy of
Holies, and of Thy gra-
cious goodness,

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(At Alexandria).

Deacon. Bow down to
the Lord with fear.

(The Priest privately.)

O Merciful and Good
Lord, we Thy sinful and
unworthy servants

beseech and bow down
ourselves to Thee, that of
Thy gracious goodness

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

and send down Thy Spirit,

the witness of the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus,

on this Sacrifice,

and send down upon these Gifts which are here set before Thee Thy most Holy Spirit,

(Then bowing down his head, he says)

even the Lord and Giver of Life, who with Thee, O God the Father, and with Thine Only begotten Son, liveth and reigneth a consubstantial and co-eternal Person, who spake by the Law, by the Prophets, and by the New Testament, descended in the form of a dove upon our Lord Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, and rested upon Him, and came down in the shape of fiery tongues upon Thy Apostles when they were assembled on the day of Pentecost in the upper room of the holy and glorious Zion. Send down, O Lord, this Thy Most Holy Spirit upon us, and

upon these holy Gifts here set before Thee,

and send down from Thy holy Heaven, the habitation of Thy dwelling, from Thine infinite bosom, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy One,

the Lord and Giver of Life,

who spake in the Law, in the Prophets and the Apostles, who is everywhere and fills all things, sanctifying whom He pleases, not ministerially but according to His own will, simple in nature, but various in operation, the fountain of all divine graces, consubstantial with Thee, proceeding from Thee, and sitting with Thee on the throne of His kingdom, together with Thy Son our Lord our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these loaves and these cups, that the Almighty God may sanctify them and thoroughly consecrate them,

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S
LITURGY.

to send down Thy Holy
Spirit

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Constantinople*).

to send down Thy Holy
Spirit

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(*At Alexandria*).

Thou wilt send down
Thine Holy Spirit

upon us, and
upon these Gifts lying be-
fore Thee.

*(The Deacon lays down the
fan or veil which he had
in his hand, and going
nearer to the Priest, they
both bow three times be-
fore the Holy Table, and
pray privately.)*

O God, be merciful to
me a sinner.

(three times.)

O Lord, who didst send
Thy Holy Spirit upon Thy
Apostles at the third hour,
take Him not from us.

upon us, and
upon these Gifts, to bless,
to sanctify, and to perfect
them.

*(The Deacon lays down
the fan or veil which he
held, and comes nearer to
the Priest, and both of
them bow down thrice
before the Holy Table,
and pray privately.)*

God be merciful to me
a sinner.

(thrice with a low voice)

O Lord, who sentest Thy
Holy Spirit to Thy Apos-
tles at the third hour, take
Him not from us, O mer-
ciful Lord.

upon us Thy servants, and
upon these Gifts lying
before Thee to bless them,
to make them the Holy of
Holies.

Deacon. Attend.

People. Amen.

CLEMENTINE LITURGY.

ST. JAMES'S LITURGY.

ST. MARK'S LITURGY.

*(and raising himself he says
with a loud voice)*

(exalting his voice)

that He may make this
Bread the Body,

that by His good and glo-
rious presence He may
sanctify and make this
Bread the Holy Body of
Thy Christ,

making the Bread the
Body,

People. Amen.

People. Amen.

and this Cup the Blood of
Thy Christ.

and this Cup the Blood of
Thy Christ.

and the cup the Blood of
the New Testament of our
Lord Himself, our God, and
Saviour and Supreme King,
Jesus Christ.

People. Amen.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S
LITURGY.

Make me a clean heart,
O God, and renew a right
spirit within me.

*(The Deacon bowing down
his head points with the
orarium to the Holy
Bread, and says with a
low voice,)*

Bless, Sir, the Holy
Bread.

*(And the Priest standing
upright, signs the Holy
Gifts thrice, and says
with a low voice)*

Make the Bread the
precious Body of Thy
Christ;

Deacon. Amen.

*Deacon. Bless, Sir, the
holy Cup.*

*(And the Priest blessing it
says,)*

and what is in this Cup,
the precious Blood of Thy
Christ.

Deacon. Amen.

*(The Deacon, again point-
ing to both with his ora-
rium says)*

Bless, Sir.

*(And the Priest blessing
both with his hand says)*
changing them by Thy
Holy Spirit.

*Deacon. Amen. Amen.
Amen.*

*(The Deacon bowing down
to the Priest says)*

Holy Sir, remember me
a sinner.

*(Then he returns to the
place where he stood be-
fore, and takes his fan in
his hand.)*

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(At Constantinople).

Make me a clean heart,
O God, and renew a right
spirit within me.

Bless, Sir, the Holy Bread.

Make this Bread the
precious Body of our Lord
our God and Saviour Jesus
Christ;

Deacon. Amen.

*Deacon. Bless, Sir, the
holy Cup.*

*(And the Priest blessing it
says)*

and this Cup the pre-
cious Blood of our Lord,
our God and Saviour Jesus
Christ,

Deacon. Amen.
which was shed for the
life of the world.

Deacon. Amen.

*(The Deacon again pointing
with his orarium to both
the Holy Things says)*

Bless, Sir,

*(The Priest blessing both
with his hand says)*
changing them by Thy
Holy Spirit.

*Deacon. Amen. Amen.
Amen.*

*(The Deacon bowing down
to the Priest says)*

Sir, be mindful of me a
sinner.

*(Then he returns to the
place where he stood at
first, and takes again his
fan.)*

ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
(At Alexandria).

(Priest with a loud voice)

that we may make this
Bread the Holy Body of
our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ, for the re-
mission of sins and life
everlasting to all those who
partake of it.

People. Amen.

and this Cup the pre-
cious Blood of our Lord
our God and Saviour Jesus
Christ for the remission of
sins and for everlasting
life to all those who part-
take of it.

People. Amen.
Lord have mercy upon
us.

(Three times.)

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