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REMAINS

OF THE

REV. CARLOS WILCOX,

LATE PASTOR OF THE NORTH CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH IN HARTFORD.

WITH A

Memoir of his Life.

HARTFORD,

PUBLISHED BY EDWARD HOPKINS.

MDCCCXXVIII.

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT SS.

L. S. BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventeenth day of June, in the fifty second year of the Independence of the United States of America, EDWARD HOPKINS, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit :—
"Remains of the Rev. CARLOS WILCOX, late Pastor of the North Congregational Church in Hartford, with a Memoir of his Life" In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."—And also to the act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

CHAS. A. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,

CHAS. A. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

PREFACE.

THE desire has been expressed by many of the numerous friends of Mr. Wilcox, that some memorial of him might be collected from his writings. Though these Remains may fall below the expectations of those who knew the distinguished excellencies of the writer, still it is believed that they will prove a valuable memento of departed worth, and promote the cause of truth and piety, now he who so ably advocated this cause while living, has finished his course on earth and passed into a better and more glorious world. It must be expected that there will be some disappointment, among those who shall peruse this volume, after having heard some of the sermons from the lips of the writer. Much of his excellence as a preacher, depended upon what cannot be discovered in sermons from the press. The sweet voice, the emphatic pronunciation, the eloquence of looks and gesture, which have sent a thrill of deep feeling through many a listener to the man, cannot be transferred to the book.

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MEMOIR.

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MEMOIR.

SOME account of the author may reasonably be expected to accompany this volume. The materials for a biography, such as his friends would desire, are very few. No diary has been found among his writings, and most that can be collected from himself is contained in the few letters which he wrote to his friends. Some of his early correspondents, with whom he was in the habit of exchanging thoughts most freely, are removed from the earth, and the letters he wrote to them are not to be obtained. The late Solomon M. Allen, professor in Middlebury College, the Rev. Sylvester Larned, who died at New-Orleans, and the Rev. Joseph R. Andrus, who died in Africa, were among the number of his early, intimate friends; and from their letters to him, found among his papers, it is evident that he was on terms of intimacy with them, to which few, and perhaps no other of his correspondents have been admitted. The materials from which this Biographical Sketch is taken, are a letter by his mother, respecting his early years, his own letters, and the recollections of a few friends.

CARLOS WILCOX was born Oct. 22d, 1794, at Newport, N. H. His father, Mr. Ebenezer Wilcox, was the son of Dea. Abel Wilcox, of North Killingworth, Conn. He is a respectable farmer, attentive to his duties, and distinguished for habits of punctuality and order in the management of his concerns. The original name of his mother was Thankful Stevens, daughter of Josiah Stevens, Esq. of Newport, N. H., for a number

of years deacon of the church in that place. He was afterwards licensed to preach, and employed as a Missionary on the Isle of Shoals, where he died. His daughter, the mother of the subject of this memoir, was well educated, and is possessed of an unusual share of tenderness of feeling, and of maternal excellencies. These parents are both pious; and Carlos, their first born, was early dedicated to God in baptism. The care of his education in his early years devolved principally on his mother. The following account of his childhood from her own pen may be read with interest. "As soon as he began to talk, I began to teach him to repeat the Lord's prayer, the Assembly's Catechism, and devotional Hymns. He was very active, and appeared much delighted with receiving instruction. He early showed a great fondness for books. When only two years old he would often ask me to instruct him. When I was engaged in necessary domestic avocations, and informed him that he must wait, he would stay by me, or follow me with his book in his hand until he had repeated his lesson. The winter after he was two years old, while sitting by his father, and seeing him at work, after watching him a considerable time in silence, with great earnestness he exclaimed, 'Papa, what are you doing? Making all things out of nothing by the word of your power?' He could read and spell correctly before he attended any school. He was healthy, active, persevering in every thing he did, whether at his lessons, work, or amusement."

When he was about four years of age, his parents removed to Orwell, Vt. where they still reside, and sustain with christian resignation, their bereavement of a son, who comforted them in his childhood, and by his affectionate conduct, his distinguished talents and devotedness to the cause of Christ, gave indications of future usefulness most cheering to the parental breast.

The subject of this Memoir was, from his earliest infancy, amiable and lovely, dutiful to his parents, and affectionate to his younger brothers. Among his first efforts in the school room he gave indications of talents, capable of making rapid

progress in knowledge. The writer of this Memoir has heard from the school companions of Mr. Wilcox, anecdotes of his childhood, when the little stripling took and retained a station at the head of the school, while his competitors were far his superiors in age.

Until between the ninth and tenth year of his life, he had a good constitution, and was unusually active and efficient in affording that assistance to his father, which could be expected from such a youth. At this period he gave himself a wound in his knee with an axe, which was followed by consequences felt to the day of his death. By taking cold in his wounded limb, it was seized with a violent inflammation, and for many months his pain was intense.

During the months and years of suffering that succeeded, he discovered a mildness of temper, maturity of reflection, and manliness of conduct, which made lasting impressions on the minds of those who saw him ; and one of his physicians, though he saw him only occasionally, was so interested in his demeanour and in the nobleness of mind which he exhibited, that he named his first son after this youth, who had so won his affections. Twenty years afterwards, though he had removed into the western country, he could not speak of the scene which passed in the sick room of that little sufferer, without deep emotion. There was something so marked in his temper and manners, so mature and judicious in his conversation even in that early period of his life, that time could not efface the impression which had been made.

The years of feebleness which followed, he spent in the pursuit of knowledge ; and under all his disadvantages, he made rapid and honourable progress. When he became able by the use of crutches to make his way to the school house, though often with extreme suffering, his place was generally at the head of his class.

His inability to perform agricultural labours, and his attachment to books, which disease and infirmity rather increased than abated, determined his father to assist him in obtaining a public education. When between twelve and thirteen years

of age, he was sent to an Academy at Castleton, where he soon took among youth, who had enjoyed the best privileges, the same place that he had taken at the common school. At fourteen, he acquitted himself with honor in an examination in all the studies which were required for admission into college ; and but for his youth and feeble health, would have presented himself for admission. About this time he was afflicted with a cough and a hectic fever, which in the opinion of his friends threatened his speedy dissolution ; but in the summer following, his health was so far improved, and his desire to pursue his favourite employment, and to enter college, so ardent, that his parents consented to allow him to review his preparatory studies. Accordingly, in September, previous to his fifteenth year, he was received a member of Middlebury College.

This Institution was then in its infancy, but there was a spirit of enterprise in its officers and students, which rendered it on many accounts a peculiarly desirable place for youth to prepare themselves for public life. It was favourable to that aspiring, determined perseverance, by which self-made men rise above those who rely upon the celebrity of establishments, libraries, and the literary renown of teachers. Here was nothing to foster the impression, that a diploma would be a passport to the high places of the earth ; but there was a consciousness, that reputation must stand upon individual enterprise and personal character. This gave an independence to the character of the student, and in the pursuit of his studies, he felt that the reputation of a youthful college was to be raised by his own. Such was the principle that operated upon the minds of the students of that Institution, and its influence on them was similar to its influence on the founders of our republic. They were roused to deeds of enterprise, which men under other circumstances rarely attempt.

While a member of College, Mr. Wilcox distinguished himself in all the branches of study, but excelled principally in the languages and belles-lettres. His conduct was irreproach-

able, and though his constitution was very delicate, he was never willing to excuse himself from a lesson, or from a college exercise. Every thing was performed with strict punctuality, and it is believed that while he was a member of college, no censure was ever passed upon him. Early in his collegiate life, his composition began to be noticed for originality, neatness of expression, purity and elevation of style. During his junior year, he wrote a poem and pronounced it at a public exhibition. This was among the first efforts in this species of composition, that he had ever submitted to the eye of any of his friends.

He graduated with the highest honors of college, and in a valedictory oration "On the reputation of greatness in the cause of humanity," showed himself capable of writing with distinguished excellence. He begins by saying, "It is humbling to the pride of man, to know that when he dies he may be mentioned no more. The heart is chilled at the reflection that when its motion ceases, all its affections may be forgotten; and the tongue falters to own, that when silenced in the grave, its accents may never be repeated. It would seem then, that no one susceptible of the blandishments of fame, no one alive to the laudable love of character, could rest contented with sporting awhile on the spot which gave him birth, and then disappearing forever, unknown and unlamented. It is affectation in man to pretend to disregard the esteem of others. Self-approbation can seldom answer the demands of vanity, and virtue herself may taste with inward relish the honey of applause. Respectability in life, may be gained with little exertion, and friendship is often purchased with a toy. But the attention of the community, and the gratitude of ages, can be won only by vigorous, and unceasing activity."

He then points out some of the different fields in which the reputation of greatness may be acquired, and concludes with addresses to the president and officers of the college, and to his classmates. A few sentences from the last, are so characteristic that they may be interesting to the reader.

“The meeting which we have never been able to contemplate without emotion, has at length arrived. That moment, the anticipation of which has so embittered the draught of enjoyment, is none other than the present. Every thing bespeaks an interesting occasion. Else, why such nameless expressions in the countenance, why such struggles in the heart? Our circles were not wont to be overcast with such gloom. The agonizing solicitude betrayed in each feature, witnesses that this is a crisis of no common moment. In one word, and that big with meaning, we have assembled for the last time.

“It would seem that some sequestered grove best befitted a scene like this. There, the enthusiasm of grief would repine under no restraint. There, nothing would check the effusions of the heart. Yet, before this assembly, the event loses none of its solemnity.

“We have all remarked, that the traveller, while ascending a hill, is generally busied in anticipating the prospect which the brow is to command. He sketches a valley in which he crowds together the epitome of every grace. In the back ground of his picture, he draws a villa with romantic environs. With an eye pursuing the path before him, eager to greet the rising spire, he hastens to the summit. But his scene, so lovely, suddenly shrinks into a dreary waste. With a curiosity unabated, he speeds his way over the barren heath to the eminence beyond it. Here his ideal promises meet a second failure. Thus he follows this beauteous phantom, and thus it eludes his grasp.

“This, my brethren, is the miniature of our journey through life. We have reached the first station whence the world, deformed as it is, instead of the comely creation of fancy, opens before us. Man chases some favourite show to the confines of the grave. He plays his part in some imaginary drama, till he passes from the theatre of life. The happiness of to-day is to dream of the happiness of to-morrow.

“Yet the desert would be smoothed of half its ruggedness, were our road through it one and the same. But we are now

at the centre, whence all our paths proceed, continually diverging. Were the ills of men seven-fold, were every tear multiplied without end, still the worst could be endured were we not to be separated.—There is an hour in which man is himself, and in which he couples himself with dearer selves, in which he holds sweet converse with those that are far away. It is the midnight watch when the hum of day hath ceased, and sleep fallen heavy on the lids of mortals. Then shall our spirits be commingled, and scenes long past be revived. What time the temple of nature is lit up for her nightly orison, our widowed spirits shall pay their devotions at the tomb of buried joys.

“But we shall soon have other cause to mourn than mere separation. Our number must dwindle away by death. Tidings will soon reach us that a class-mate is gone. The Grand Archer may have already chosen the place to take his aim. Then must that eye so vivid, be covered with an impervious film. Do I gaze on the form which must soon be hid under the clods of the valley? And can nothing avail? No. The amenity of disposition, the fascination of address, never won the king of terrors from his cruel purpose.

“Religion may rob the arrow of its poison, but she cannot evade its point. Some of us may be denied the sole comfort of dissolving nature, that of having our last wants relieved by the hand of a brother. Companions of my youth, ye inmates of my soul, how gladly would I fly to earth’s utmost bounds to cheer the dying moments of one, to catch his last breath, and to plant the wild flower on his tomb. Should it be my unhappy lot to live when ye were all dead, I would visit this village and mark the place of each endearing incident. While watching for some well known face, I should weep to see none but strangers, and exclaiming, the world is to me but a wilderness, I would fall asleep to wake with you beyond the sky.

“’Tis done, ’tis done. The tumult of passion is now a dreary calm; yonder orb of day is shedding his last beams on our collected view; but may our eternity be where God and the

Lamb are the light thereof. A long farewell to this academic grove, a longer farewell to you. Yon bell shall assemble us no more ; but, O remember, our next meeting will be at the summons of the last trump, to rehearse to the Judge of the Universe the long lesson of life."

It was soon after he entered college, that his attention was turned to the subject of personal religion. His native amiableness, his refined and delicate feelings, and his uniformly irreproachable conduct, had been such as might have seemed to many, satisfactory evidence that he needed no great change ; but when the Spirit of God visited his heart, it produced the same impressions, uniformly produced in those who are led to Christ and fitted for heaven,—a deep sense of his own sinfulness. From that time till the day of his death, he viewed himself a helpless sinner, unworthy of any favour, and entirely dependent on the sovereign grace of God. The following letter, written soon after this change in his feelings, contains some particulars respecting his views of himself and of divine things.

Middlebury, Dec. 14, 1809.

HONOURED PARENTS,

It is with a heart filled with gratitude to that Being who has supported my life, that I now write to you. It will undoubtedly afford you some consolation to hear that I have some hope that I have experienced a change of heart, though I am not without many doubts and fears, lest it should prove a delusion. But I will relate to you some of my feelings. When this revival first began in Middlebury, I felt somewhat opposed to it, and indeed, I thought I would concern myself nothing about it, so I paid little regard to attending conferences and other exercises of public worship. I considered that it would intrude upon my classical studies at college. I felt desirous to obtain an immense stock of earthly knowledge, and my heart glowed with fervent anxiety for worldly honours and emoluments. But alas, they last but for a moment and then vanish away. Though I sometimes thought of

the importance of striving to obtain something which would exist beyond this life, as I knew for a certainty I must soon die and leave all my earthly knowledge, yet I was for having a more convenient opportunity. "Go thy way for this time," was the language of my impenitent heart. At times, I suffered my thoughts to roam on things concerning a future state. A heaven of eternal happiness, and a hell of eternal misery, would often be the subjects of my serious contemplation; and though I had no sensible alarm, yet sometimes I thought I must attend to religion before it was too late. At other times, I thought I would delay repentance until old age.

"I heard many solemn sermons, and very many warnings and invitations, but rejected them all. I continued in this condition until Friday, Dec. 1st, when I thought I would leave college and go home. Then the thought rushed into my mind, that perhaps I was going directly away from my eternal salvation, and that my conduct might so offend a just and holy God, that he would come out in judgment against me, and "swear that I should never enter into his rest;" yet this thought I soon shook off, resolving to go home, provided I could get away. Accordingly, I went to Professor H——. Scarce had I made my errand known to him, when he began to question me upon the subject of religion. He asked me whether I had attended to it or not. For a moment I stood speechless, thinking what reply to make. I answered him in the negative. He then conversed with me in a manner so affecting to my feelings, that words cannot express it. He seemed unwilling to let me go, until I had attended to the one thing needful. He proposed to let me return home in a fortnight, if I would inform him in plain terms, that I had resolved to persist in the ways of sin, and at last go down to destruction. This seemed like an arrow that pierced into the very recesses of my soul. I returned to my room, and thought that from that time, I would seek for religion with an intense desire to obtain it. I took my Bible and turned to the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, and the 1st chapter of Proverbs. I thought the 35th verse of the former,

and the 25th of the latter, applied to my situation. I attended a religious meeting in the college on Saturday evening, was much impressed with a sense of my own guilt, and wondered at the mercy of God in sparing the life of such a sinner as I was. I admired that God had not cut me off, and assigned me a portion among devils and damned spirits. After the meeting was closed, I went into a class-mate's room, who had recently experienced religion. He seeing me look serious, said, 'what do you think of these things?' I told him that it seemed to me the revival was about to close, and I was to be left. He conversed with me awhile, and then I retired. I attended meeting on the Sabbath, and a conference in the evening, at the Court-House. On Monday evening, I attended a meeting of youth, at a dwelling house in the village. While I was walking to it, I felt so impressed with a sense of sin, it seemed like a burden, and I could hardly support myself under the heavy load. When I entered the room where the meeting was held, I found those who had assembled, were singing praises to God. I wished that I might be one of the happy number. I was sensible, that all that hindered me from it, was the opposition of my own heart. I was endeavouring to do something to merit salvation. This I found I could not do. The meeting was attended with great solemnity, such as I never before witnessed. After the close of the meeting, some of the students accompanied me to my room, conversed and prayed with me, but I was so overwhelmed with grief for my sin, which I had committed against my Maker, that I scarcely knew what was passing around me. Afterwards, while I sat musing on my situation, it seemed plain to my mind that life and death were set before me. On the one hand, Christ was inviting me to come to him that I might have life, on the other, the devil seemed to be tempting me. Late at night I went to bed, but not to sleep. I thought I could exclaim, 'The sorrows of hell compassed me about.' I spent the greatest part of the night in meditation; sometimes I had half a thought to give up the subject and think no more about it: then this passage came to

my mind, 'Remember Lot's wife.' I was in this situation, musing what it was best to do, when this thought occurred to my mind, that all I had to do was to give up myself into the hands of God, and these lines expressed my feelings,

' Here Lord I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.'

I felt that I was willing to surrender myself into the hands of the Saviour, to humble myself at his feet, implore his pardon for my past offences, and solicit his protection for the future. I arose from my bed, and attended prayers in the chapel as usual, and for the first time, I felt a heart to pray. My burden was gone.

"I have enjoyed myself very well since, only I have had some dark hours, fearing lest my hope was not founded on a rock. I believe I can say as much as this, that every thing appears different to me : the word of God, religious worship, christian people, religious conferences, and prayer, which before appeared to be gloomy, now appear quite the reverse. It now seems to me that if there is any happiness in this life, it is in living near to God. I have tried the pleasures and amusements of this world, and found them vain. There are some things which the natural heart calls happiness, but such as always leave a guilty conscience. I think I can enjoy more happiness, in one hour, in reading my Bible, and contemplating the character of God, than in a whole life of sin and rebellion against him."———

As an exhibition of his ability to express his thoughts in sentences, this letter might not be deemed worthy of preservation ; but as containing his own views of himself, and of the change which he hoped God had wrought in him, it will be read with interest by all who value the exhibition of piety in others, or are conversant with their own hearts.

From this time, a new direction was given to his mind, and he resolved on devoting himself to the service of Christ, in the work of the ministry. After leaving college, Mr. Wilcox

spent part of a year in Georgia, with a maternal uncle : he then returned, and entered upon the study of theology, at the Institution in Andover, in the fall of 1814. Through the delicacy of his health, he was unable during the severity of the winter months, to attend upon some of the public exercises, yet he never neglected preparation for any of the required duties.

In the spring after he entered the Institution, one of his classmates,* a very interesting and lovely youth, sickened and died. His class made choice of Mr. Wilcox to deliver an address on the occasion, and the manner in which he performed this office, will long be remembered by all who heard him. The tenderness of feeling he exhibited, the chaste and elevated style in which his Eulogy was written, and the eloquence with which it was pronounced, were such as to make it manifest that he possessed talents of superior order. While a member of the Institution, he had seasons of suffering from depression of spirits. They who were admitted to an intimacy with him, thought much less of his dejection, than others who only knew that he chose to be retired, that he was reserved in conversation, and that the features of his face often bespoke something preying upon his mind. But when he was required to perform any duty that called forth his talents, there was no indication of neglect in his studies, or want of tone and strength in his intellectual powers. Two of the exercises assigned him while at the Seminary, have appeared in the *Christian Spectator*.†

But the fact must not be concealed, that he really suffered from depression of spirits. There was some things in connexion with these sufferings, eminently illustrative of his character. While a member of college, he was "smit with the love of sacred song," and a propensity of heart more dearly cherished than any other, was to serve Christ by composing a lofty song of praise to him—"Benevolence" the theme. He ardently desired to engage in writing upon this favourite

*Philanthropos Perry.

† Vol. I. p. 613. Vol. II. p. 404.

subject, as an employment most congenial to his feelings ; but there were formidable obstacles in the way. He was in debt to nearly the whole amount of his college bills. They who knew his trials on this account, have had seasons of depression too ; they have mingled tears, when they thought how much his delicate mind suffered, at times, from a burden of debt which he saw little prospect of discharging, while a love of the muses led him to cast many a wistful look towards their enchanting bowers. The following extract from a letter written by him in a season of dejection, will best disclose his trials.

“ I dread the sight of my pen and half written sermon. Sometimes I sit for whole days without advancing a single letter. I sit with my cheek leaning on the palm of my hand, and scarce a day passes in which I do not weep—walk my room with my hands clasped in anguish, and my eyes streaming with tears—sit for hours and gaze into the fire, or on vacancy, or out of the window, without noticing any particular object, or having any particular train of thought, but a deep feeling of indescribable wretchedness.

“ I have such a disheartening consciousness of my unfitness for the ministry, that I cannot engage in it. I have studied nothing but poetry, am fit for nothing but poetry.

“ I dare not look at the setting sun, the placid and beautiful moon, the mild planet of the west, the pure blue heavens, the white flying clouds, the lofty mountain with its waving forests, the valley with its green meadows and crystal streams :— I dare not listen to the sweet bird that comes to the tree before my window, and sings from the fulness of its heart, pouring forth a stream of melody.

“ When the clouds gather round and shut out the beauties of the natural world, especially when the storm rages, and beats against my window, I seem ready to wish that they would remain so forever. It suits the gloom of my soul, I feel a great relief, a burden taken off. And when the hour of sleep comes, and I wrap myself up in the drapery of my couch, I am almost ready to wish that the sleep of the grave had come, or

that I might never wake again. What will become of me? The heart knoweth its own bitterness.

“ I spend my days in sighing, but no sigh heaves off its load from this o'erburdened breast.

“ My mind is unstrung, relaxed till it has almost lost the power of reaction ; every little labour, seems an Herculean task, every little obstacle, a mountain of difficulty. I have lost all self-controul, all discipline of the thoughts and affections, and become the passive slave of circumstances. I feel borne along in despairing listlessness, conforming to the current in all its windings, and varieties of motion, without resolution enough to raise my head, and look about me, and see where I am ; or forward, to see whither I am going ; the roaring of a cataract before me, would rather lull me to a deeper sleep, than rouse me to a mighty effort for my escape from destruction.”

This extract exhibits, at least, one of the causes of the conflict which was passing in his mind, when to his friends, he was so evidently the subject of exquisite suffering. To those who are mere spectators of such a conflict as is rendered visible in the countenance, it undoubtedly appears a mark of imbecility ; but they may be incompetent judges in such a case. They, whose thoughts always flow in dull prose, know not the movements of a mind, under the conduct of the muse. One who had poetic reveries, and seasons of exquisite feeling, in which only the initiated can sympathize, but who was an entire stranger to that sweet rest of the soul which Mr. Wilcox enjoyed, has expressed something of this internal anguish, not indeed in his finest strains of poetry, yet in language which poets can understand.

“ When from the heart where sorrow sits,
Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
In clouds that darken all the sky.
Heed not the gloom ; they soon shall sink ;
My thoughts their dungeon know too well,

Back to my breast the captives shrink,
And bleed within their silent cell."

While at the Institution, as divine truth was unfolded to his mind, Mr. Wilcox had eminent christian enjoyment, intermingled with hours of conflict between his own inclination, and the advice of others.

His inclination was very strong to devote himself to the service of Christ, in writing poetry. The friends to whom he disclosed his feelings, were almost unanimous in the opinion, that the cultivation of fine writing should be subordinate to his greater object, the work of the ministry. One, whose judgment he highly valued, and whose early death he deeply felt, wrote to him as follows: "I have no objections to your drinking occasionally at the fount of Helicon, but I have great fears that you will tumble in and be drowned."

Such were some of his sufferings, and such the causes; but there is evidence that the soul had found its rest and was comforted, as may be learned from the following letters.

Andover, March 22d, 1815.

DEAR PARENTS,

Your letter *surprised* as well as affected me, beyond any thing I ever experienced. What! were all the family awaked from sleep with the expectation of seeing my beloved Mother breathe her last, and I still in bed! O who can sufficiently admire that hand which restored you? Affliction is not sent in vain. O the happiness of that soul, which has a refuge in the hour of death! The world is poor indeed, for it cannot purchase a moment of comfort, when comfort is most needed.

"If I should not visit Orwell within two or three years, I must expect to see it sadly changed; many will be born, and many die. Gray hairs will drop away; blooming youth will fade. Many faces I shall not see again, till I meet them at the dread judgment-day. Who knows, but one of my dear parents, or brothers, may be of the number. Let us trust in God, and then all will be well.

“My health is extremely good. You never saw me as fleshy and ruddy as I am now. This I attribute to the moderate weather of past March, and likewise to my regular hours of exercise. Two or three times in the day I am in a washing sweat, and it would do you good to see me then. I am told by my fellow-students, that I have grown fleshy remarkably fast within a month; and indeed I take some pleasure in looking at my face in a mirror, but I often check myself, with the thought that health is a vain thing for security.

“I am delighted with the study of the Hebrew language. My class recite one day in Hebrew, and the next in Greek. Thus, we are reading the Bible in the words in which it was written. Oh! there is no book like the Bible! I am now reading the Psalms in Hebrew, and they are most sublime and beautiful.

“In the following letter, is an exhibition of his fraternal affection.

Andover, August 17, 1815.

HORACE, MY DEAR LITTLE BROTHER,

“I thank you, that you remember brother Carlos, though he has been gone a long time, and a great way off. Alonzo, and Seneca and Stevens remember me too, I hope, though they do not or cannot write to me. I wish I could send you and my other little brothers, some more good books. But you must read those I sent to you, a great many times; and you must pray to God, that He will make them do you much good, make you love him and obey all his commandments. You must mind your parents, and love them, for they love you, and work hard all the time for you. You must read the Bible often, and ask your mother to tell you what you cannot understand. When you say the catechism, you must ask what it means, if you do not know. When I was a little boy, I used sometimes to dread the time when I was to say the catechism. Now I am very sorry; and if you should live to be as old as I am, you will be sorry if you do not love to say the catechism.

You must not play on the Sabbath, you must not look out of the window and be glad when the sun is down, that you may play. God will see you, and be very angry with you and all little boys, who do not love the Sabbath, and the Bible, and the catechism, and other good books, and their parents, and all good people. When you go to meeting, you must look at the minister and mind all he says. There is a pretty, lovely boy here, about as old as Stevens, who always looks at the minister, and when he comes home, can tell a great deal of what he said. Good bye, Horace.

CARLOS.

DEAR PARENTS,

Andover, March 14, 1816.

I have received your letter and the money. I have much to write in answer, for my heart is full. Whence have I deserved such kindness? Surely, if we did but know it, we have no friends on earth like our parents. You heard that I was unwell: I am not; I have had the best health all winter. Every day I work an hour and a half at the wood-pile, and walk half an hour besides. I never touch a book after breakfast, until I have laboured an hour; so that the sweat runs off my face. Thus by exercise, my constitution is renewed. So my dear father always told me, but like many other of his precepts, I little regarded it.

You say you have heard that I was dejected for want of money, &c. True, I have not been very high in spirits for some time, but the want of money is but a very small part of the cause. I have not been *suffering* for want of any thing. I have learnt a few things since I came to Andover, about the real value of money. In a letter from my mother, written last spring, soon after the sickness of herself and my brother, she says—“Your honoured father is almost worn out with cares and hard labour.”—This went to my heart. “Worn out with hard labour”—thought I, and for whom? for *me, me* who never earned a cent for myself, and who am now living in ease, upon that property, which he has gained by a long course of industry and economy. The idea, that probably

my dear father's days might be shortened by his exertions to support his children, and me in particular, who had been of less service to him, than any of them, sunk deep into my heart, and I have constantly kept it in mind since. It was then, I formed the resolution never to ask him for another cent of that property, which ought to be preserved to support my parents in the decline of life, and to train up the younger children. I am now, thought I, better able to support myself, than my parents are to support me—why should I trespass any more on their goodness? The money you have now so kindly sent me, I thank you for, and I wish to consider it as borrowed.

With regard to my support at this excellent Seminary, I can speak freely, and to your satisfaction. My board and washing bills, are paid out of the funds. Wood, candles, &c. we all have to find for ourselves. There is a society of ladies in Boston, who furnish poor students with all the clothes they wish. And should I barely send in my name, and a list of the articles I wanted, I might have any thing free. But though I have been urged to do it, I have not; for when I see so many around me, more needy than I, and far more likely to be useful ministers, I have not had the face to do it. The bare possibility, that I may not answer the expectations of benefactors, is more than I wish to endure. * * * I have no thought of leaving the Seminary, unless I should be sick, or some other reason persuade than want of support.

The office of the ministry, looks too arduous and too sacred for me. Since I have been here, I have learned some of the trials and duties of a faithful minister. From these, I seem to shrink, and dread the responsibility of the station. I begin to find, that a minister has something more to do, than merely to enter the pulpit and pronounce a fine sermon. He is to watch and labour for souls in private, as well as in public; to have an answer for every question of infidel effrontery, or inquiring penitence. He is to look after the strayed ones of the flock; to bind up the wounded, &c. Is *he* to do all this, or is it *God* through him?

Besides, it rings in my ears every day, that a man is not fit to be the spiritual guide of others, unless he be eminently pious himself. I dare not claim this character of eminent piety. No, I dare not. I have rather to fear and tremble, lest I have no piety *at all*. What then shall I do? How can I do the most good? Heaven direct me. I would rather remain in a private, humble sphere, and do little good, than appear in public, and do much harm. It is my constant prayer, that I may be led in the path of duty. I hope it will be yours also, my dear parents.

I have many, very many melancholy hours, in meditating on this subject. I can never be sufficiently thankful for the blessing of *pious parents*. Little children are apt to think it hard for parents to be always instructing them in religion, and restraining them from vanities; but when they come to maturity, they will look back and bless them.

Andover, May 30, 1816.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

You have been sick again it seems. I tremble when I think of your feeble health and my great distance from you. I may not even have time to hear that you are sick, before I hear that you are gone. I cannot come home in a moment, but if you, or my dear father, should be dangerously sick, I beg that you will let me know immediately, that I may fly to your arms with all possible speed. May heaven prepare us for the day of affliction, for come it must, sooner or later. Were there no hope of meeting friends in a happier world, I could almost wish to *have* no friends in this; for the bitterness of separation, and that forever, would be so much the more severe, as the friendship was more ardent.

Perhaps there is no direct evidence from the scriptures, that friends will know each other in heaven, but there are circumstances, which render it in the highest degree probable. The rich man in the parable is represented as knowing Lazarus and Abraham; and surely if the inhabitants of the two states have knowledge of each other, those of each state

separately may be supposed to know each other. We are naturally led by reason, to think that much of the misery of the wicked, will consist in mutual accusations—that the unfaithful parent will writhe with keenest anguish when reproached by the child as the author of his ruin—that the ungodly minister will feel the sharpest stings of remorse when his people shall rail at him as the cause of their undoing. And if this be so, why may not much of the happiness of the blessed, consist in recounting the many instances of faithfulness in each other? the child thank the parent for his godly example and pious instructions? the church welcome their pastor and bid him rejoice in the fruit of all his labours of love? How could such employment be inconsistent with God's being *all in all*.

My health is excellent. I suppose you will think so, when I tell you that I walk ten miles every day, as steadily as the day comes. Four weeks of our six weeks' vacation have expired. I room at College and board one mile and a half off; and I go and return at every meal, which makes nine miles. I visit the post-office, or the mineral spring we have here, once a day, which makes more than another mile. Instead of feeling fatigued, I grow stronger and stronger, so that I verily believe I could walk home, after practising upon this plan a number of months.

I long to see you all, and to enjoy again those pleasures that I found in rambling over your lovely farm. Believe me, you have a happy spot—a spot where I could almost wish to spend my days. The great and noisy world, you only hear about at a distance. *You* know little of the trials and temptations of public life. You have the Bible—you have the preaching of its holy truths—you have kind and pious friends and neighbours, and what more could you expect in this vale of tears? I almost, I do quite envy you the happiness of a retired life—a public station has no charms for your

CARLOS.

Andover, August 5, 1816.

MY DEAR PARENTS,

I have been considerably unwell for a week or two, and have about concluded that it is best for me to comply with your request made last spring, when you heard that I was "depressed" and "out of health;" that is to come home. Our present term is fast drawing to a close, six weeks only remaining; then comes a vacation of six weeks. The expense of a journey home on horseback will be very little more than the expense of residing here. A journey on horseback (if I can sit on a horse, for I have hardly tried since I left home) will be the very best thing for my health and spirits. Say, my beloved Parents, shall I again find a home under your generous roof? Can I doubt it? I feel like a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth; and am sometimes ready, almost, to lay me down and die.

I want very much to see my little brothers. I think I should delight to teach their young and tender minds to love their Creator and Redeemer; to pray to him morning and evening; to love their Parents and obey them in all things. I thank you, my Parents, a thousand times, for the religious instruction you gave me in childhood. It will never be forgotten. One of the most wicked and abandoned men in our country, has been known to observe that had it not been for the religious principles instilled into his mind by his father, he should have been a downright atheist. Of so much importance is early instruction. How ought I to bless my God for pious parents. But I have reason to lament that I so misimproved these blessings. What have you seen, what has any body seen in my life, since I professed to love God supremely, that gave any evidence of my sincerity? I may yet be deceived. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," says the blessed Saviour. Where are my fruits? All my hope must be in the atonement of Christ. "Other refuge have I none."

If I come home, I shall probably see you the last of next week. Do not expect me very strongly, for I may possibly,

after all, be disappointed in my plan. If I do not come, then, you must not conclude me sick till you hear from me. I think I derive consolation from the reflection that you are daily praying for me ; and I am never on my knees without praying that you may live to see your prayers answered.

Farewell. Conclude me safe, whether at home or abroad.

CARLOS.

Andover, June 21, 1817.

HONOURED AND DEAR PARENTS,

You will doubtless be surprised to see that I am again at Andover. I hasten to let you know the reasons and to give some account of my vacation. You already know the cause of my going to Connecticut. I spent three or four weeks with our friends in North Killingworth. A class-mate of mine came to Killingworth, and insisted on my spending a few weeks with him at his mother's house in Saybrook. I stayed with him till the close of the vacation, the twelfth of this month.

By giving up study entirely, and passing the whole time in bodily exercise, I recovered my health so far as to deem it expedient to return to this place, and try to stand it this summer. I may be disappointed ; for my complaint has frequently disappeared during a vacation of activity, but returned with double violence upon being again shut up in a study. How it will be now, time only can determine. I am at present hardly fit for study, being very poor in flesh, and troubled with pain in my breast. Indeed I have long been convinced that hard study will never agree with my constitution. Look at my health since I first went to Castleton Academy. How often have I been apparently near the consumption with a cough. Every cold that I take, unless peculiar care be taken, will, as long as I am unhardened by exercise and constant activity, endanger my life. If I should enter the ministry, unless my constitution should first undergo a great and radical change, I should not expect to live many years. My dear Parents, I had no idea of the labour of writing sermons until

very lately. To write one sermon in a week is here thought to be doing extremely well. It would require harder study than I have been accustomed to, and than my present health would endure, to write, in one week such a sermon as would be expected from one who has enjoyed my advantages. I have seen so many lamentable effects from the bad health of clergymen, that I dread them. I will give you one example that I have seen this vacation. An excellent minister has a weak constitution, and is subject to many complaints that keep him almost constantly indisposed. After hard labour in writing his sermons during the week, frequently, on the Sabbath, his health is so poor that he cannot preach more than half of the day. Monday morning he is seen riding out for his health. His people who are at work by the way-side, say, "Ah! he is well enough to ride out and take his ease; but he cannot preach—a fine story, &c." They think him not worthy of his hire; and instead of treating him with tenderness and sympathy, even the members of his church talk together about him as though he were to be blained—as though his sickness were all a whim, or a fit of spleen. In short, a minister must preach if he is able to be off his bed, or be charged with neglect of duty. Such treatment would throw a person of my feelings into the lowest state of dejection—it would kill me outright. I cannot think of it without tears. Several students who have completed their studies at this Seminary, have not ventured to take upon them the arduous work, the immense and responsible charge of the minister and pastor of a people, on account of their feeble health; but have conscientiously gone into some other more active employment.

I make these remarks with no direct reference to my case at present, but only to prepare your minds for what might happen. I think if I know my own heart, that I desire to live to the glory of God, and the good of my fellow men. I wish to keep in mind the day of death and the awful scenes of eternity. What is there worth living for but religion!

It is my present intention, if Providence permit, to stay

here my time out, till the last of September ; and to make a trial at preaching as the Professors advise me.

What destruction has death made in Orwell since I left it. I expect to have a solemn time if I ever live to enter your meeting house again. May God preserve my dear Parents and brothers, or prepare them for death. Your

CARLOS.

When Mr. Wilcox appeared before the public as a preacher, the expectations of those who had enjoyed the opportunity to appreciate his talents, were fully realized ; and they who had viewed him as subject to melancholy, and had formed their opinion from his enfeebled bodily constitution, were surprised at the elevated stand which he was enabled to take and maintain. In his sermons a classic purity of style was conspicuous. His thoughts were mature and elevated, adorned with elegance of diction, and in the delivery pronounced with eloquence. In his highest flights, no hearer was ever startled with a harsh or unintelligible word. Some passages may be faulty from a redundancy of words, and an exuberance of epithets, but when they were delivered, the hearers had rather the impression, that the mind by which they were composed, was filled to overflowing with rich thoughts and sweet expressions, than labouring to attain them. These characteristics of his early attempts in writing sermons and in preaching, did not vary essentially from those of his last. They were filled with poetic *thoughts*, yet the expressions and the collocation of words, were always pure and chaste prose ; and if any appearance of effort is discernible in his composition, it is to come down from the poetic elevation in which his thoughts most naturally soared, and speak with the simplicity of a child in plain prose.

It should however, be added, that it is not in the beauties of fine writing, that the chief merit of his sermons consists. They are plain and impressive exhibitions of the great truths of the gospel, and appeal to the conscience and the heart.

After having finished the regular course of Theological

studies at Andover, he chose to prolong his residence for a few months at that favoured place. In the spring of 1818, he returned to his father's house, where he spent a year. It was during this period, that he laid his plan for a Poem entitled the "Age of Benevolence." At the expiration of the year, his health being improved, he commenced preaching, and continued for about twelve months, failing scarcely a Sabbath. The first three months, he preached in Pittstown, N. Y. performing the various duties of a clergyman with great acceptance. He then visited the western part of Connecticut, and preached in the towns of Huntington, New-Stratford Society, now Monroe, Newtown and Norwalk.

Extracts from some of his letters, written during this period, are submitted to the public.

New-Stratford, in Huntington, Sept. 24, 1819.

Having wandered from place to place without letters of introduction and without friends, in search of employment, till I had spent almost my last cent of money, I was under the necessity of stopping and of denying myself the pleasure of attending commencement. You recollect your promise of writing me at New-Haven, by that time. I requested a man from this town, who went to that place on the day after Commencement, to enquire at the Post-Office for letters. No letter there. The week following, I sent again and received the same intelligence. I conclude therefore if you wrote at all, you must have written by some person who expected to see me in N. Haven. Be that as it may, I have not heard a whisper directly or indirectly from you since I left S——. Nor do I expect to hear now till you know where I am. To give you this information is the object for which I have taken up my pen; but since I have a large sheet before me, I may as well blot it over with something, as make you pay postage for white paper.

After I parted with you at the division of the roads, the burden which I had felt all the morning, in consequence of being obliged once more to sally forth without any particular des-

tion, and without any letter of recommendation or introduction, literally to seek my fortune, was soon removed by that freedom from all restraint, which being left on a sudden to one's self gives to the bosom swelling with feelings long repressed. When I had got off my horse at a shaded rock by the way-side, about a quarter of a mile from the place of our parting, and given myself up to the luxury of weeping a while over my situation, I then mounted again and rode on, as contented and happy as if my way was clear before me.

I arrived at L.— an hour before sunset. Put up at Mr. C—'s, a good house—landlord pious. A gentleman mentioned at the table that L.— ought to congratulate itself on being the birth-place of the prince of American poets. Upon hearing this speech, I, who had hitherto minded nobody but myself and nothing but my plate, suddenly looked up, and entered into a long conversation with the author, on subjects relating to his singular speech. He said he had lately read a foreign Review, in which was a critique on Mr. P's poetry, containing much about there being no poets in this country, and then placing Mr. P. at the head of them, mentioning likewise that we had no divines of note, except Mr. C.— &c. So Mr. Reviewer, whoever you are, it is very manifest *what* you are, and how much your opinion is worth on such subjects. After tea, I took a walk up the west side of the street running North. I met Mr. B. in company with another gentleman. We passed as near each other as possible. He looked at me but did not recollect me, and I felt so much inclined to be alone, that I passed without introducing myself. I saw no more of him while in L. I continued to pace the side-walk to and fro, from one end of the street to the other. The evening was one well calculated to delight the pensive mind. At sunset and after, the western sky was richly beautiful. L. is one of the most pleasant villages in the country; my walk was in the pleasantest part of it, the evening was one of the pleasantest in the year, and why should I go to my lodgings till the fear of being shut out of doors compelled me? Next day I proceeded onward as

far as N., the day after to S. Mr. D. was still unable to preach and his pulpit unsupplied. I offered to preach a Sabbath for him which was gladly accepted. I busied myself till Sabbath in reading the Christian Observer and Christian Spectator, with a design of comparing their merits in several particulars, and in reading Buchanan's Life, from which I hope to receive material benefit in some respects, especially from his maintaining while in college the spirit of devotion in a high degree, in the midst of the closest attention to mathematical studies; and from the energy and perseverance with which he pursued every good object that came in his way till death. After having preached on the sabbath, the next day I rode to N. and called at the house where those who had supplied the pulpit had boarded. The man of the house, one of the Society's Committee, being absent from home, I conversed with his wife who is a very intelligent and interesting woman. She observed that they were a large people, that they were pretty particular, and expected something above mediocrity, that they were already divided in consequence of having several candidates, and one in particular who came and offered to preach, thus pressing himself into the pulpit uninvited, that Messrs. O. and H. had been recommended to them, and finally, that the Committee had written to Mr. S. to recommend some one from the next class, having understood that there were young men of talents in it. So you see I had got out of my latitude. I had nothing to do but to back out with as good a grace as I could, and be off with myself. Ah me! I am in a strange land without a pass.

“Be hushed my dark spirit, for wisdom condemns
 What the faint and the feeble deplore,
 Be firm as the rock of the ocean, that stems
 A thousand wild waves on the shore.”

On returning to S. I went five miles out of my way to visit G. It is indeed a delightful place, and I almost thought

of settling down there and turning poet. I went so far as to enquire the price of board. I then turned my face northward again, deeming it high time to retreat into the woods and hide myself. I came to this place and preached a Sabbath and received a request to continue three months. I consented out of necessity; and here I am, labouring at the rate of 350 dollars a year, when I am in debt 630, 100 of which must be paid in two months, and the remainder as fast as possible. At this rate, I may possibly be free from debt some three or four years hence, should providence spare my life and health and reason.

As a man and his wife are but one, this letter must be considered as addressed to both of you, one complex person. Again, If a man and wife make but one, then either of you alone is but *half* a one. Consequently a letter from either of you alone will be but half a letter. Therefore if either of you write alone, you must write twice to my once, otherwise I shall not consent to balance accounts.

Yours with much respect and affection,

C. W.

Huntington, Nov. 2, 1819.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

Your letter came to hand just in time to relieve me from the fear of being forgotten, and from the fear that all was not well with you. I am permitted to call you brother and sister. That word sister sounds very novel and sweet in my ear. I was never before permitted to call any one by the tender and endearing appellation.

Permit me to congratulate you with all my heart on the birth of a young poetess. Does not the little stranger already begin to sing? Do not the bees begin to light on her lips to sip honey while she sleeps in the cradle; as according to fable they did upon those of Pindar? Have you never yet dreamt, as Socrates did respecting his pupil Plato, that you had embraced a young swan, which nestled in your bosom till its feathers were full grown, and then stretching out its

wings, soared to an immense height in the air, singing all the while with inexpressible sweetness?

I begin to look back upon the period which I spent with you as a golden dream, too bright to be forgotten, and too happy to be remembered without pleasure, but too transient to be remembered without pain, "pleasant but mournful to the soul."

I regret to hear that your trials continue. I hope that God will enable you to maintain your ground, and continue to blow not a "ram's horn," but the silver trumpet of the gospel, till the sound ring through all the vallies, and echo on the mountains, so long and so loud, as to wake the dry bones to life.

Have you seen Mr. S—'s letters to Mr. C.? They are admirable. The spirit with which they are written is altogether new in the history of controversy. The book is in this respect, as well as in others, the best piece of controversial divinity that ever I read.

My engagements in this place extend to the first Sabbath in Dec. inclusive. What will become of me then is uncertain. I trust the Lord will direct me, and provide for me.

Yours most affectionately,

C. W.

Norwalk, January 20, 1820.

— I have very strong reasons for not settling in the ministry at present. In the first place, I am in debt six hundred dollars; and the experience of other ministers has convinced me that unless I pay the debt before I settle, I shall never pay it. In the second place, I grow more and more confirmed in the belief that I can do more good in some other capacity than that of a settled clergyman. I said the same, years ago, but was advised and urged to make the trial as fairly as practicable. I have now preached about a year, and performed all the duties of a settled clergyman, except that of administering the ordinances. I have preached, and lectured, and visited; but while I have endeavoured to feed others, I have been starving my own soul. When I

hear others preach and pray, I am happy, I hope I am sometimes devout ; but when I preach and pray myself, I am neither devout nor happy. Solemn, alarming confession ! What shall I do ? Where shall I go ?

I have thought very seriously of what you said to me respecting a connexion with the Christian Spectator. The direction of my former studies and my present inclination, appear in favour of such a connexion. But I know not whether the thing can now be brought about. Let the subject rest for the present. I have my head full of a previous project, a project not just now started, but nearly completed. Now for a great secret. The year ending with March 1819, I spent at my father's house, exclusively employed in writing a *didactic poem* in the school of Young and Cowper. Now you may laugh at me, and pity me, and pray for me, but you must not advise me to give it up. Such advice will only distract me for a little while without persuading me. I have gone too far to go back. Five thousand lines are finished ; one thousand more are wanting to complete the plan. The subject is "The age of Benevolence ;" and you who know so well what is doing at the present day for the extension of Christ's kingdom, know the subject is a great and good one, and one that will do much towards saving the work from contempt. I have done nothing to it since last April, at which time I left it in its present state in order to pay some debts, that could remain unpaid no longer. I find that I can do nothing to it while I continue to perform all the various duties of preaching, lecturing, visiting, &c. I want my time all to myself, that I may have my mind all to myself. I am now resolved to devote five or six months to finishing, correcting, copying &c. &c. that I may get the work off my hands. I want some place for utter seclusion. Where shall I find it ? Dare I ask for a home under your roof ? I mean as a boarder, not as a beggar. Will it be convenient and agreeable ? Can I have a little lonely chamber ? Do write me a speedy answer to this singular request. Refusal will be less intolerable than suspense. I wish to know which way to turn. And now

since I have thus committed myself to your mercy, do not betray me nor despise me. It is not without a great struggle, that this secret is wrung from me. While I was with you I was a hundred times upon the very point of letting it out; but I had not resolution enough to meet the cold encouragement of mingled pity and affection. Remember me in those hours when a poor erring mortal most needs to be remembered.

C. W.

P. S. I shall probably repent that I have written this letter as soon as it is gone.

Norwalk, March 1, 1820.

Your kind letter was indeed a reviving cordial to my drooping spirits. My health has been failing for some time past, and with it my mind has felt its usual sympathy. The palpitation of the heart, a complaint which has afflicted me, more or less, for four or five years, has increased during the past fall, and the present winter, to an alarming degree. I have long been accustomed to pass it off with a laugh, but it has been gaining ground so long that it has become no laughing matter. It was brought on at first, by the weak consumptive state of health, with which I was afflicted during the whole of my first winter at Andover. Medicine appears to have no effect towards removing it. I have worn a strengthening plaster for a month or two, and have taken wine-bitters, prepared with various bracing ingredients. I have also taken the oxid of iron, together with various other *infallible cures*, but all to no purpose. Last week I was bled, because a young man in this place, who almost died with the same complaint, was cured by bleeding. But he was a person quite fleshy and full of blood. The very reverse is the case with me. I had no blood to lose, and fainted away before half a pint had been taken from me. I continued to faint during the day, so soon as I attempted to sit up. My disorder serves to weaken me in several ways; directly, by its violence, and indirectly, by injuring my appetite and disturbing my sleep. I am troubled with it some days, almost incessantly, and on none, am I en-

tirely free from it. It is much the most violent on the Sabbath. When the hour for public worship draws nigh, my trembling diffidence increases it to such a degree, as to prostrate my strength, and render my task almost insupportable. I have not preached for six weeks past, without suffering the most violent palpitation, during the greater part of the exercises. Several times, I have felt as if I should fall down with faintness, even in time of prayer. It is very disagreeable, as well as painful to preach, when I feel so. Last Sabbath I was not able to preach at all. My physicians advise me to give up preaching for the present. I have not written a sermon for ten weeks. If I preach any longer, I must write, but I cannot endure the labour of composing two sermons a week, without taking a great share of bodily exercise, and I cannot take any at all without bringing on my complaint. If I sit still, indigestion brings it on. Thus am I straitened on every side. But I hope that a little relaxation and systematic exercise, together with the opening spring, will enable me to study so much as not entirely to forget the use of my books and my pen. The beauties of your mountains on which I hope to take many a delightful ramble, and the beauties of your lakes and streams, together with the care of your garden; and above all your own sweet company, will restore my health and spirits, if any thing can restore them. I hope to grasp your hand, ere this month is at an end. Pray that I may be directed, and healed, and supported by Him who doeth all things well.

C. W.

These letters have been inserted, because they contain more full disclosures than could otherwise have been made, of his plans and feelings at the time they were written.— Though he had disclosed his intention of devoting some time to the writing of poetry, to two of his most intimate college friends, as appears from their answers to his letters, it is believed that this was the first time he definitely made known his design to write the “Age of Benevolence.”

He left Norwalk about the first of April, 1820, and through

relaxation and exercise, attended by the blessing of Divine Providence, he gradually increased in strength, and obtained a temporary relief from the disease with which he was so severely afflicted.

The two following years, with the exception of a few weeks, were employed at the house of a friend in Salisbury, Con. upon the above mentioned poem. On sitting down to this labour, he found it greater than he had anticipated, or at least we may draw this inference from the fact, that instead of getting it off his hands in a few months, only the first book was prepared to make its appearance after the lapse of two years. These years were not wasted in idle musings. His habits of study were such as become every student. His time was carefully divided between close application, efficient exercise, and relaxation of mind by devotional and literary reading. He wrote and corrected with great care, and endeavored to add a definite number of lines every day. On some days he wrote many more than he proposed to himself as his task, and in the review he examined, and re-examined, every word with nice discrimination.

He seemed to find high enjoyment in social reading, intermingled with free conversation upon the merits of the book read, the signification and power of words, and the philosophy of language. The North American Review was a favorite literary work. Foster's Essays, and Baxter's Saint's Rest were always on his table, and it is believed that scarcely a day passed in which he did not read some pages of one, or both of them. But the Bible was the book, upon the pages of which he delighted most to dwell. From all other books he would turn to this, with a glow of feeling, and with a cheerful expression, which made it manifest that he had chosen this for his heritage forever.

These two years were spent in uniform cheerfulness. He lost no time "weather-bound," or suffering under mental depression. Like every other writer, he saw days in which, from some indescribable cause, his mind was less fitted for originating thought, yet those days were not spent in despair-

ing complaints. They were employed in transcribing what he had previously corrected, or in select and judicious reading. He chose to see but little company, that he might prosecute his work without interruption: yet he evidently enjoyed society in a high degree, and was never more happy and eloquent, than when in the social circle he expressed his thoughts on literary subjects, or on practical religion.— His conversation was characterized by good sense, correct and delicate taste, and ardent piety. Of himself he spoke little, and always with humility. Before strangers he was reserved, especially on every thing relative to his own employment or feelings on the subject of poetry. Indeed, during these two years, he was never known to exhibit a line of poetry, of his own composition, to his most intimate friends. He preached a few times, but never without suffering for a day or two, and sometimes for a week afterwards, with the palpitation of the heart.

For a respite from study, he spent about ten weeks in the spring of 1821, at East-Haven, in the family of the late Dea. Morris. Of these days he often spoke as among the happiest in his life. The delightful scenery, the retirement, and the friends he there found, rendered them peculiarly exhilarating to his mind: and by that circle of friends, made happier by his company, he will never be forgotten.

At the expiration of the second year, he had written, or rather re-written, as appears from his letter of Jan. 28, 1820, about nine thousand lines, and prepared the first book for the press. To the friends with whom he resided, he read the first book and part of the fourth, and what may be added as exhibiting a trait of his character, he began by reading a number of unpoetic lines from Cowper and Milton, which he had transcribed for that purpose. He read the first book to two other friends, and it is not known that any other ever saw or heard a line of the production of these three years labours, until they saw the first part of his work from the press.

The plan of publishing the first book by itself, was adopted through the advice of one of the friends to whom he read

the manuscript, in whose judgment he placed great confidence, though all his other acquaintance, whom he is known to have consulted, thought it better to publish the whole at once. Had the state of his finances allowed him to have published the whole at his own expense, this course he would have preferred. It is deeply to be regretted, that the whole work, when thus prepared, or nearly so, for the public, was not sent forth under the author's own care. The reception which the first book met with, ought not to have discouraged him. The thousand copies printed, found as ready sale as could have been expected, considering it was but a fragment.

His own views and feelings, while his little work was in the press, and afterwards, are expressed in some of the following letters to his friends.

New-Haven, April 29, 1822.

“O that mine enemy had written a book!” This is the saying of an *author*, who thought it right to hate his enemy and to wish him all manner of evil. You may think this a sad beginning. I have just returned to my room from the book-store, where I saw the first hundred out of my thousand copies brought in; when lo! and behold! the three first copies which I laid my hands on, were bound all *helter-skelter*, the beginning in the middle, and the last end first. The bookseller snatched them up, and ran to the binders, then in came the binder, and we began to look them over one by one.—Soon there came in a man, and took up one and began to read. I trembled and hurried out of the house, but heard before I reached the door, the very *comforting* enquiry,—“*Who is this Carlos Wilcox?*” I will now go back to the beginning of my dealings with printers and booksellers, for as you perceive, I have begun this letter in the true epic style, that is, in the middle of my story. After I had recovered from the illness of which I informed you, I went to see Mr. C——. He had too much work on hand to print my *thing*. I then went by the advice of Mr. F——, to A. H.

Maltby & Co. and made a bargain for printing and doing up the work in the style in which you see it. This form was declared by every one, to be much more saleable than any other for a work of the kind and size. When I saw the printer's boy come into my room with the first proof sheet, I felt almost inclined to throw it into the fire at once, without looking at it; so painful was my solicitude respecting the appearance of my ideas in print. My agitation, together with my familiar acquaintance with every line, rendered me quite unfit to do the business of correction. But the worst of all was to find in the second proof, after some dozen of sheets had been struck off, that the printer had spelt "plough," "plow," and not because it was so in the manuscript, but because he thought it was sometimes spelt so, and would thus save turning up the end of the line. This you may well suppose was not very favourable for the palpitation of the heart. I went into the printer's office and had the press stopped for the correction of this error and several others. You know nothing about the pleasure of being in such a place, and hearing your poetry groaning beneath the press, and chinking in the type-setter's fingers. You never thus listened to the music of your own numbers.

The Rev. Mr. S.— has just called upon me and objected to the price of the poem; and I have been to the bookseller, and altered it from thirty-seven and a half cents to twenty-five. About fifty had been sold, but the buyers of these are to receive back the difference. Many of my friends have come to me and remonstrated against the change in the price. Mr. H—— tells me, it had been better to raise it to fifty. And Mr. D——, who has some acquaintance with the book-selling business, says it will not sell half as well in the city, as it would at a higher price. In a multitude of counsellors there is —— . I can bear complaints about *too low*, but not about *too high*, so the price must stand at twenty-five, though it will leave me, even if the whole edition be sold,

next to nothing, after deducting the expenses of printing, and the thirty-three and a third per cent of the bookseller.

Yours affectionately,

C. W.

New-Haven, May 31, 1822.

— I have lately received a very interesting letter from my mother, from which I have the happiness to learn, that two of my brothers have lately become hopefully pious.— My friend, I must preach the gospel, though I have much reason to believe that my health will fail, and my life be cut short. I shall endeavour to complete the “Age of Benevolence,” but perhaps at the rate of one book in a year. For the present I must do nothing but write sermons. O, pray for me. I have not preached yet, but I expect to attempt next sabbath. Where I shall spend the summer, is uncertain.

July 18.—If I can have my health, I must preach, or do something to enable me to pay my debts. I cannot write poetry while I am thus embarrassed. A young brother of mine has written, that he has begun to fit for college with a view to the ministry, and that our father has told him, that he must stop now, unless I can pay him very soon. He has written me a *pleading* letter, the thought of which, makes me weep.

August 27.—Your letter I did not receive till this morning, in consequence of being absent for a week. To some part of your plan I have strong objections. I wish you not on any account, to collect your money with the expectation of loaning it to me. I thank you a thousand times for your offer, but I cannot consent to accept of it. I *cannot*, because if I should die before I became able to refund the loan, you might lose it; whereas, if I should die without paying my father, the debt would be discharged by that event. At any rate, I cannot bring my feelings to accede to this part of your plan.

With respect to “The Book,” you judge correctly in say-

ing, that I shall not be able to do much towards it while engaged in preaching. I know very well that I shall not. The labour of preaching, with my palpitation of heart, produces such an exhaustion of strength and spirits, that to re-write an old sermon, or make out a new one, takes up the whole week, besides the many hours consumed by necessary and unnecessary interruptions. But as I have undertaken to preach again, I feel it my duty to continue, while my health will permit. The cold weather of winter, will perhaps put a stop to the business."

New-Haven, Dec. 6, 1822.

MY DEAR BROTHER ALONZO,

I have been informed by a letter from H——, that you have been dangerously sick, but are now on the recovery. I hope that this letter will find you quite well again. You are now, perhaps, better qualified to estimate aright the value of an interest in the salvation of Christ, than ever you were. When you lay on a bed of anguish, and appeared to be near the eternal world, did not all beneath the sun seem less than nothing and vanity? Did not the worth of the imperishable soul, then seem greater than that of the whole world? Do not forget what you then thought of sin, of the vain amusements and vain emoluments of earth. Do not forget what you then thought of the friendship, the company, the conversation, and the immoralities of the wicked. Continue to estimate things as you then estimated them, and to feel respecting them as you then felt. I hope that God has brought you to love him, and will now give you a heart to love him more fervently. Live near to God, my dear brother, and you will be happy here and hereafter. All things will work together for your good, in life, in death, and in eternity. God has designed by this sickness to show you how frail you are, how entirely dependent on him. What is our life, but a vapour that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away? On Tuesday of this week, I saw a girl thirteen years old, breathe her last, in the midst of weeping parents and sisters. She prayed

earnestly to Christ to have mercy on her, and on all around her. She prayed almost with her last breath, though in the greatest distress. It was to me a solemn, and I hope a profitable scene.

Pray for me, write to me, and give me an account of your religious views and feelings.

January 7, 1823.

I have lately read Scott's Life, and I think it has done me good. It is truly a valuable book. It far exceeded my expectations. What an example of strength of purpose, and indefatigable industry ! What self-denial and what singleness of aim ! What apostolic devotedness to the great work of the ministry ! There is likewise, in my opinion, much evidence of a great and original mind, much more than in his Commentary. There is a vividness of conception and expression, which we do not find in any of his works before published. Pray for me, my friend, that I may possess, not the greatness of Dr. Scott, but some of his self-denial, industry and devotedness.

You probably expect me to say what I intend to do in regard to the poem. Why really I cannot tell. I do not give up the intention of finishing it, at some future period. The first book will soon be forgotten ; and let it.— At some future period of my life, if it should be prolonged, and circumstances should permit, I may re-write the first book, and finish the rest, and then send abroad a volume, instead of a *primer pamphlet*.

Stratford, Feb. 16, 1823.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

By a letter from brother H. I hear that you are quite sick, and have been so for a considerable time. I have long waited in vain for a letter from you. Your sickness accounts for your silence. Were it not for the cold weather and unpleasant travelling, I think I should immediately start for Orwell. As it is, I feel it my duty to wait, at least till I hear something further respecting you. In the mean time, I

would gladly say something for your consolation, and something to show that I tenderly love you, and pray for you daily. You know well that the only source of true comfort, even in health, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the overflowing and inexhaustible fountain of light, and life, and joy, even in the vigour of our days, and in the sunshine of worldly prosperity. What then must He be in our days of pain and affliction. In such seasons, the question may be asked with double force, "To whom shall we go but to Him?" We need not go to any other. He is enough for the soul's eternal portion. If it be filled with all the fullness of God, it surely cannot want any thing more. Though your heart and flesh should fail, my dear mother, may God be the strength of your heart, and your portion forever. It is my continual and earnest prayer, that you may be speedily restored to health, that you may live to see all your children ornaments in the church and blessings to the world, and that you may enjoy an old age clearer than the noon day, without a cloud, bright with the visions of an approaching Heaven. May God spare you, that you may recover strength, before you go hence to be here no more. But should it not be the will of Heaven to restore you to health, I trust you will have strength of faith to support you in the sinking hour of death, and brightness of hope to cheer you in its darkness. I have lately seen a copy of the last letter, that my dear friend, Levi Parsons, dictated to Mr. Fisk. It was written only three days before his death. At the close of the letter, he breathes out his soul in a strain like the following. 'My mortal frame grows weaker every hour, but my imperishable spirit becomes more and more vigorous. The world fades away and recedes from my view; while heaven comes nearer and grows brighter. The world will soon vanish forever, and all will soon be heaven.' With such a view of the world of glory opened before him, did this ethereal spirit bid farewell to all below, clap his wings in triumph, and take its upward flight. I often think of him as walking in white among

the glorified immortals. I often think of him in connexion with his favourite hymn, beginning,

‘ When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I’ll bid farewell to every fear
And wipe my weeping eyes.’

I often think of him as among the ransomed of the Lord, who have returned from all their earthly wanderings, and come home to the heavenly Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and have obtained joy and gladness, where sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away ; where the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water ; and where God himself, with his own right hand, shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and fill their souls with his own fulness of purity and bliss. O, is it not enough, my dear mother, to die such a death as that of this dear servant of God, after having lived a life like his ? What more can we desire ? If we are thus prepared to leave the earth, in the high triumph of faith, or with the peace of humble and holy resignation, what matter is it, whether the summons for our departure come in youth, in middle life, or not till old age ? A few years, more or less than those appointed to us, in this world of darkness and sin, of sorrow and death, would hardly be remembered in that world where all is bright, and pure, and happy, and everlasting. While, therefore, I cease not to pray that you may be spared for the sake of your family and the church, I do not forget the more important petition, that you may abide in Christ while here, and that hereafter you may be a joint heir with him to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. I know that this has always been your prayer for me. Let it be so still. Pray also that I may have strength and grace to perform the duties of a faithful minister of Jesus. This you have long done ; and with regard to strength of body at least, I feel confident that your prayer is answered. Ever since the date of my last letter, I have been

able to preach twice on the Sabbath, and twice during the week. My health is now quite good, though I am obliged to be very cautious respecting my diet.—

March 3, 1823.

I received your last just as I had taken my pen to write a singing lecture to preach at Derby, from the following text : “ My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise.” I suppose you will regard this coincidence as a providential intimation, that it is my duty to give up preaching, and go to *singing* with a fixedness of heart. Your advice accords with that of a man of no less note than Mr. F——, who recently enquired of me when another number was coming out ; to which I gave answer that I did not know, as I felt it my duty to preach while I was able. His reply was in the following words : “ Yours is a high kind of preaching ; you get at people that we preachers cannot reach. The amount of good that Cowper has done, and will do, is incalculably more than he could have done as the minister of a single parish.” Yes, added Br. B——, who was standing by, “ a thousand times.”

The truth, my friend, requires me to confess that your advice and the opinion of these eminent christian friends, are pleasing enough to my heart. All my wishes, as well as my tastes, my studies, my habits of thinking, feeling, and acting, incline me to pursue the course recommended. I might mention others, who have concurred in the opinion which you have expressed on this subject. Even Mr. T., who is no great lover of poetry, as such, remarked to me some months ago, that he thought I could not do better than to continue writing for the public ; and Mrs. T. added that she was afraid the Age of Benevolence would not come, if I became settled in the ministry. The news-papers, as you may have observed, have at various times said enough to encourage me to proceed in my undertaking. I mention these things to convince you, that I have not hung up my harp in a pet of disappointed pride. I love it as well as ever I did ; and would continue

to manifest my attachment as I have begun, if my conscience and the christian public, instead of a few individuals, would bear me out in it. You may think that my conscience ought to operate in a different manner, in view of the tacit pledge of more books to come, given to the purchasers of the first. But if the first book alone is not worth twenty-five cents, I am sorry that any arguments of yours, should have prevailed on any person to purchase it. In saying this, I would not deny the greatness of my obligations to you, for all the pains you have taken to promote its circulation. For this I hope to be always grateful. But will not all the reaction you speak of, pass by you and light on my single head? If it will I shall be glad, for I have so many greater troubles, that this will scarcely be regarded. Some of these greater troubles are, my past neglect of theological studies for those merely literary—my past and present unfitness of constitutional temperament for the active, and public duties of the ministry—my total destitution of books, and my debts, which will keep me thus destitute for years to come, so that I must make sermons entirely out of my own head, filled as it has long been, with only poetical images, instead of divine truth. Another thing; the few sermons that I have on hand, written for the most part, at leisure, and among commentaries, lexicons, and systems of divinity, have given me more reputation, than in my present circumstances, I can possibly support under the weight of labours devolving on a settled minister. At least, the effort necessary to support it, increased as it perhaps is by my authorship, will leave me no time to count syllables on my fingers, and will probably break down my health and spirits, which are now sufficiently low. But notwithstanding all the disheartening circumstances in my situation and prospects, I am fixed in my determination to preach the gospel, while God gives me strength.—

Here are Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Antinomians, Arminians, Triangulars, Hopkinsians, Universalists, Socinians, and Nothingarians, huddled together in one fomenting mass, in this little town, containing only

1600 souls. A few years ago, all these sects had their representatives in the congregational church, and many of them have to this day. Some of each are generally at meeting on the Sabbath, one half of the day, at least, provided it has not stormed for a week past, and does not look likely to storm for a week to come.——

It is unpleasant enough to preach to such a mixed audience. But this is one of the trials, that I must endure with patience and fearlessness. Forget not to pray, that I may be supported, and guided by the Spirit of all Grace.

Your friend and brother,

C. W.

New-Haven, May 28, 1823.

—— With respect to my own affairs, I am to preach here one Sabbath more, and beyond that I have no definite plan. I hope that by next Nov. I shall have something in the shape of a home, of some kind or other. How it can be brought about, is more than I can possibly discover. I cannot descend to reason on the subject, and obtain the desired object by ordinary means; I can only wish for it, and dream about it, and imagine it just at hand, and of course, it is likely to be as far from me as ever. Would that I could break through the enchantment of a fond imagination! But I have not the strength, and health, and resolution to do it. I need the grace of God, I need the prayers of my friends, I need their sympathy and encouragement.——

Southbury, Nov. 15, 1823.

—— You have another daughter for me to name. Let me see,—*Julia* and *Adeline*.—What next? *Caroline*? No. That is too much like *Adeline*, to come next to it. We will lay that aside for the present. Shall it be *Amelia*? No. That is too much like *Julia*, to come so near it. You have now one of two classes of pretty names, you want one of another class. *Elvira* and *Almira* come into a third class. In a fourth, may be included *Charlotte*, *Antoinette*, *Juliet*. But the last is too much like *Julia*. They would look and sound

sweetly together for twin sisters. *Emily, Irene, Mary*, are sweet names, belonging to no class. If I were to choose among all these smooth liquid names, perhaps I should say that *Charlotte*, will come in well after *Julia* and *Adeline*. So much for names.—Yours, &c.

C. W.

This last paragraph has been transcribed from his letters, because it is an exemplification of the author's taste. He loved to dwell upon smooth, sweet-sounding words.

New-Haven, June 18, 1823.

Ten thousand thanks for your delightful letter. It was put into my hands by H——, at a moment when I needed something to exhilarate my spirits. I had just been gazing in solitary pensiveness, over the beautiful elms of this city, as their thick and fresh foliage slept without motion in the light of a golden sun-set. I had looked till the city, with its deep green groves, was left in the shade, and only the spire of its loftiest tower, was shooting up into the region of brightness. I had watched the last beams, till they had climbed the glittering pinnacle, and vanished in mid-air ; and with my eyes still fixed in their upward direction, and my head resting on my hand, as I sat alone at my window, I was musing on those bright visions of happiness, pursued by the imaginative youth, till they vanish in the clouds, and leave him to the dark realities of the world below,—when I was waked from my reverie, by the arrival of your letter. I read it again and again, till I felt completely restored to the region of common sense, and common life—the world of living, and acting beings of flesh and blood. The account that you give of the state of things in your society, reminds me that I am in a world where something must be done, besides musing, and dreaming. But with all your matter-of-fact plainness, you have, now and then, a touch of the romantic. “The little tumbler keeps its place on the mantle-piece, and frequently receives its portion of Scotch roses.” This is to my liking. It is just as our friend Cowper would have written ; and therefore it is just as it should be.

“Your flowers have come up ; but it is ten to one, if they do not get choked with potatoes and mustard, they being staple commodities here.” Well, let the flowers go ; for if they were good to make “nectar and cherubim broth,” we, creatures of clay, must take up with potatoes and mustard. The flowers of poetry and fine sentiment are often choked to death by the eatables of this eating world.

Southbury, Jan. 5, 1824.—After this long interval, I am going to fill out this sheet, instead of beginning with another, that you may see the attempt I made to answer your former letter. If I deserve no credit for this attempt, I deserve none for any thing ; for my life hitherto, has been spent in attempts that have come to nought—in beginnings with no endings. I live at present, by making resolutions of amendment, and trying with conscientious seriousness, and systematic industry, to put them in execution. But whether I shall succeed or not, is yet a matter of doubt. It must be determined by time and circumstances.

You ask what I am doing at Southbury. Who told you that I am spending the winter here I know not, but I shall probably not do it, unless I conclude to spend my life here. About three weeks ago, I received an invitation to settle here, and I am to give an answer within three weeks more. Some say it is my duty to accept the invitation ; some say it is not ; so that, let me do which I may, I shall not do my duty, in the view of some, for I cannot conform to the opinion of both. I am in a great strait. May the divine Head of the Church direct me to such a decision, as shall most promote the interests of his kingdom. I think I feel willing to do what impartial judges might say I ought to do. But where shall such be found, who are at the same time sufficiently acquainted with my circumstances, and those of the people here ? After all, I see not but that I must decide for myself, according to my own convictions of duty, in view of the heart-searching trial of the last day. I have an inclination to stay here. I have been wandering to and fro, so long, that I am strongly averse to packing up my little all into my

little trunk, and moving again, nobody knows where. This feeling, however, ought not to have much influence. But enough of this subject. Mention it not out of doors. You will know the result before many weeks are past.

At a late minister's meeting in this region, I had the pleasure of seeing your old friend Mr. B.— He appeared in fine health and spirits. He had just returned from a kind of missionary visit to B,— and talked much of what revivals are doing to Socinianism. At the minister's meeting, a sermon was preached on the “year of the Lord's recompenses for the controversy of Zion.” At the time for criticising the sermon, your friend became quite eloquent in his way. His whole face kindled to a glow, and his eye sparkled with the fire of genius ; as in speaking of the overturning and dashing together of nations in Europe and Asia, he remarked, that the Almighty will come in the day of his vengeance, and “break up old marble, the repose of princes,” and sweep away his enemies, and their refuges of lies with them, till the way is prepared for the universal establishment of his own kingdom of righteousness and peace.

I have recently been to B,— to attend the Installation of my right hand friend. Being sent for, once and again, to preach the sermon, I set off in a chaise, and hurried along through snow drifts, and mud, and rain, but after all failed of getting there in season, in consequence of being turned back, by the rise of water in some of the streams, crossing the road. But I made a pleasant visit of several days. Mr. N,— was there, at work at his Hymn Book. He has a fund of knowledge, derived from his observation, compared with the word of God. This makes his conversation highly interesting and instructive to his christian friends, in whose society he appears to take as much real delight, as any man I ever saw.

My health is good, except that I have something of the dyspepsy now and then, but not enough to make me see visions of unearthly beings, and imagine that I converse with them face to face. You will understand this allusion, if you have seen the article on Swedenborgianism, in a late number

of the Christian Spectator. I have just been conversing for two hours, with one of the converts to this system of fanaticism. He knows that there is a God, because it has been revealed to him. Millions of angels and spirits of departed men, are around him every day; and he sees them. It has been his great business and delight, for seven years, to talk and sing with them. He has conversed with all the kings of England, with all the great men of antiquity, that he has read of, and even with the giants of patriarchal times. The winged spirits of little children, too, are among the multitude, and what is not at all strange, they sometimes read in Dilworth's Spelling Book, in classes as at school. These spirits are all dressed in white, they come in rows as if *strung on strings*; and when they first come into sight, they generally repeat the Lord's prayer. They delight in prayer as much as we do, and he *guesses* much more. When I pray in the family, he interprets, or communicates my words to them, for which they seem very grateful, as the meaning comes very *hard* to them in consequence of passing through *two*. They visit him at night, and make his room as light as day; and what is odd enough, they often tuck up his bed, as no mortal ever tucked it up. Sometimes those appear who have been asleep so long that they have forgotten their own names; and so he has to tell them. They often give him a message to their relatives and neighbours, who are yet in the flesh; but he never delivers it, because he is afraid that people will think him insane, or under the influence of a diseased imagination, which according to his frequent assurance, is in no degree the case. And the man really appears perfectly rational on every other subject, and very intelligent and pleasant withal. While conversing on this subject he appeared so sincere, and serious, that you could not have the heart to laugh in his face; and as to reasoning with him, you might as well have reasoned with one of Ossian's ghosts, moving straight forward out of sight and out of hearing, in the midst of stormy clouds. The testimony of Moses and the prophets, is now superseded by that of millions risen from the dead.

By the way, were not our first parents Swedenborgians? Our honourable friend Milton, who knew all about it, and was himself poetically a Swedenborgian, makes father Adam say to mother Eve, not only that,

‘Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,’

but also,

————— ‘How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we *heard*
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other’s note,
Singing their great Creator.’

This reference to Milton, puts to flight all these visions of “airy nothing,” and brings to remembrance your kind wish, that I were with you again to read and comment.

I wonder what Mr. T. finds to do this winter, now Mr. O. is gone. I suppose the people will not go forward and settle a minister while Mr. O. is absent. If you don’t take heed this engaging a supply for a year, will prepare the way for perpetual desolation. A kind remembrance to Mr. T. and his sisters, Mary Anne, and little Charly. I spell Mary Anne with a final *e*, because it makes the word look more classical, and more like the name of a *queen*, a very good reason in these days of the universal reign of the Holy Alliance.

Yours, &c.

C. W.

Southbury, May 10, 1824.

The sad intelligence in your letter came like a thunder-clap in a clear sky. I had not before heard a whisper respecting your afflictions. I had supposed that you were all passing along, from one day to another, as pleasantly as ever. So little do we know, while we are happy ourselves, what absent friends may be enduring. It would seem as if this

were no world to be merry in. Happy we may be : but ours should be a sober happiness—a happiness consistent with reflection, and prepared for sorrowful tidings—a happiness, whose foundation is truth, whose source is God, and whose end is heaven.

From what you say respecting yourself, and from what I heard last week in New-Haven, I conclude that you are now fast recovering. What you say of H—'s situation expresses all a mother's tender love and foreboding anxiety. It goes to my heart and thrills through my frame, to hear you say, "I feel a great and increasing solicitude for my poor H—: he seems to be restless and unhappy." There is something most deeply interesting in hidden sorrow—something that makes the most powerful appeal to our sympathies. Why that restlessness? Why that sudden rising up and sitting down,—that walking the room with folded arms and eyes fixed on vacancy? Why that heaving sigh and that starting tear? Thou poor child of grief, there is a voice that is now calling in accents of divine compassion, "Come unto me and I will give thee rest." O that word *rest*, how sweet and how full of meaning as it comes from the lips of the Redeemer! Here is rest from the burden of guilt, the annoyance of temptation, the fear of death, and the gnawings of the worm that never dies. Here is rest from the vexations and labours of the world, rest in the arms of infinite love, rest eternal in the paradise of God. Who that feels the need, can refuse to accept of it?

I rejoice to hear that you found such support and peace, when your heart and flesh so utterly failed, and left you powerless as an infant, in the hands of the great arbiter of life and death. What can you desire for your children, but that interest in a Saviour's mercy, which will yield them like support and peace, when they too are brought into the deep, and troubled waters of affliction. What greater happiness can you wish for on earth, than to see them sitting down with you, at the table of a Redeemer, whose service is all their delight? May this happiness soon be yours; then the fears

and sorrowings, that you speak of, will flee away, or lose all their gloom and bitterness.—

During the summer of 1824, Mr. Wilcox devoted his leisure hours to the composition of a poem, which he pronounced before the Society of Φ . B. K. at Yale College. This poem with some additions, the last literary labours of his life, is presented to the public in this volume.

About this time he complied with an invitation to preach in the North Society of Hartford, as a candidate for settlement. In October, this newly organized church and society gave him a call to become their minister. The following brief extract from a letter written soon after, will show his feelings on the occasion.

Hartford, Oct. 5, 1824.

— Last Wednesday, I received a call from the North Church and Society to become their minister. Pray much for me, that I may not be deserted of God in this solemn crisis of my life. I feel that I am standing on delicate ground. Much is expected from me. A congregation is to be gathered, a church to be built up. Much is at stake. Who is sufficient for these things? I need a great increase of grace.—

In December 1824, he was ordained, and we are to contemplate him in a new and highly responsible station. From his first appearance among this people, as a spiritual guide and teacher, a cordial attachment commenced, which increased until his separation from them, and then was by no means diminished.

In his intercourse with his people as a minister, he united faithfulness with the most delicate propriety. He was welcomed in every family, as an intimate friend, in whom every heart felt interested, and reposed confidence, and all his conversation was such as to secure respect and affection. No weak places were found in his character, nothing in his con-

versation in the family, or social circle, to diminish the impressions made by his preaching. He was eminently happy in relation to the people of his charge ; he felt at home, and had all the tokens of kindness from them, that could render his labours pleasant, and encourage him to preach, with plainness, the great truths of revelation.

The pressure of duties, and the deep interest which he felt in the performance of them, soon began to exhaust his strength and overpower his feeble constitution. His letters, disclosing some of his feelings while a Pastor, and the trials which he endured and anticipated from his infirmities, will be read with interest.

Hartford, January 20, 1825.

— Why is it that you are so often, and so severely chastised ? If the Lord chasteneth whom he loveth, does he not sometimes proportion the measure of his chastisement to that of his love ? If you will not allow that your great afflictions are proofs that God's love towards you is great, I trust that you will live to see them made the means of promoting your love to him, till it becomes great. What a vale of tears is this world ! I have thought much of this truth since my last visit to Vermont. For a day or two after I reached the town in which my parents reside, I felt such a weight upon my spirits, in view of the sad changes among the families of my acquaintance, during an absence of six years, that I could hardly be happy under my parental roof. Six heads of families had died out of the eight families nearest my father's. Besides these deaths, there had been others, and two others had been excommunicated from the church, and had broken the hearts of their widowed parents. Both of my parents had been brought apparently near to the borders of the grave ; and so had one of my brothers, but they were preserved.

Thus you see that your situation is not peculiar. You never thought that it was. You do not need the philosopher's consolation, that yours is the common lot of humanity. You

have comfort far above this. When you are in heaviness, you think upon God. What time you are afraid, you put your trust in him. He will never leave you.

I rejoice to hear that Mr. T—— has been preserved from the mental derangement, which he so much fears, whenever he becomes unusually ill. This must be a great blessing in the midst of all your afflictions, and the convalescence of H—— must be another; another must be the attentions of the kindest of daughters and sisters. Thus there is many a drop of sweetness in your bitter cup. The gloom of your situation is cheered by many a ray of comfort, shining directly from heaven, and by many more reflected from the earth around you. Why then may you not be happy. You are so, I trust, without any counsel or exhortation of mine, when I myself need support and consolation far above what I enjoy.

I tremble at the step that I have taken in consenting to become a minister of the gospel in this city. There are already moments when I feel as if I should, at no distant period, sink under the weight of labours and trials that is coming upon me, and pressing every day more and more heavily. I know not what is before me, but I have reason to fear much evil from the state of my heart, and my sad want of ministerial qualifications in other respects. This is not *affected* humility, nor is it real humility. It is no more nor less than a plain statement of the truth. My health is at present quite good, but the time to try it will come, when my present stock of sermons is gone. I must be up and doing.

March 14, 1825. Of my own health, I can only say, that it is just good enough to enable me to drag along with my burden. But this burden is becoming heavier every day; and I fear it will ere long crush me. My stock of sermons runs low. To write new ones, as fast as I want them, or rather as fast as my people want them, draws prodigiously upon my strength. There are times when I walk my room, and in the anguish of my spirit cry out, "What shall I do?" I have preached twice every Sabbath since I was settled, except one. I had more of my palpitation yesterday, than I have had be-

fore for a year or two. This spring and summer will be the trying season with me.

We have been hoping for a revival, and one or two have given some evidence of conversion, but now all are again as cold and lifeless as ever. Pray for us. O for a heart to take delight in my work. It is hard for a poet to love the labours of the ministry.——

Mr. Wilcox was undoubtedly injudicious in expending his strength. His sermons were prepared with great care—not with too much,—for no minister ever preached too good a sermon; but those of Mr. Wilcox were long, and the deep feeling with which they were delivered, almost uniformly exhausted him. He might not have been sufficiently attentive to regular exercise. When he exchanged with neighbouring clergymen, he generally preached his longest sermons in the pulpits of his brethren, and thus, instead of making his exchanges subservient to relaxation, he more commonly returned with an entire prostration of his strength.

Hartford, June 22, 1825.

I am the most dilatory of all letter writers. No one else could let such letters as yours, lie unanswered for weeks and months together. It will hardly do for me to plead that I have been absent for several weeks, on a visit to New-York and Philadelphia, for I might have written you from both of those cities, and given you some account of the sublime, and beautiful, and wonderful, that I heard and saw in the natural, the intellectual, and the moral world. But it is all gone like a dream when one awaketh.

I have returned, and resumed my labours again, but with very little hope of being able to continue them long. My nights are sleepless, after preaching. My strength and my spirits fail; and there are times when I am well nigh ready to give up the ministry, at once, and go on to a farm to get some hardihood of constitution. I think it highly probable, that I shall have to come to this, at no very distant period.——

July 2. After a week's interruption, I sit down to add a little more to my journal of a letter. Last Sabbath I attempted to preach, but after proceeding ten minutes, with my sermon, I was obliged to stop, to prevent fainting from the palpitation. I have studied none this week, and know not when I shall begin again. My people are urgent in their request, that I should journey for two or three weeks, and visit the Springs and the sea-side. I shall probably go somewhere, next week, in search of health, though I have no hope of deriving more than a temporary benefit, from a temporary suspension of the labours of the ministry. Preaching, and close study, are two just the worst things in the world for my complaint.——

In the summer of 1825, his health became so feeble that he was obliged to seek relaxation by leaving his charge. He was absent about two months, in which time he visited his parents. This was his last interview with them. Some extracts will now be made from his letters, disclosing distinctly his fears, his trials, and his hopes.

Sept. 16, 1825.

Yesterday I reached Hartford. To-day I have been visiting the sick and the afflicted; and this evening, I am writing to you. I have lived so at random for the last two months, in stages, and steam-boats, and hotels, and boarding-houses, without domestic order or quiet, not to say family religion, that I feel most unfit to enter at once into the spirit of my many, and arduous duties. Two months more, spent like the past, would ruin me. You may well think that I have but little piety, to bear so short a trial no better. And such is the fact. I have indeed but little, if I have even that. I hope my labours will soon be performed with a spirit more congenial than at present.——

Oct. 17.—A chief of the Sandwich Islands, says, when he receives a letter from his sister, he sits down alone and reads it, and it is just as if his sister whispered in his ear. Let me then whisper to you that I am almost discouraged, in regard

to the "physical" state of my heart, after which you enquire. Though not as bad as its moral state, it is bad enough ; and what is worse, I see not that there is any prospect of its growing better, while I continue to preach. I exert myself to keep up my spirits as well as I can. I tell no one around me the half that I suffer, for it would do no good. I am determined to hold out as long as I can, with all proper attention to diet, and exercise, and relaxation. My prospects are by no means flattering. I have frequently, for the last fortnight, when I have thought of them, felt a painful trembling ; and more than once the anguish of my spirit has been such as to wring from me the reluctant tear. This has been, when I have found myself dreading the labour of preaching, after being exhausted with the labours of the study, during a week of more than ordinary business. I can study hard through the week, or preach on the Sabbath, either of them alone ; but to do both, is more than I can bear without groaning, and coming frequently to the very verge of sinking. I know that I need a stronger faith, and a higher tone of piety. With these, I might preach with the palpitation, and suffer less from the exhaustion of animal spirits, if not of bodily strength. But I must speak of myself as *I am*, and not as what I might be in body, if I was what I ought to be in soul. What will become of me I know not. What shall I do ? Give up preaching, and have good health ? Or continue it, and live on, at this poor dying rate ? Perhaps you will hardly dare to advise me. Who then will do it ? If I must decide entirely for myself, I shall take the latter course, and leave the event with the great Arbiter of life and death.—

Nov. 27, 1825.—I have been for the past week, more seriously sick than I have been for ten years. I preached half a day last Sabbath, and caught a cold which seemed to settle in the region of the heart, where there had been for some time so much unnatural muscular excitement. This produced great soreness, and frequently very intense pain, particularly when coughing. I must resort to some more efficient remedies, or I shall probably not be well very soon. May God be my re-

fuge in this day of trouble. This morning, I told the physician, that I had almost all the symptoms of passing by a slow fever into a decline. He made no reply, but set himself about writing a recipe. I have some serious fears as to the result of my sickness. I fear that I am neither ready nor willing to die. But why art thou cast down, O my soul ; why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God.—

Dec. 1.—Last night was the most comfortable of any since I was taken ill. I think myself decidedly on the gaining hand, in almost every respect. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. I shall, in all probability, ask a dismission soon after I am able to get about again. I cannot think of rushing again into the labours, which will so certainly be followed by consequences like those which I am now suffering. I have now no remaining doubt, as to my inability to perform the duties of a settled minister. It is quite manifest, that the interests of my church and society have suffered, on account of my being absent so much, and giving up extra meetings. It is the complaint of every one, that the state of vital religion among us has long been very low. It is so in the other churches, as well as in mine ; and therefore I am not regarded as particularly the guilty cause.—

Dec. 15.—Thus you see that my society are quite spirited, and are prosperous in a pecuniary respect. This will very much lessen the trial of leaving them. A trial it will be, indeed, to leave my dear church and congregation, and leave the ministry, and leave so delightful a situation as mine, and cast myself again upon the wide world, without employment, and without a home ; but I see not that I can avoid it. Without employment, however, I will not be, if God has given me talents, that I can in any way use in his service. A great variety of talents is needed in this day of universal action and improvement. But I will say no more on this subject in this place, lest I expose my vanity. I hope you are very happy, without any thing to disquiet you. But you too must have your trials. It is no doubt best for us all, that we should find thorns enough on our pillow, to keep us from sleeping life

away, and waking at last, unprepared for eternity. May your sorrows always be as few, and as light, as your spiritual safety and prosperity will permit.—

Jan. 31, 1826.—You see I have once more reached my home, if home there can be, without the pleasures, and endearing associations of domestic life. For just twenty years, I have been a sojourner in as many different towns; and what wonder if I feel very much a citizen of the world? I begin to feel somewhat sad, as I draw near to the time, when I am to undergo the last trial I shall make of my ability to endure the labours of a settled minister. But it is best to wait in silence for the issue. I hope God will prepare me for it, and glorify himself by it, whatever may become of me.—

March 4.—I have presented a communication to my society, the substance of which is, that I feel it my duty to resign my charge, believing that the circumstances of the society, and church connected with it, are such as to require much more labour for their best good, than I am able to perform. This communication was not written without many prayers and tears. Nor was it written without long and serious deliberation. I have, however, been persuaded to suspend my request for a short indefinite period, to give time for further satisfaction in regard to my health, and, if necessary, to find a successor. I had no expectation of finding such unanimity in the wish for me to stay longer. My communication has called forth a stronger expression of attachment, than I had supposed to have existed.—

To exhibit still more distinctly his motives, for requesting a dismissal, the communication to which he refers is here inserted.

To the North Ecclesiastical Society in Hartford, at their annual meeting March 1, 1826.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

You are all aware of the feeble and precarious state of my health. During the year which is now brought to a close, I have been able to preach but just half of the Sabbaths, and to perform but very little labour beside: The nature of my

complaint is such, that there is no good reason to hope, that I shall be radically and permanently better, while I attempt to pursue the united labours of the study and the pulpit. I have myself no expectation, that if I remain your minister the next year, I shall be able to do any more, than I have done during the past. But to me it appears abundantly evident, that the circumstances of this new society, and of the church connected with it, absolutely require that much more should be done. I cannot then avoid the conclusion, that it is my duty to resign my charge. It seems to me a duty, which I owe to you, to your families, to the church, and the congregation of immortals that assemble with you in the house of God. It is affecting to think how little I have been able to do for the salvation of my people. Indeed the thought has been at times, and is now, too oppressive to be endured.

It may perhaps be the opinion of some, that, while I am able to go through with the mere delivery of a sermon, I ought to continue the trial of my strength, in hope of its increasing. To me, however, it seems clear that the year and a half, which I have spent with you, has been a trial long enough, if not too long, for the best good of my people. I must also be permitted to say, that I prize your respect and affection too highly, to be willing to be almost a burden on your hands, till I lose or begin to lose both, especially when without their continuance I could neither be happy nor useful as your minister.

Perhaps this communication may appear to be hasty. To explain this appearance, it is necessary to observe, that it did not occur to me, till the day before yesterday, that this meeting of the society was so early in the month. The subject of the communication has been one of daily thought and prayer for two months; and this meeting has been expected as the proper time for it to be made public.

I have been with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And it was in my heart to live and die with you. But it seems the will of God that it shall not be so. In that will I would humbly acquiesce.

It is therefore my sincere and earnest request, that you will unite with me in calling a council, to take into view the existing facts of the case, and to dissolve the relation between us, if they judge it best for the interests of the society and the church connected with it, and for the great cause of truth and righteousness, and the salvation of souls.

Wishing that grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, may be multiplied to you and yours continually, I subscribe myself,

Your affectionate Pastor,

CARLOS WILCOX.

March 28.— ———What a serious work is that of a minister of Christ! Since writing the paragraph above, I have been to the bed-side of a dying parishioner. I had but just finished the last line, when my door opened suddenly, and I was requested to visit a lady immediately, who was but just alive. This was the first intimation I had received of her sickness. Through what a heart-rending scene have I passed since I began this letter, only an hour ago. I was then in a playful mood, though greatly fatigued. Now I feel a great heaviness of spirit, accompanied with the exhaustion of sympathetic grief. This is the fifth time within a month, that a messenger has called me away from the study, or the social circle, to the bed-side of the dying. But I am too much depressed to dwell on these sad scenes. In several of them, however, there have been circumstances full of comfort.——

May 20.—I shall leave Hartford next week unless my people insist upon having a farewell sermon. I am very unwilling to preach one, as it can only awaken sympathies to be indulged to very little purpose. I find my interest in their welfare growing stronger, as I am about to leave them.——

To another correspondent he expressed his feelings with still more particularity.

June 10.—You have heard that I am no longer minister of the North Church in Hartford. When the tie was cut, I felt

such a shock as I never felt before. But I trust that all will be ordered well for me, and for this Church and Society. It has been a difficult thing to get away from this dear people ; and nothing but the strongest conviction of my inability to do what ought to be done for them, could have carried me through it. The Society voted, unanimously, to grant me leave of absence for a year, with a continuance of my salary. But as I could give them no reason to hope, that at the end of that period, I should return with health permanently established, I could not conscientiously accept of their proposal. After all this, a remonstrance, with thirty-five names, was laid before the Council, on the ground that they were willing to run the risk of the proposed trial of a year's absence. I submitted it entirely to the Council to say what ought to be done, and they dismissed me. Something was said among my people about paying back to me the two hundred dollars which I gave to their funds, and the one hundred which I paid for supply of preaching in my sickness. But at length this course has been adopted ; to let my name stand on their records as giving the two hundred dollars, and to remunerate me, by a voluntary subscription, which has swelled into a present of five hundred dollars.

What will now become of me, I cannot tell. I have some expectation of spending the summer at Newport, for the benefit of bathing in the surf, and enjoying the sea-breezes. Perhaps I may preach some,—perhaps I may write some poetry. But all is uncertain. I feel that I am once more afloat in the world, and the feeling is at times sufficiently uncomfortable. I hope yet to do some good in the pulpit, and with my pen, if God spare my life ; but I never expect to be again so pleasantly situated as I have been in Hartford.—

June 20.—I am rejoiced to find that you remember me in my wanderings, and continue to take an interest in all my concerns. I hope you will not forget the dear people that I have left, and will not cease to pray, that they may not long be as sheep without a shepherd. As to myself, it is comparatively of little consequence what becomes of me. I

say not this because that I regret that I resigned my charge, though I may sometimes be made sad, by the thought that it should be necessary to do it. I say it not because I am unhappy on that account. I hope that in whatever situation I may be placed, in the providence of God, I may be able to look to him, as my chief portion, and be content.—

June 28.—And now that I have despatched my business, permit me to say, “ Good morning to you, to the dear Anne, and A——” I begin to grow quite impatient to hear from your family, and from the dear people that I have left. I have heard nothing from Hartford since my departure. I however expect to hear nothing till I write myself. Well, then, what shall I say? Shall I begin with an account of the weather, which is always the first subject of conversation, the world over? This cannot be interesting to you, except in its bearing on my health and spirits. The fortnight that I have spent here, has been almost all of it, too cold for my comfort. Several days have been passed by a good fire. For a week it has been rainy, and is now becoming somewhat warmer. It has hitherto been too cold, to think of Newport air, or Newport beach and surf. But I am going down, on Saturday, and shall probably remain there for two or three months, if I receive any benefit to my health.

You have probably heard of me by Dr. P——, whom I saw in Providence. I hope you have not heard any thing bad respecting me. You must be very cautious about receiving conjectures, and dreams, and such like shadowy things, for substantial matters of fact.

Permit me, my dear friend, to take this opportunity to express to you, and to Mrs. M—— and your family, my grateful sense of your kindness, which has been to me so great, and so constant. I shall ever take an interest in your welfare. May the best blessings of heaven be yours.

Newport, July 5.

I have just seated myself in my new lodgings. My room is in the third story, and the south-west corner. The west

window looks over the town, and the south commands an enchanting view of the ocean, extending almost half around the horizon. I have been sitting for half an hour, with my eyes fixed on this circular expanse, admiring the beautiful blue, and the white sails moving over it. Fifteen or twenty are now in sight, scattered along the line where the sky and sea seem to meet. I have no reason yet to complain of fogs; but the wind from the water is often too fresh for my comfort, and I fear for my health. The people here think a north wind the softest, and sweetest of all the airs of heaven. What a world of contradictions is this? and what contradictory creatures are we that live in it. As long ago as the days of Horace, the rich and the gay of the city were forever talking of the beauty of fields, and groves, and lakes, and mountains, and sighing to enjoy them; while the poor, and plain people of the country were always admiring the palaces, and pomp of the city, and panting to live in the midst. And now the inhabitants of the sea-board are praising the air from the country, and welcoming it, with great delight; while those of the interior are quoting poetry about the cool breath of ocean; and opening all their windows and doors to invite it in. As to my health, I am not yet satisfied about the effect of these winds and waves. One thing is certain, that from some cause or other, during several days, I have had a more violent pain in my breast than I ever felt before. It has left a very uncomfortable sensation of soreness. If I continue here, I am afraid I shall be obliged to leave this beautiful situation, and pleasant family, for a place less elevated and unconfined.—

Soon after the date of this, he wrote to another friend, and though the letters are similar, there is no impropriety in the insertion of both.

Newport, July 13.

You may wish to hear something about my present situation and prospects. I have taken lodgings in a house more pleasantly situated than any other here. My room is in the south-west corner of the third story. My west window over-

looks the town, the beautiful harbour, with its sails and steam-boats, its islands, and forts, and light-houses. My south window commands a view of the blue rolling deep, extending almost from east to west. Here are fifteen or twenty white sails almost always in sight from this same window. The ocean's dying roar sometimes comes to my ear. The distance to the shore in a south direction is two or three miles ; to the long, beautiful beach, in an east direction, it is only three-fourths of a mile. The land of these shores and islands lies in smooth swells, and long drawn slopes, and is rich as a garden. As to my health, I must say, that I am not yet satisfied whether it will be best to spend the summer here. If I do, I fear I shall be obliged to leave my present lodgings for a situation less exposed to the sea-breezes, which are here so fresh even at noon, and frequently towards evening, that I must shut down my windows, or suffer for not doing it. Either these bracing winds, or bathing in the surf, or both, or something else, has given me, for several days past, a more violent pain in my breast than I ever felt before. But I have less of my palpitation than usual. I must therefore stay here a while longer, at least, in order to make a faithful trial of this climate. I preached the last Sabbath, and have engaged to preach the next, if I am well enough. May the Lord bless you, and yours, abundantly, and continually.

Newport, July 13, 1826.

— I thank you most sincerely for the intelligence with which your kind letter commences ; and I praise God for the work which is the subject of that intelligence. If M.— has become indeed a christian, it is an event highly important to your family, as well as to herself. I pray God that it may be a great blessing to every member. How happy, beyond the common lot, must be that family, in which every member loves the Saviour. May you enjoy this happiness. May you enjoy it soon, and as long as shall be best for your eternal interests. It seems probable that Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha, constituted a family, and they were all

the followers of Christ, and there Christ delighted to dwell. May he dwell with you in Spirit, and shed abroad his love in every heart. You say that you lament that M—— cannot have my instructions in her present interesting state. I trust that she will have those which shall be much better. The value, that you seem to set upon my instructions, makes me feel more deeply my insufficiency, and my unfaithfulness, as a minister of the gospel. It now appears to me, that I did very little, while in Hartford, to bring my hearers to a saving knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. I sometimes wonder, that my dear people could bear with me as they did, in my coldness, as well as in my weakness. When I look back to the work that I was appointed to do among you, it seems as if I failed in every part of it. May the great Head of the Church, speedily send to you, not only a healthier minister, but one far more spiritual and devoted. It is only by offering such a prayer, that I can show any of the gratitude which I feel towards my dear people, for their persevering kindness to me. My interest in the welfare of the church and society will continue, wherever my future lot may be cast. In this connexion, permit me to thank you, and all your family, for all your kindness, and theirs, when I have been sick, and when in health, when present, and when absent. May the Lord bless you richly, and continually.

Worcester, July 18, 1826.

— You will perhaps wonder how it happens, that I am writing to you, from the middle of Massachusetts, instead of the south side of R. I. The case is just this: I found that the strong and damp sea-breezes of Newport, produced a stricture in my breast, attended with severe pain at times, and with constant soreness. I was obliged to relinquish bathing in the surf, and at last to quit the town. I am now on a tour to the mountains of Vermont, and New Hampshire. My route from Newport to Keene, and Bellow's-Falls, lies directly through Worcester. I shall probably travel up Connecticut River, as far as Lancaster, then turn to the East,

and climb the White Mountains, and thence proceed to the sea-coast, perhaps to Portland, perhaps through Concord and Andover, to Boston. I am resting at Worcester, for a few days, because I wish to get rid of all my soreness of lungs and throat, in this inland valley, before I expose myself to the evening air, in stage-coaches and on lofty mountains. Last evening I saw Mr. C.— for a minute, while one carriage was unloaded, and another loaded. Of him, I made as many enquiries as the time allowed, respecting my dear people, and Hartford in general, and your family in particular. I am sorry to hear that you do not succeed in obtaining a permanent preacher. But I trust, God will provide one in his own best time.

Respecting my health, I can only say, that I have had but little of my palpitation, this summer, as I have preached but very seldom, and studied none at all. What will become of me, I know not, but I will not murmur at the allotments of providence, for they are all wise, and good. May the Father of mercies grant to you, all that you need, for the present, and the future life.

July 27.—I fear you think me foolishly, if not fatally in love with the charms of poetry. You think me too much under the influence of the imagination, to be happy myself, or to make others happy. Perhaps I ought to reproach myself for my attachment to ‘harmonious numbers,’ but it is in vain for me to conceal the fact, that this attachment is ungovernable, and that from it, I derive the most exquisite enjoyment.—

Of the tour to the White Mountains, to which reference is made in a preceding extract, the public have heard. To preserve a connected series of the leading incidents of his life from his own pen, the letter which has appeared in the public journals is reprinted in this connexion.

Hanover, (N. H.) Sept. 2, 1826.

DEAR SIR,—

I have just returned from an excursion to the White Mountains, and shall now spend a day of rest in this village, in giving you some account of the effects produced by the most destructive fall of rain ever known in that region. It happened on the night of the 28th of August, which will be long remembered in this part of the country.

I left Hanover on Saturday last, in company with two gentlemen of my acquaintance from the city of New-York, and rode as far as Haverhill, where we all spent the Sabbath. The road over which we passed was like a bed of ashes two or three inches deep; and the country around us exhibited the usual effects of a long drought. The abundant rains that fell three weeks ago, over the Southern half of New-England, did not reach the upper part of the valley of Connecticut River. On Monday morning it began to rain at Haverhill, and continued along our route for most of the day, but so moderately and at such intervals, that with the help of great coats and umbrellas we proceeded on our journey in an open wagon as far as Bethlehem, fifteen miles west of the White Mountains. As we approached the vicinity of the Mountains, the rain increased till it became a storm, and compelled us to stop about the middle of the afternoon.

The storm continued most of the night; but the next morning was clear and serene. The view from the hill of Bethlehem was extensive and delightful. In the Eastern horizon, Mount Washington, with the neighbouring peaks on the North and on the South, formed a grand outline far up in the blue sky. Two or three small fleecy clouds rested on its side, a little below its summit, while from behind this highest point of land in the United States East of the Mississippi, the sun rolled up rejoicing in his strength and glory. We started off toward the object of our journey, with spirits greatly exhilarated by the beauty and grandeur of our prospect. As we hastened forward with our eyes fixed on the tops of the Mountains before us, little did we think of the

scene of destruction around their base, on which the sun was now for the first time beginning to shine. In about half an hour we entered Breton Woods, an unincorporated tract of land covered with a primitive forest, extending on our road five miles to Rosebrook's Inn, and thence six miles to Crawford's, the establishment begun by Rosebrook's father, as described in the travels of Dr. DWIGHT. On entering this wilderness we were struck with its universal stillness. From every leaf in its immense masses of foliage the rain hung in large glittering drops; and the silver note of a single unseen and unknown bird was the only sound that we could hear. After we had proceeded a mile or two the roaring of the Amonoosuck began to break in upon the stillness, and soon grew so loud as to excite our surprise. In consequence of coming to the river almost at right angles, and by a very narrow road, through trees and bushes very thick, we had no view of the water, till with a quick trot we had advanced upon the bridge too far to recede, when the sight that opened at once to the right hand and to the left, drew from all of us similar exclamations of astonishment and terror; and we hurried over the trembling fabrick as fast as possible. After finding ourselves safe on the other side, we walked down to the brink; and, though familiar with mountain scenery, we all confessed that we had never seen a mountain torrent before. The water was as thick with earth as it could be, without being changed into mud. A man living near in a log hut showed us how high it was at day break. Though it had fallen six feet, he assured us that it was still ten feet above its ordinary level. To this add its ordinary depth of three or four feet, and here at day break was a body of water twenty feet deep, and sixty feet wide, moving with the rapidity of a gale of wind, between steep banks covered with hemlocks and pines, and over a bed of large rocks, breaking its surface into billows like those of the ocean. After gazing a few moments on this sublime sight, we proceeded on our way, for the most part at some distance from the river, till we came to the farm of *Rosebrook*, lying on its banks. We found his

fields covered with water, and sand, and flood wood. His fences and bridges were all swept away; and the road was so blocked up with logs, that we had to wait for the labors of men and oxen, before we could get to his house. Here we were told that the river was never before known to bring down any considerable quantity of earth, and were pointed to bare spots on the sides of the White Mountains, never seen till that morning. As our road, for the remaining six miles, lay quite near the river and crossed many small tributary streams, we employed a man to accompany us with an axe. We were frequently obliged to remove trees from the road, to fill excavations, to mend and make bridges, or contrive to get our horses and wagon along separately. After toiling in this manner for half a day, we reached the end of our journey, not however without being obliged to leave our wagon half a mile behind. In many places, in these six miles, the road and the whole adjacent woods, as it appeared from the marks on the trees, had been overflowed to the depth of ten feet. In one place the river, in consequence of some obstruction at a remarkable fall, had been twenty feet higher than it was when we passed. We stopped to view the fall, which Dr. DWIGHT calls "beautiful." He says of it—"The descent is from fifty to sixty feet, cut through a mass of stratified granite; the sides of which appear as if they had been laid by a mason in a variety of fantastical forms; betraying, however, by their rude and wild aspect, the masterly hand of nature." This description is sufficiently correct; but the beauty of the fall was now lost in its sublimity. You have only to imagine the whole body of the Amonoosuck, as it appeared at the bridge which we crossed, now compressed to half of its width, and sent downward at an angle of 20 or 25 degrees between perpendicular walls of stone. On our arrival at Crawford's the appearance of his farm was like that of Rosebrook's, only much worse. Some of his sheep and cattle were lost; and eight hundred bushels of oats were destroyed. Here we found five gentlemen, who gave us an interesting account of their unsuccessful attempt to ascend

Mount Washington the preceding day. They went to the "Camp" at the foot of the mountain on Sabbath evening, and lodged there, with the intention of climbing the summit the next morning. But in the morning the mountains were enveloped in thick clouds; the rain began to fall, and increased till afternoon, when it came down in torrents. At five o'clock they proposed to spend another night at the camp, and let their guide return home for a fresh supply of provisions for the next day. But the impossibility of keeping a fire where every thing was so wet, and the advice of their guide, made them all conclude to return, though with great reluctance. No time was now to be lost, for they had seven miles to travel on foot, and six of them by a rugged path through a gloomy forest. They ran as fast as their circumstances would permit; but the dark evergreens around them, and the black clouds above, made it night before they had gone half of the way. The rain poured down faster every moment; and the little streams, which they had stepped across the evening before, must now be crossed by wading, or by cutting down trees for bridges, to which they were obliged to cling for life. In this way they reached the bridge over the Amonoosuck near Crawford's, just in time to pass it before it was carried down the current. On Wednesday, the weather being clear and beautiful, and the waters having subsided, six gentlemen, with a guide, went to Mount Washington, and one accompanied Mr. Crawford to the "Notch," from which nothing had yet been heard. We met again at evening, and related to each other what we had seen. The party who went to the Mountain were five hours in reaching the site of the camp, instead of three, the usual time. The path for nearly one-third of the distance was so much excavated, or covered with miry sand, or blocked up with flood wood, that they were obliged to grope their way through thickets almost impenetrable, where one generation of trees after another had risen and fallen, and were now lying across each other in every direction, and in various stages of decay. The Camp itself had been wholly swept away; and the bed of the rivu-

let by which it had stood, was now more than ten rods wide, and with banks from ten to fifteen feet high. Four or five other brooks were passed, whose beds were enlarged, some of them to twice the extent of this. In several, the water was now only three or four feet wide, while the bed of ten, fifteen or twenty rods in width, was covered for miles with stones from two to five feet in diameter, that had been rolled down the mountains, and through the forests, by thousands, bearing every thing before them. Not a tree, nor the root of a tree remained in their path. Immense piles of hemlocks and other trees with their limbs and bark entirely bruised off, were lodged all the way on both sides, as they had been driven in among the standing and half standing trees on the banks. While the party were climbing the Mountain, thirty "slides" were counted, some of which began near the line where the soil and vegetation terminate, and growing wider as they descended, were estimated to contain more than a hundred acres. These were all on the western side of the mountains. They were composed of the whole surface of the earth with all its growth of woods, and its loose rocks, to the depth of 15, 20, and 30 feet. And wherever the slides of the two projecting mountains met, forming a vast ravine, the depth was still greater.

Such was the report which the party from the mountains gave. The intelligence which Mr. Crawford, and the gentleman accompanying him, brought from the Notch, was of a more melancholy nature. The road, though a turnpike, was in such a state, that they were obliged to walk to the Notch House, lately kept by Mr. Willey, a distance of six miles. All the bridges over the Amonoosuck, five in number, those over the Saco, and those over the tributary streams of both, were gone. In some places the road was excavated to the depth of 15 and 20 feet; and in others it was covered with earth, and rocks, and trees, to as great a height. In the Notch, and along the deep defile below it, for a mile and a half, to the Notch House, and as far as could be seen beyond it, no appearance of the road, except in one place for two or

three rods, could be discovered. The steep sides of the mountain, first on one hand, then on the other, and then on both, had slid down into this narrow passage, and formed a continued mass from one end to the other, so that a turnpike will probably not be made through it again very soon, if ever. The Notch House was found uninjured; though the barn adjoining it by a shed, was crushed; and under its ruins were two dead horses. The house was entirely deserted; the beds were tumbled; their covering was turned down; and near them upon chairs and on the floor lay the wearing apparel of the several members of the family; while the money and the papers of Mr. Willey were lying in his open bar. From these circumstances it seemed almost certain, that the whole family were destroyed; and it soon became quite so, by the arrival of a brother of Mr. Crawford from his father's, six miles farther East. From him we learnt that the valley of the Saco for many miles, presented an uninterrupted scene of desolation. The two Crawfords were the nearest neighbours of Willey. Two days had now elapsed since the storm, and nothing had been heard of his family in either direction. There was no longer any room to doubt that they had been alarmed by the noise of the destruction around them, had sprung from their beds, and fled naked from the house, and in the utter darkness had been soon overtaken by the falling mountains and rushing torrents. The family which is said to have been miabile and respectable, consisted of nine persons, Mr. Willey and his wife and five young children of theirs, with a hired man and boy. After the fall of a single slide last June, they were more ready to take the alarm, though they did not consider their situation dangerous, as none had ever been known to fall there previous to this. Whether more rain fell now than had ever been known to fall before in the same length of time, at least since the sides of the mountains were covered with so heavy a growth of woods, or whether the slides were produced by the falling of such a quantity of rain so suddenly, after the earth had been rendered light and loose by the long drought, I am utterly unable to say. All I know is, that at

the close of a rainy day, the clouds seemed all to come together over the White Mountains, and at midnight discharge their contents at once in a terrible burst of rain, which produced the effects that have now been described. Why these effects were produced now, and never before, is known only to Him, who can rend the heavens when he will, and come down, and cause the mountains to flow down at his presence.

Yours, &c.

CARLOS WILCOX.

*Hanover, Sept. 4.—P. S.—*We have just heard that the bodies of the three adults of Mr. Willey's family have been dug up, dreadfully mangled, from amid earth and rocks, about fifty rods from the house. We have also heard that many of the bridges and mills, on the streams running south from the White Mountains, and forming the several branches of the Merrimack, have been swept away, and that much other damage has been done in that direction.—

After having passed the summer of 1826, in various places, he visited Boston, and spent the autumn in that city, preaching almost every Sabbath. Near the close of the year, he received an invitation to supply the pulpit in Danbury, Con. with which he complied. At this place he arrived some time in December. From Danbury he writes as follows :

Danbury, January 6, 1827.

— It gives me pleasure to be assured of your kind remembrance, and that of your family. * * * I shall think of my dear people all day, the second Sabbath of January, and while I thank God, that I am not in Mr. S——'s place, I shall not forget to pray, that the events of that Sabbath, may issue in a union that shall be happy and lasting.

You are kind enough to enquire about my situation, which I can truly say is more pleasant than I had expected. I board in the family of a very pleasant brother clergyman,

who teaches the Academy here. Tell Mrs. M. that since so much has been said about my pleasant room in your house, she may know, that the one I am now in is more like that, than any other that ever fell to my lot in all my wanderings. It is quite as large; has two windows towards the rising sun, and two towards the setting, and one toward the northern star. You see, then, that it is on the north end of the house; and as it is on the lower floor, it is more like the one in which you are now living. My windows are surrounded with rose-bushes and lilacs. It will be a delightful room for summer, and is pleasant enough now. Do just come and see.

I find some very intelligent and agreeable society here. * * * * * My health is pretty good for me. My exercise is regular, as I have cut every stick of wood that I have burned. Your caution about multiplying my labours, is worthy of remembrance. I have, however, undertaken to attend one evening meeting in a week, in addition to my other labours.—

Danbury, March 3, 1827.

You probably heard something of the state of my health a fortnight ago, by Mr. W * * * or from the note to Mr. H. Since that time, I have been much more seriously ill. My throat began to be inflamed about the middle of January and has been growing worse ever since. For four or five Sabbaths, I continued to preach, or to read half a sermon, in the morning, and the other half in the afternoon. This I was enabled to do without much pain, by taking sugar wet with elixir, and warming my stockings, boots, socks, and standing on an oak plank well heated, and by tying a muffler round my neck. By these means, I was kept from coughing during the service. But I am now convinced, that I had better not have attempted to preach. But who can tell always, whether a little illness is likely to end in something serious? Ulcers began to form in my throat three weeks ago, some have broken and healed up; others have appeared in other places. By the

application of blisters to my neck, and the use of a particular wash, the soreness in my throat has been rendered less, for a day or two; but it has seemed to tend downwards to my breast and lungs, and it has become necessary to bleed me, and apply a blister to my chest, &c. In this way my breast and lungs have been relieved, but the soreness has returned to my throat. It is with great difficulty and pain that I swallow any thing. But nothing seems to contribute so much to irritate my throat, as my cough, which for some weeks has been very severe. It does not trouble me much in the day time, as I sit in my chair, and walk my room; but for a fortnight, it has kept me awake more than half of every night upon an average. It is only from the influence of strong anodyne, that I can sleep at all. I have had night sweats, but they appear to have left me for the present. My fever is very slight as yet; my appetite is not wholly gone, and my strength holds out remarkably well. I know not what is in store for me, in the providence of God; and I desire to commit myself, with all my sicknesses, and all my interests, with all my hopes, and all my fears, into the hands of that Being, whose judgments are righteous, and whose tender mercies endure forever. I do not expect to be cured by medicine. If I can be kept along till the snow is gone, and the ground settled, and the weather becomes dry, and warm, it is the most that I can hope; I may then recover. I have been confined to the house for about a fortnight, and expect to be for a month or six weeks to come. Tell Dr. C. that my physician often reminds me of him. His name is B*****. I have the utmost confidence in him.

Danbury, March 10, 1827.

DEAR MADAM,

You have doubtless heard of my illness; and if you have seen my letter to Mr. M.— you have learnt all the particulars respecting its nature and progress, till the past week. If you have not seen that letter, I must beg leave to refer you to it, as I feel quite unable to go over this ground again. For

a week past, my symptoms have worn, on the whole, a more favourable appearance ; and my friends here have not been so much alarmed for me, as they were for a fortnight before. I have, however, lost strength during the past week ; and my appetite is poorer than ever. This may be owing to the indirect debility produced by medicine, and not by disease. I have been obliged to take so much anodyne, at night, to allay my cough, that it has left me too languid to hold up my head the next day. My cough is not so severe. Several of the ulcers in my throat are healed or healing, though others remain as sore as ever. There is reason to hope that none have yet formed on my lungs, though those in my throat have shown a tendency to spread downward, when disturbed by external blisters and internal washes.

But I have said enough on this subject to tire myself and you too. In all my weakness, I would wish to think more of that Almighty Being, who has sustained me to this hour, and who is ready to do all that for my relief, which he sees to be best. O for a child-like submission to his will ! There have been times, during the last three weeks, when it seemed to me, that the end of all my earthly wanderings was to be in this valley of Danbury. But I have now a prevailing hope, that a merciful God will spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence to be here no more. We know not however, what a day may bring forth. Most sincerely do I rejoice, that you are so soon to have so good and acceptable a minister of Christ, set over the dear church and people that I was once permitted to call mine. I trust in God, that he will come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace ; and that you will receive him with thanksgiving. May he have the affections, and prayers of all his people, to encourage him in his labours ; and may the good Spirit of God bless him with great and growing success.

I have received an official letter, inviting me to Hartford, as one of the Council at Mr. S.—'s Installation. You see from the feeble state of my health, that I must be denied this

privilege. I shall be with you in spirit, and rejoice in your joy.

But I must bring my letter to a close. It is twice as long as I expected it would be when I began it. My strength is quite exhausted ; and I can only add a request, that you will remember me affectionately to Mr. B.— and other enquiring friends.

The Lord be with you, and bless you, and yours.

Danbury, April 21, 1827.

When my last letter to Hartford was written, I was thought to be gaining quite fast. But soon afterwards, that is, about three weeks ago, I was brought down again by a very severe relapse. My throat, which had become almost well, was thrown into a state of the most burning, and distressing inflammation, lasting day and night, for more than a fortnight. My cough became harder than ever. I have been much lower since the first of April, than before for many years. The burning inflammation in my throat is now somewhat less again, but the soreness is still so great, that I am obliged to live on liquids. My cough is yet quite severe. I am wasted to a skeleton. Many of my friends here have very little hope of my recovery. I consider it quite doubtful myself, whether I ever see Hartford again. It is possible, that in the good providence of God, as the warm weather of May comes, I may be relieved of my disease, and blessed with returning strength. But I desire to feel that all is in good hands, and to pray that I may be resigned to the righteous and merciful will of my heavenly Father. Living or dying, may I be his. I have not strength to write any more.—

About the middle of May, his disease had made such progress, and his strength was so far gone, that he relinquished the hope of ever being restored to health, and began to arrange his affairs with the expectation of speedy dissolution, and with entire composure, to anticipate the closing scene. He dictated three letters, one to his parents, and two to other

friends, in which he expressed fully his apprehensions of immediate death ; and in his own affectionate and delicate manner, took his leave of them. In one he says—“ My strength is almost gone, my days are numbered, and will soon be finished.**** The world, with all its joys and sorrows, fades from my view. I must soon prove the reality of the great things of faith and eternity. The religion of Christ must be all in all to me now.****

“O what a glorious change, to leave this world and go into the presence of Christ ! O to become *sinless*, as well as happy and glorified. I desire to pray continually while I have breath, God be merciful to me a sinner.

And now, my dear friend, we must part. May you have much of the presence of your God and Saviour, may you see many good days on earth, while the sun is shining on my lone grave ; may your death be peaceful, whenever it come, and your immortality glorious ; may we meet in a better world, and together unite in singing the praises of the Redeemer.”——

To his parents, after mentioning the state of his health and his apprehension that his last sickness had come, and requesting one of his brothers to visit him immediately, he dictated the following : “ And now, my dear parents, what shall I say to you in conclusion ? I cannot say much, for you see I am so weak as to be obliged to employ the hand of a friend to write for me. First of all, then, let me thank you for all the kindness you have shown me in my past life. And let me beg of you to be earnest in prayer, that God would be merciful to me a sinner. Pray that I may have much of the presence of my God and Saviour, in my sickness. Pray that he may fit me for heaven, and take me to that blessed world, to behold his glory. And may the God of life and mercy support you under your trials and increasing infirmities—may he spare you many years, to be a blessing to the family—may he increase your faith, and brighten your hope, and add to your joy, as the infirmities of age gather upon you—may your death be peaceful, and your eternity glorious. Do not fail to write me immediately. Though I am in a land of comparative stran-

gers, yet God has raised me up many friends, some one of whom I can employ to write to you, perhaps, every week.

To my dear brothers, I have much to say, would my strength permit, but I can merely direct them to the Saviour in their early days. O tell them to prepare for a sick bed in the morning of life. Tell them that the world all appears vanity to me now. Tell them that the religion of Christ is the only satisfying portion of the soul. Tell them to make the Bible their daily companion, and the throne of grace the place of their daily resort. And may the God of mercy and grace, give them repentance and faith, preserve them amid the snares of a wicked world, make them ornaments in the church, and prepare them for a blessed immortality. I can add no more."——

Some of the expressions he used in conversation during his sickness have been preserved, and may with propriety be inserted in this place.

"Some have spoken of it as a mystery, that I should be sick and laid aside from my labours; but it is no mystery to me: I am a great sinner, and deserve the wrath of God now and forever."

"If I have any evidence of piety, it is that I see more and more suitableness in the prayer of the Publican, to my wants: God be merciful to me a sinner."

"Do pray for me, my friends, pray much, that Christ may be with me and show me mercy, for never a poor sinner needed mercy more."

On Monday, the 28th of May, he attempted to describe to his physician his sensations after taking some of his medicine; his thoughts were somewhat incoherent: he said—"O I have no command of my thoughts on these subjects. God, Christ, Heaven, the pardon of sin, *the pardon of sin*, what themes are these!"

"Pray that I may be entirely resigned to the will of the Lord, for his will is always good, always benevolent. But the most suitable prayer for me is, God be merciful to me a sinner."

“Salvation : what wonders, what glories are contained in that one word ! Salvation, salvation from sin : No honor *can* be conferred upon a sinner like this.”

He was asked if he had any fears of death. He replied—
“I ought to have fears ; my heart and life have been such—
but I am by no means without hope, for

‘ There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.’

“ I feel myself a poor guilty sinner ; but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners.”

On Tuesday morning, the 29th, he said—“The Saviour ! O all heaven praises him, let the whole earth praise him, let all intelligent beings praise him. Eternity is too short to praise God and the Lamb.”

About 8 o’clock he began to converse with the friends who stood around him, and continued without much interruption to address them for nearly an hour. With the same propriety of expression, and delicate regard to their feelings, which he had ever been accustomed to manifest in health, he thanked them for all their kindness to him, bade them farewell, and sent messages to absent friends.

He then with a distinct voice, repeated the following lines ;

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly ;
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, oh my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee,

Leave, ah leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me."

"I am going fast, pray for me, that I may not be deceived in the hope of heaven."

"I have some hope, all my hope is in the promises of God in Christ Jesus."

These were the last words his lips uttered, and soon after he ceased to speak, he ceased to breathe.

The kindness and attention shown to Mr. Wilcox, by the inhabitants of Danbury, will be gratefully remembered by his distant friends: but it was a dark and painful dispensation, which led him away from those friends, to languish and die among comparative strangers, while so many hearts would have rejoiced to minister to his comfort, in the last sinking hours; and above all, when the tenderest of mothers, would have felt half the bitterness of that bitter cup removed, if her hands might have smoothed his dying pillow, and her lips received his parting breath.

The funeral was attended with great respect in Danbury, and there his body was first buried. But the people to whom he had sustained the relation of a pastor, desired to have his dust deposited with them and their children. Accordingly he was removed, and interred in the North cemetery, in Hartford, by the side of the Rev. Dr. Strong.

In this notice of Mr. Wilcox, no attempt has been made to delineate, in a formal manner, his private character. But it is the recollection of his worth and loveliness in this respect, that will be last to fade from the memories of those who knew him intimately. The history of this beloved man, has shades of sadness, and lines of mystery thrown over it, which have been but imperfectly exhibited in this short sketch; yet while darkness rests upon some of the dealings of divine providence with him, there is a bright side, and we may add his name, to a list of his own beloved friends, to whose memory he has paid a tribute in the following unfinished elegy.

" Ye* were a group of stars collected here,†
 Some, mildly glowing, others sparkling bright ;
 Here rising in a region calm and clear,
 Ye shone awhile with intermingled light ;
 Then parting, each pursuing his own flight
 O'er the wide hemisphere, ye singly shone ;
 But ere ye climbed to half your promised height,
 Ye sunk again with brightening glory round you thrown,
 Each left a brilliant track as each expired alone.

And now, ye live, above the starry spheres,
 In sweet communion with the pure and blest ;
 Ye know no earthly change of hopes and fears,
 But all is one unbroken heaven of rest,
 An ocean, with no wave on all its breast.

* * * * *

Ye dwell in love and feast upon high truth,
 And share, in that bright world beyond the tomb,
 Unwasting vigour, and unfading youth,
 A cherub's beauty and a seraph's bloom ;
 Ye err not, mourn not, fear no day of doom ;
 Within your breast there's nought to wake one sigh,
 Across your brow there comes no shade of gloom ;
 The tear is wiped forever from your eye,
 And all your souls are filled with rapture pure and high.

The letters of Mr. Wilcox have disclosed something of his
 " attachment to harmonious numbers," and this volume
 would be deficient, should it be published without containing
 some of his poetic productions. . It is to be regretted that
 though he had written much, he had finished nothing, in this

* Solomon M. Allen, Sylvester Larned, Alexander M. Fisher, Levi
 Parsons, Pliny Fisk, Joseph R. Andrus.

† Andover Seminary.

species of composition. But whatever there may be to criticise in the Fragments he has left, there certainly are proofs that his was a gifted mind. His poetic effusions are not common place. They are not dull prose, made duller still by the monotony of measured syllables. The living spirit of poetry inspired his numbers. He had that sympathy with nature which distinguishes the poet from other men, that deep and incommunicable feeling, which expatiates, and delights in her loneliest and loveliest scenes, investing with richer lustre, all her bright objects, and casting a deeper shade over every thing dark and mournful. These remarks are founded not merely on what he has written, but on an intimate knowledge of the man, his habits, and his favourite themes of conversation. A common place book, found among his manuscripts, is filled in considerable part, with an account of his little excursions for relaxation and exercise, and shows how his eyes and thoughts were employed during his solitary, or social rambles. It is filled with descriptions of a great variety of objects, so minute and graphic, that they cannot be read without a conviction, that he looked on nature, with an eye observant of all her varieties, and a heart alive to all her power. He seemed to have stored in this repository, every thing with which he met, that might ever be of use to him as a writer, and especially, as a writer of poetry. Peculiarities in the habits of any animal or plant, which he observed in his walks, or met with in his reading; facts illustrating the workings of the human heart, the effects of the various passions, of natural affection and of christian principle, are here noted down. And it was not merely from objects and facts which would strike an ordinary observer as worthy of special notice, that he collected hints and borrowed imagery to be wrought into the texture, or the ornaments of poetry; but from things which by most, would have been passed as common and trivial, he gathered the elements of poetry, like the bee extracting honey from the unobtrusive as well as the more gaudy flowers.

One who had known him long, and intimately, expressed himself thus in a letter to the writer of these remarks.

‘I should call him a true poetical genius, and not a little acquainted with that sort of enthusiasm, and melancholy, and excitability, which sometimes attend men of genius. I used sometimes to blame him for his melancholy, and think him foolishly inclined to cherish and cultivate it. But I suppose it may be said of him, as has been said of those of like cast of mind, that he lived in a different sort of world from other men, and, perhaps there were more of certain kinds of satisfaction, covered up under his pensive moods, than is dreamt of in the philosophy of every man. His taste was refined, and delicate, almost too much so for him to write with ease to himself, and perhaps, sometimes leading him to undervalue the productions of his own mind. He had too much sensibility for his comfort, in a world where a man must be scratched every day of his life by some bramble; but as giving a cast of delicacy to his character, and a kind of pathos to his thoughts, he had just about the right proportion.’

The first effort of his pen in Poetry, which has been found among his papers, is a piece entitled “Fancy.” It was written while a member of College, and spoken at an exhibition. It contains 616 lines. Another, without date, containing 410 lines, appears to have been written about the same period, under the title of the “Cottage in the West.” These are written in rhyme, in an easy flowing manner, and many passages are worthy of being preserved as specimens of youthful genius, and real poetry. An extract from the introduction to the poem last named, is inserted.

* * * * *

How mildly the sun of the even,
Smiles back on the dew-sprinkled thorn,
Leaves blackness and storms in mid-heaven,
But bends a bright bow round its morn.
Thus age in the sun-set of time,

Looks by the long blank of its noon,
 To the beauties that danced in its prime,
 To the rainbows that melted so soon.

The "Age of Benevolence" was commenced about the year 1817, and the first Book was published in 1822. This appeared under some disadvantages. It was a part of a work, and many who might have been disposed to purchase the whole, did not choose to take this Fragment. Another disadvantage was, that the Title had no appropriateness to the part which was published. The plan of the "Age of Benevolence," as nearly as can be collected from the unfinished fragments, and from what is recollected in the conversation of its Author, was as follows :

- 1st Book. Benevolence, the glory of Heaven.
- 2d " Benevolence on earth, a resemblance of Heaven.
- 3d " Need of Benevolence in our world.
- 4th. " Rewards of Benevolence.
- 5th. " Triumph of Benevolence.

The outlines of this plan are announced in the beginning of the first Book :

Of true benevolence, its charms divine,
 With other motives to call forth its power,
 And its grand triumphs.—

The reader may be gratified in seeing something more of the plan of the "Age of Benevolence." To give a connected view of the Work, the Argument of each Book is presented, though left by the Author in an imperfect state.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Books, are written in a fair hand, but as they have undergone several revisions, the last corrections of their Author could not, in many places be ascertained.

As a specimen of his manner of correcting, the following line is given :

"Nor what the pang of thy resistless dart."

This has these words substituted for *resistless*.

Nor what the pang of thy *cold cruel* dart.

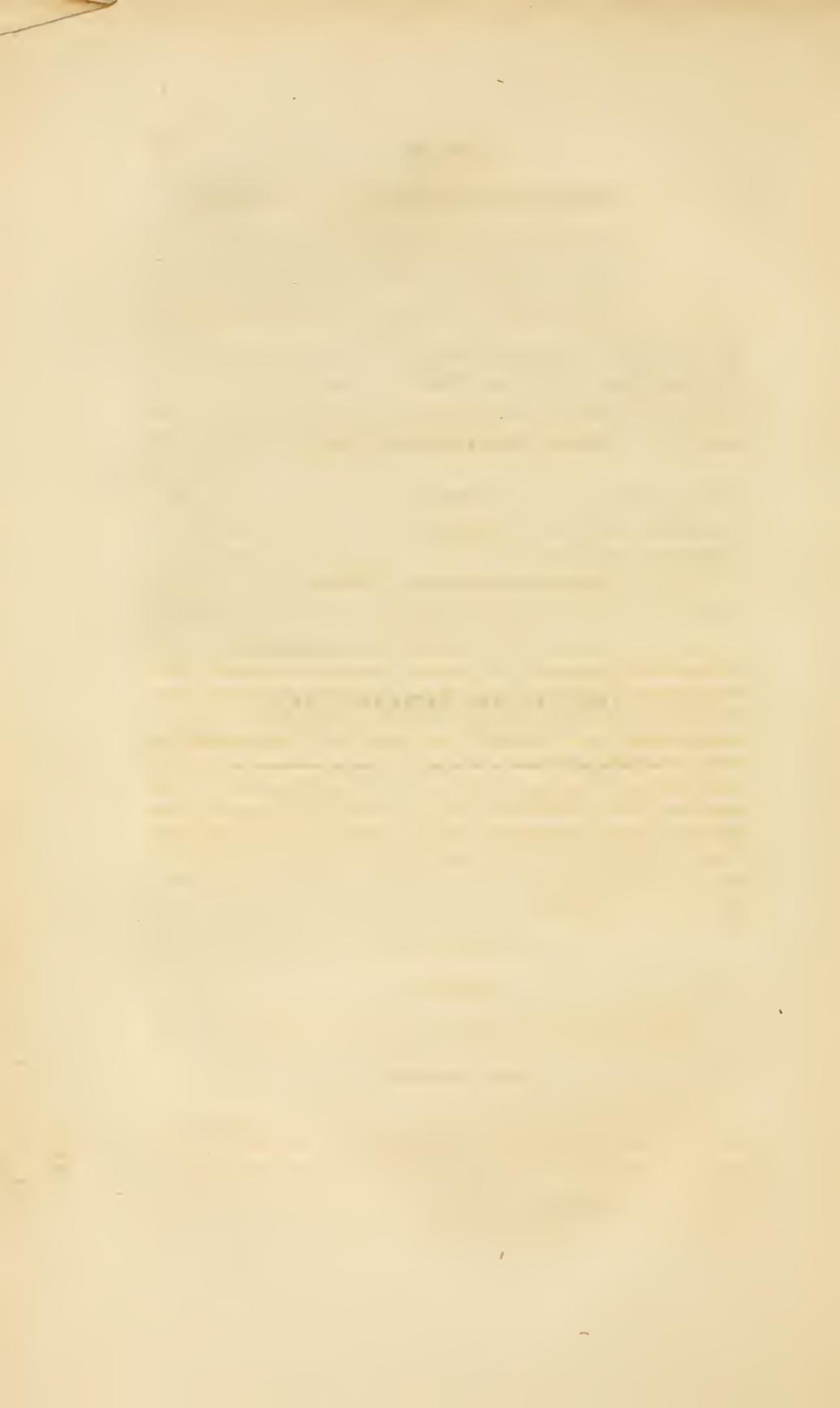
Nor what the pang of thy *cold piercing* dart.

Nor what the pang of thine *unerring* dart.

The reasons, which influenced the writer to relinquish his plan of publishing the other Books, as was his intention when the First went to the press, are in part, expressed in his letters comprised in the Biographical Sketch. Others need not be stated.

As copies of the First Book are not to be obtained, the edition having all been sold, it has been thought desirable to preserve it in this Volume. A few Extracts from the other Books are also inserted, that the Author's plan, and what might have been expected had it been completed, may be more distinctly known.

THE AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.



THE
AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.

BOOK I.

Benevolence the glory of Heaven.

THE ARGUMENT.

General subject proposed. Invocation. Subject of the first book. The Benevolence of God in the works of nature. Illustration from an example of vernal scenery. God's Benevolence, the theme of revelation. Its immediate exercise in his providence. Its higher glory in his moral government. Its highest in the work of redemption, and in the renovating effects of the preaching of the cross. Objection to the Divine Benevolence from the existence of sin. Another from future punishments. A third from the afflictions of the pious in this life. The happy tendency of these afflictions illustrated by the history of Orville and Charlotte. Importance of the doctrine of God's Benevolence. A hymn of praise. The Benevolence of angels. That of saints in glory.

BOOK II.

Benevolence on earth the resemblance of Heaven.

THE ARGUMENT.

Contrast between this world and heaven. Nature of Benevolence: distinct from constitutional kindness. Not kindled by natural religion. Implanted by divine grace in the place of native selfishness. Its excellence. Its power illustrated by an example. A safe-guard from tempting passions. Its activity a cure for religious melancholy.

BOOK III.

The need of Benevolence.

THE ARGUMENT.

Profaneness. Sabbath-breaking. Intemperance. Slavery. War. The Heathen.

BOOK IV.

The Rewards of Benevolence.

THE ARGUMENT.

The happiness flowing naturally from the exercise of Benevolence, already sung, really a great reward. So is the success of benevolence, its happy effects on the world. But the design of this book is to treat more at large, of the absolute blessings promised by God, as the reward of well-doing. The body to share in the glory of heaven—its resurrection certain—a Spiritual body, incorruptible, glorious. Moral likeness. Freedom from sorrow. Happiness from various sources—society of angels, of each other—God and the Lamb the chief sources. All these enjoyments increasing, eternal. Resurrection, the time when they that have done good will be introduced to the consummation of all their glory—but the soul of each happy at death. Death of Horatio. Christian's great and sudden change, a motive to activity in preparation. Negligence caused by unbelief. Faith in an invisible heaven reasonable. The effects of this faith, &c.

THE
AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.

BOOK I.

OF true benevolence, its charms divine,
With other motives to call forth its power,
And its grand triumphs, multiplied beyond
All former bounds, in this its golden age,
Humbly I sing, awed by the holy theme ;
A theme exalted, though as yet unsung,
In beauty rich, of inspiration full,
And worthy of a nobler harp than that
From which heroic strains sublimely sound.

THOU who art only and supremely good,
Thee, thee alone, with trembling I invoke,
From no pretended consciousness of need,
And for no vain imaginary aid.
Deign thou to smile upon my poor attempt
To sing the glories of thy truth and love,
Thyself and kingdom. With extended hand
Bear me along ; surround me with thy light ;
My heart enlarge and soften ; every power
Make sacred for thyself ; and let thy love
Constrain me. Give me purity of aim,
By selfishness untainted, lest my lips
Thy truth profane. O make my whole intent,
Thy glory to promote by doing good ;
And, if successful, thine shall be the praise.

If in the universe there be a world
 Uncursed by sin, beyond conception fair,
 Inhabited with intelligences pure,
 Of more exalted nature than our own,
 And perfect in enjoyment, what it is
 That forms their excellence and chief delight,
 Not one of human kind, without a soul
 Of its sublime capacity to rise
 Unmindful, and a heart to virtue dead,
 Can think it vain to know, or, knowing, fail
 To imitate. Of such a world so fair,
 Filled with inhabitants so pure and blest,
 And with the visible presence of the Source
 Of all existence, long have mortals heard ;
 And of each being in that happy world,
 From Him who sits on its eternal throne
 To him that holds the humblest station there,
 Love is the bliss, the glory doing good.

Of God's benevolence, proof in his works
 From their beginning, and in all his ways,
 Illustrious shines. What motive, but desire
 To give felicity, called forth his might
 To build this fair creation ; to surround
 His dwelling in the immensity of space
 With orb encircling orb, to give to dust
 The happiness of life in countless forms
 Delightful, and to creatures rational
 His pure immortal nature to impart ?
 Was it his glory ? 'Twas his goodness still ;
 For both are one, inseparably one.
 God seeks not his, as men their glory seek ;
 From vain ambition. Earth and heaven sublime
 Were not created for the mere display
 Of power and skill immeasurably great ;
 Nor men and angels merely to admire
 The wondrous fabric, and its Author praise
 With lofty songs. The whole grand universe
 Is not an empty monument of fame ;
 Nor yet a monument, on a wide waste

Erected, for no purpose known to man.
 'Tis not a pageant bright, o'er an expanse
 Illimitable, moving with vain pomp,
 In revolutions vain. The glory sought
 In its creation, is but that which flows
 From giving happiness with bounteous hand.
 Its Maker, full of goodness infinite,
 Self-moved, in acts beneficent poured forth
 Of his abundance, as the sun, all light
 And heat itself, cannot but shine and warm.

On each created thing within his view,
 From the most humble to the most sublime,
 Man while yet sinless, in a world prepared
 For happy innocence a fit abode,
 Beheld, in characters entire and bright,
 The impress of benevolence divine.
 And e'en apostate man, by reason led,
 Unaided reason, in a world defaced
 For his revolt, beholds remaining marks
 Of like benevolence, in mercy spared,
 When just had been a universal curse.
 Marks of its primitive glory he beholds
 Amid its desolations, as he views
 Among the ruins of a city, famed
 For ancient splendour, many a precious stone,
 And marble fragment beautifully wrought.
 He sees them in the grateful interchange
 Of day and night, and the propitious round
 Of seasons ;—in the growth of forests vast
 Where winter's cold requires the cheering flame,
 And, when these fail, in mines of fuel found
 Beneath earth's surface ;—in the countless streams
 That streak its map immense, so duly ranged,
 Like the thick branching fibres of a leaf,
 The less along the greater on each side,
 Watering the whole ;—in genial suns and rains,
 Combining their sweet influences, to crown
 The year with plenty ;—in the thousand plants
 Of healing virtue, of all various kinds,

Growing at hand where human pain is felt ;—
 And in the powers by which each living thing,
 Down to the meanest and the most minute,
 Finds out its food, where'er its lot is cast,
 Provided there. From what but kindness flow
 These and like blessings ? Or if such be deemed
 Means requisite existence to prolong,
 E'en though unhappy, other proofs remain
 Of kindness, clear to reason's naked eye.
 Why this profusion in the fruits of earth,
 And sweet variety, so far beyond
 The mere supply of nature's simple wants ?
 Why not the fruit without the fragrant flower ?
 Or if the fragrance to its proper food
 Attract the wandering insect, why the hues,
 Their endless beautiful diversities,
 Enamelling the fields and verdant groves ?
 Why is man fitted to receive delight
 From aught that he beholds ? Why, in its use,
 Is not each sense an instrument of pain,
 Instead of pleasure ? Why with objects fair
 Is the eye charmed, and with melodious sounds
 The listening ear ? Why at the frugal board,
 As at a banquet, is the taste regaled,
 When food as well might nourish, though devoid
 Of flavour, or unpleasant, and the love
 Of life instinctively constrain to eat ?
 'Twas pure good-will, that for ungrateful man
 Enjoyment thus for its own sake prepared.
 Nor less apparent is the will to bless,
 In that delight inferior creatures feel ;
 The sporting insects, and the warbling birds,
 The bounding and the ruminating flocks,
 Yea, all the tribes, that walk, or swim, or fly.
 His providence the Lord of all extends
 O'er all his works, not merely to uphold,
 But to impart enjoyment to all ranks
 Of conscious being. This his kind extent,
 To unassisted reason, if not blind

From deep and wilful turpitude of heart,
How brightly clear, when in some rural scene
Blooming and sunny, fertile fields, green woods,
Pure air and water, with fair creatures swarm,
Seeming, in their exuberance of good,
Too full of pleasure for a moment's rest ;
And when this rural beauty and delight,
Are heightened by some renovating change,
From drought to showers, or from foul skies to fair !

The spring, made dreary by incessant rain,
Was well nigh gone, and not a glimpse appeared
Of vernal loveliness, but light-green turf
Round the deep babbling fountain in the vale,
Or by the rivulet on the hill-side, near
Its cultivated base, fronting the south,
Where in the first warm rays of March it sprung
Amid dissolving snow :—save these mere specks
Of earliest verdure, with a few pale flowers,
In other years bright blowing soon as earth
Unveils her face, and a faint vermil tinge
On clumps of maple of the softer kind,
Was nothing visible to give to May,
Though far advanced, an aspect more like her's
Than like November's universal gloom.
All day beneath the sheltering hovel stood
The drooping herd, or lingered near to ask
The food of winter. A few lonely birds,
Of those that in this northern clime remain
Throughout the year, and in the dawn of spring,
At pleasant noon, from their unknown retreat
Come suddenly to view with lively notes,
Or those that soonest to this clime return
From warmer regions, in thick groves were seen,
But with their feathers ruffled, and despoiled
Of all their glossy lustre, sitting mute,
Or only skipping, with a single chirp,
In quest of food. Whene'er the heavy clouds,
That half way down the mountain side oft hung,
As if o'erloaded with their watery store,

Were parted, though with motion unobserved,
 Through their dark opening, white with snow appeared
 Its lowest, e'en its cultivated, peaks.
 With sinking heart the husbandman surveyed
 The melancholy scene, and much his fears
 On famine dwelt; when, suddenly awaked
 At the first glimpse of daylight, by the sound,
 Long time unheard, of cheerful martins, near
 His window, round their dwelling chirping quick,
 With spirits by hope enlivened up he sprung
 To look abroad, and to his joy beheld
 A sky without the remnant of a cloud.
 From gloom to gayety and beauty bright
 So rapid now the universal change,
 The rude survey it with delight refined,
 And e'en the thoughtless talk of thanks devout.
 Long swoln in drenching rain, seeds, germs, and buds,
 Start at the touch of vivifying beams.
 Moved by their secret force, the vital lymph
 Diffusive runs, and spreads o'er wood and field
 A flood of verdure. Clothed, in one short week,
 Is naked nature in her full attire.
 On the first morn, light as an open plain
 Is all the woodland, filled with sunbeams, poured
 Through the bare tops, on yellow leaves below,
 With strong reflection: on the last, 'tis dark
 With full-grown foliage, shading all within.
 In one short week the orchard buds and blooms;
 And now, when steeped in dew or gentle showers,
 It yields the purest sweetness to the breeze,
 Or all the tranquil atmosphere perfumes.
 E'en from the juicy leaves, of sudden growth,
 And the rank grass of steaming ground, the air,
 Filled with a watery glimmering receives
 A grateful smell, exhaled by warming rays.
 Each day are heard, and almost every hour,
 New notes to swell the music of the groves.
 And soon the latest of the feathered train
 At evening twilight come;—the lonely snipe,

O'er marshy fields, high in the dusky air,
 Invisible, but, with faint tremulous tones,
 Hovering or playing o'er the listener's head ;—
 And, in mid-air, the sportive night-hawk, seen
 Flying awhile at random, uttering oft
 A cheerful cry, attended with a shake
 Of level pinions, dark, but when upturned
 Against the brightness of the western sky,
 One white plume showing in the midst of each,
 Then far down diving with loud hollow sound ;—
 And, deep at first within the distant wood,
 The whip-poor-will, her name her only song.
 She, soon as children from the noisy sport
 Of hooping, laughing, talking with all tones,
 To hear the echoes of the empty barn,
 Are by her voice diverted, and held mute,
 Comes to the margin of the nearest grove ;
 And when the twilight deepened into night,
 Calls them within, close to the house she comes,
 And on its dark side, haply on the step
 Of unfrequented door, lighting unseen,
 Breaks into strains articulate and clear,
 The closing sometimes quickened as in sport.
 Now, animate throughout, from morn to eve
 All harmony, activity, and joy,
 Is lovely nature, as in her blest prime.
 The robin to the garden, or green yard,
 Close to the door repairs to build again
 Within her wonted tree ; and at her work
 Seems doubly busy, for her past delay.
 Along the surface of the winding stream,
 Pursuing every turn, gay swallows skim ;
 Or round the borders of the spacious lawn
 Fly in repeated circles, rising o'er
 Hillock and fence, with motion serpentine,
 Easy and light. One snatches from the ground
 A downy feather, and then upward springs,
 Followed by others, but oft drops it soon,
 In playful mood, or from too slight a hold,

When all at once dart at the falling prize.
The flippant blackbird with light yellow crown,
Hangs fluttering in the air, and chatters thick
Till her breath fail, when, breaking off, she drops
On the next tree, and on its highest limb,
Or some tall flag, and gently rocking, sits,
Her strain repeating. With sonorous notes
Of every tone, mixed in confusion sweet,
All chanted in the fulness of delight,
The forest rings :—where, far around enclosed
With bushy sides, and covered high above
With foliage thick, supported by bare trunks,
Like pillars rising to support a roof,
It seems a temple vast, the space within
Rings loud and clear with thrilling melody.
Apart, but near the choir, with voice distinct,
The merry mocking-bird together links
In one continued song their different notes,
Adding new life and sweetness to them all.
Hid under shrubs, the squirrel that in fields
Frequents the stony wall and briery fence,
Here chirps so shrill that human feet approach
Unheard till just upon him, when with cries
Sudden and sharp he darts to his retreat,
Beneath the mossy hillock or aged tree ;
But oft a moment after re-appears,
First peeping out, then starting forth at once
With a courageous air, yet in his pranks
Keeping a watchful eye, nor venturing far
Till left unheeded. In rank pastures graze,
Singly and mutely, the contented herd ;
And on the upland rough the peaceful sheep ;
Regardless of the frolic lambs, that, close
Beside them, and before their faces prone,
With many an antic leap, and butting feint,
Try to provoke them to unite in sport,
Or grant a look, till tired of vain attempts ;
When, gathering in one company apart,
All vigour and delight, away they run,
Straight to the utmost corner of the field

The fence beside ; then, wheeling, disappear
In some small sandy pit, then rise to view ;
Or crowd together up the heap of earth
Around some upturned root of fallen tree,
And on its top a trembling moment stand,
Then to the distant flock at once return.
Exhilarated by the general joy,
And the fair prospect of a fruitful year,
The peasant, with light heart, and nimble step,
His work pursues, as it were pastime sweet.
With many a cheering word, his willing team,
For labour fresh, he hastens to the field
Ere morning lose its coolness ; but at eve
When loosened from the plough and homeward turned,
He follows slow and silent, stopping oft
To mark the daily growth of tender grain
And meadows of deep verdure, or to view
His scattered flock and herd, of their own will
Assembling for the night by various paths,
The old now freely sporting with the young,
Or labouring with uncouth attempts at sport.

When so luxuriant, and so fair, is all
Of vegetative growth, and on all sides
Creatures so happy, single, and in groups,
And countless multitudes, attract the eye,
The thoughtfully observant, with no light
But that reflected hence, if such there be
Without that clearer light from heaven direct,
Cannot o'erlook the goodness of the Power
Invisible, that thus delights to bless.

But why at nature gaze with pagan eyes,
And only at her fairest happiest scenes,
When revelation shines, and gilds the whole ?
That God is good, and nothing does but good,
Is the one truth of his whole written word.
'Tis the deep root, that to this tree of life
All its vitality and beauty gives.
Turn we again to nature, with the book
Of inspiration open in our hands

To be our guide, no longer need we seek
 For single tokens of Jehovah's love.
 All things declare it, and with accents loud
 Call for loud songs of gratitude and praise.
 The gifts of heaven, innumerable, descend
 On all the earth, silent, and uniform,
 Like dew distilling from a smiling sky,
 Or like the steady falling of a shower
 When the sun shines, and gilds the drops in air,
 And on the quivering leaves, and bending grass.
 Look where it may, the opened eye of faith
 Beholds the fulness of benevolence,
 And oft its overflowing, as in showers
 Falling on seas, on barren rocks and sands ;—
 In wholesome fruit within the wilderness,
 Growing each year, and perishing uncropt ;—
 In myriads of living atoms, found
 In every turf, and leaf, and breath of air,
 Too small indeed for unassisted sight,
 But not too small to feel the good they have,
 Nor yet unworthy care that knows no bound.
 Illumined by the rays of truth divine,
 The universe a lovely aspect wears,
 From its Creator's universal smile.
 About its vast circumference his arms
 In tender love are stretched, in one embrace
 The whole encircling, as the milky zone
 Surrounds the starry firmament immense.

His six days' work completed, God ordained
 A day of rest ; but not from further care
 Of his creation rested he, concealed
 In a pavilion of impervious clouds,
 Nor, like a Hindoo deity, entranced
 Or sleeping on some consecrated height,
 Nor merely watching with all-seeing eye
 The movement of his works. His outstretched hand,
 When he had sent into the boundless void
 The rolling spheres, dropt not to let them find
 Their untried way, unguided, unsustained,

And by the force of that first impulse run
Their ceaseless round. No—had he thus withdrawn
His active power immediate, from the worlds,
Created by his might, and hid himself
Above the highest, careless of them all,
How in an instant had they burst their bond
Of sweet attraction, flying all apart,
Systems and constellations mingling wild,
And far asunder vanished into nought,
Like parted bubbles by the whirlwind driven !
Or how had they together rushed, and sunk,
A mass of ruins, in a vortex, formed
By their own motion, into the abyss !
Had he once turned his countenance away
From this fair earth, and from these nether skies,
And risen to show its light no more below,
Darkness and chaos had returned amain,
Closed in behind him even to his throne.
And should he now depart, no long-fixed laws
Could still preserve the spheres in harmony,
And in accustomed orbits roll them on
Through regions wide of unsubstantial air.
As when the massy weights, that move the clock
Of some superb cathedral, for its age
And sanctity a venerable pile,
By small disorder loosened from their hold,
Run down at once, with sound of rushing wheels,
While hands enormous, flying their wonted round,
Seem to the thoughtful, gazing silently,
Thus in a moment whirling months away,
So this stupendous complicate machine
Of suns and systems, wheeling round the skies,
Were but the pressure of God's finger gone,
Would on a sudden hasten to its end
With tumult loud, cut short the reign of time,
And spend its force till every motion ceased
With deadened stop. Should the Most High let loose
From his controlling grasp, the elements
Of this calm globe, the sea would burst its bars,

And deluge every land ; or furious winds,
 With earthquakes and volcanoes, rage and waste
 With universal sway. Or should he leave
 To work alone, what men call principles
 Of animal and vegetable life,
 How would the fields and forests, though arrayed
 In summer's gay profusion, all at once
 To wintry nakedness and gloom return,
 And every creature, though with vigour flushed
 Or pleasure, die as with a single stroke !
 How desolate were nature, and how void
 Of every charm, how like a naked waste
 Of Africa, were not a present God
 Beheld employing, in its various scenes,
 His active might to animate and adorn !
 What life and beauty, when in all that breathes,
 Or moves, or grows, his hand is viewed at work !—
 When it is viewed unfolding every bud,
 Each blossom tinging, shaping every leaf,
 Wafting each cloud that passes o'er the sky,
 Rolling each billow, moving every wing
 That fans the air, and every warbling throat
 Heard in the tuneful woodlands. In the least,
 As well as in the greatest of his works,
 Is ever manifest his presence kind ;
 As well in swarms of glittering insects, seen
 Quick to and fro within a foot of air
 Dancing a merry hour, then seen no more,
 As in the systems of resplendent worlds
 Through time revolving in unbounded space.
 His eye, while comprehending in one view
 The whole creation, fixes full on me ;
 As on me shines the sun with his full blaze,
 While o'er the hemisphere he spreads the same.
 His hand, while holding oceans in its palm,
 And compassing the skies, surrounds my life,
 Guards the poor rush-light from the blast of death.
 O'er men and angels, and o'er all beside
 With understanding formed and moral sense,

If other ranks there be, unknown on earth,
Dominion absolute the King of heaven,
In majesty maintains, but with a care -
And tenderness parental, claiming nought
But filial love, and that obedience, due
To excellence and kindness infinite,
Their gain to yield, their true felicity
Unspeakable and endless. Here shines out
Jehovah's glory, in his government
Of countless beings to himself allied;
Here in his moral kingdom, in its worth
All computation of created powers
Transcending far, as far as it transcends
The universe of life irrational
And senseless matter, made but for the use
Of this superior universe of minds,
And but for this preserved, ennobled thus
With grandeur, and with beauty thus adorned.
Through his intelligent creation reigns
The eternal Sovereign, with supreme control
O'er all events, all actions, and all hearts,
In pure benevolence directing all,
One object to accomplish, good immense,
The best and greatest good by boundless power
To be attained, ore'en to be conceived
By the omniscient mind. For this he doomed
Apostate angels to the pit of wo
Interminable, and the faithful fixed
In everlasting innocence and bliss
On heavenly thrones. For this alone he rules
Among the nations, here exalting one,
And there another humbling to the dust ;
Here sending peace, and there the scourge of war ;
Here planting, and there rooting out from earth.
O the consoling thought, that, from this world
With violence covered, shaken by the tread
Of giant conquerors stalking o'er its realms,
The shock of armed hosts together dashed,
The revolutions and the frequent fall
Of mighty empires, whoso will, may lift

His pained eye to heaven, and find relief
 In viewing there, high on a spotless throne,
 A God all goodness overruling all
 Himself to show, his glory to augment,
 And swell the tide of happiness and praise,
 To roll unmingled through eternity,
 And unrestrained, when earth has passed away!

But, far above all others, though sublime,
 One grand display of goodness infinite
 Rises to view, astonishes, attracts,
 Commands the admiration of high heaven,
 The gratitude of earth. All eyes at once
 To Calvary look, for this supreme display
 Of greatness and benevolence combined ;
 To man's redemption from the curse deserved
 Of death eternal, at the price of blood
 Poured from the wounds of God's expiring Son,
 Poured from his heart of overflowing love.
 Here all the glories of the Godhead meet,
 And in one splendid constellation shine ;
 Here with consummate harmony they blend
 Their various beauties, and together form
 A token of mercy, thrown across that cloud
 Suspended o'er the world, with vengeance charged,
 Threatening destruction. Wisdom, justice, power,
 All measureless, to this stupendous work
 The grandeur of divinity impart ;
 But love imparts the loveliness divine.
 Love, love unspeakable, pervades the whole,
 Throughout diffusing its immortal charms.
 Love was its source in the eternal mind,
 And its accomplishment was wrought by love.
 Love made the covenant ere time began,
 And love fulfilled it at the destined hour.
 'Twas love that wept, and agonized, and died ;
 That rose to intercede, and judge, and reign.
 'Tis love unquenchable, its great design
 Pursuing still intently, that sends down
 The gracious Spirit, to constrain, and fit,
 The guilty, proffered pardon to receive

The lost, salvation; and almighty love,
 Its work to finish, in despite of earth,
 Sin, death, and hell, combined for its defeat,
 Safely, triumphantly, to heaven conveys
 Trophies innumerable, there to shine
 Forever, to its everlasting praise.

The bleeding cross, howe'er by thankless man
 Scorned as the monument of his deep guilt,
 His utter helplessness, ruin entire,
 Entire dependence on another's aid,
 Is yet the only monument that shows,
 In all the greatness of his high descent
 And destiny immortal, his true worth
 In Heaven's account. The cross, howe'er despised,
 And to a curse perverted by the blind,
 Is yet the only ladder to the skies,
 For men to climb, or angels to descend.
 Between this world and that of spirits blest,
 Glad intercourse, without the cross, were none.
 The earth, united by no golden chain
 Of mercy, to the realm of innocence,
 By none united to the throne above,
 Would run alone its melancholy course,
 By its Creator's never-changing frown
 Blasted throughout, presenting to the sight
 Of heaven's pure beings, keeping all aloof,
 A spectacle of horror unrelieved.
 Torn from the anchor of hope, a wreck immense,
 With what rapidity and terrible force,
 Straight toward destruction would it drive along,
 From its whole surface sending to the skies
 The shrieks and wailings of despairing men!
 Without the radiance of ethereal day,
 From the third heaven let down, a cheering stream,
 Through the one skylight opened by the cross,
 With what thick darkness were this dungeon filled,
 That nothing could remove and none endure!
 And live there those, within this heavenly light,
 Who, fond of darkness, madly shut their eyes,

And grope, at every step, in painful doubt
Which way to turn, though on the fatal brink ?
As if upon a world of one long night
A sun should rise, and its inhabitants,
In wilful blindness, should still feel their way,
Stumbling at noon. Is there, within this light,
A single eye, that overlooks the cross,
As fabled, or not needed ? Can there be
An eye, that never watered it with tears
Of penitence and love ? a stubborn knee,
That never bowed before it ? or a hand
That never clasped it with the energy
Of hope, in that glad moment when it springs
From deep despair ? O, can there be a heart,
That never, at its foot, poured out itself
In supplications, thanks, and humble vows
Of unreserved devotedness till death ?
Away with every refuge from the woes,
Here and hereafter, but the bleeding cross !
Who flees to any other, for relief
From conscious guilt, and misery, is undone ;
Who leads to any other, them that wait
His guidance, adds their ruin to his own,
And on himself redoubled vengeance draws.
Wo to the men who tear away the cross !
Sole prop and pillar of a sinking world,
If its foundation by unhallowed hands
Be undermined, what, what can give support ?
But, hush, my fears ! it rests not on the sand ;
The raging waves, that dash against its base,
Sink harmless, after foaming out their shame :
Quick, at the voice of the Almighty Word,
Away they shrink, their shallowness betray,
Stir up, and leave exposed to every eye,
The foulness at the bottom ill concealed.
From Calvary springs the only fount of life,
Knowledge, and truth, celestial. Whoso drinks
Feels immortality begun within,
And his dim vision cleared from every mist

Of doubt and ignorance ; its virtues high
He that contemns, is wholly dead at heart,
And, in a maze of errors without end
Bewildered, darkling winds his joyless way.
Divine Redeemer, thou art truth itself ;
In thee are found its sum and living source,
Its boundless and inestimable stores.
They that forsake thee, that with hands profane
From thee thy uncreated glory wrest,
Thy independent throne, and in the pride
Of false philosophy, refuse to sit
Meek learners at thy feet, how fast they pass
From one delusion to another worse,
Gone, from the earliest hesitating thought
Of leaving thee, well nigh beyond the hope
Of restoration, as if left in turn !
One step from thee, thy Godhead, and thy cross
Inseparable, and down a steep descent,
Down, down they go, with bold and bolder strides,
Till, all restraint thrown off, one desperate plunge
Sink them below the light of truth and heaven,
In the dread gulf of infidelity,
The fatal gulf. Between this rayless depth,
And that celestial height, from which they leap
Who once from thee depart, exists no ground
On which to rest ; all is but empty air ;
In which wide void each pause the falling make,
Is but a transient hovering on the wing.
Saviour of men, almighty as thou art,
And infinite in mercy, to thy throne,
Though human argument and friendship fail,
Restore the wandering, there to kneel again
In adoration, and repeat the praise
Of thy divine perfections, once their song.
Turn back the tide of error flowing wide,
Bearing away the boundaries of truth
For ages fixed, the enclosure breaking down
Of many a garden planted by thy hand,
Laying it open to the world's wide waste.

'Tis when the cross is preached, and only then,
 That from the pulpit a mysterious power
 Goes forth to renovate the moral man.
 The cross imparts vitality divine,
 And energy omnipotent, to truth ;
 To its whole system, ineffectual else,
 Inanimate. He that, without it, wields
 The sacred sword, at best, in mock display,
 A useless weapon flourishes in its sheath ;
 None feel its edge, none fear it. Men there are,
 Men of illustrious name, that have employed
 Years in portraying to admiring crowds,
 In vivid colours, with the magic hand
 Of genius guided by refining taste,
 The loveliness of virtue, and of vice
 The hideous features, and in urging all,
 With eloquent tongue, to make the happy choice,
 And, at the end, with grief and self-reproach,
 Have looked around in vain for the reformed.
 On all the moral field within its reach,
 Their beautiful philosophy has fallen
 Powerless, as moonlight cold on the cold snow.
 Convinced at length of this its impotence,
 And taught divinely to proclaim instead
 Messiah crucified, on the same field
 With joy have they beheld an aspect new,
 From fruits abundant of immortal growth.
 When amid frozen seas, mountains of ice,
 And all the horrors of a polar clime,
 Moravia's humble but heroic sons
 The bold attempt began, truth to make known
 To the besotted Greenlander, and lead
 His feet into the path of virtue and life,
 They pointed to the heavens thick set with stars,
 All, to the least, twinkling with vivid beams,
 Presenting a whole living firmament
 Through the clear atmosphere, intensely cold,
 Of his long wintry night ; and to the sun,
 Duly returning to spread o'er his vales

A sudden, transitory, summer smile:—
 To these, and objects visible like these,
 His eye they long directed, and from them
 To their Creator laboured long to raise
 His grovelling thoughts, devotion to inspire,
 And teach obedience; while with stupid awe
 He gazed and listened, or with wonder wild,
 But still to vice remained a willing slave,
 Till, of success from efforts thus pursued
 Despairing, they conducted him at once
 A ruined wretch to Calvary, when with guilt
 He trembled at the sight, melted in love,
 * Shook off the long-fixed clinging habit of sin,
 And from his bestial degradation rose
 To intellectual and virtuous life.

What though the cross, presented to the view
 With all the humbling but momentous truths
^{On its base} Inscribed on it, offend the pride of man?
 Shall it be hidden, or its truths effaced?
 Shall dying men be pleased rather than saved?
 When one who traverses some polar waste,
 Feels the benumbing influence of the cold
 Steal o'er him in a grateful drowsiness,
 Too strong to be resisted, and repays
 With bitter words, while sinking in the snow,
 The efforts of his comrades to alarm
 And rouse him, or support and drag him on,
 Is it philanthropy to please, or save?
 Will not their hated care be recompensed,
 When, borne beyond the danger, and restored
 To feeling and to reason, he pours forth
 The weeping gratitude of a full heart?
 And will the kind severity, that seeks
 To rescue those seized by a lethargy,
 Ending, not broke, in ever-dying death,
 Receive a recompense of thanks less rich
 From the delivered? Or the transient scoff
 Of those delivered never, can this pain
 Like their eternal curse, and that of Heaven,

For ministering an opiate to the soul,
To gain its momentary favour here ?
Cruel the tenderness, that whispers peace
To men at war with their Redeemer, men
Who scorn his clemency, and dare his wrath !
And O how false the friendship, that unites
Preacher and hearer in the ruinous work
Of mutual flattery!—that together joins
The sacred guide, and those who make him theirs,
In travelling merrily on the high way
Of sin and error, as the path to heaven,
Praising its breadth and smoothness, each in turn
Cheering and cheered, deceiving and deceived,
Undoing and undone ! Learn'd he may be,
And eloquent, who yet the name deserves
Of a false teacher, false in head and heart ;
But learning, with its boasted powers, arrayed
Against the sweet simplicity of truth,
And eloquence from counterfeited warmth,
The painted passion of a mind at ease,
How vain and pitiful in all their pride !
He is the true ambassador of Heaven,
Whose learning is the knowledge of the truth,
Whose eloquence is that of piety
Enlightened and impassioned—now a flame
Of pure devotion rising to the skies,
And now a stream of pure benevolence
Poured down on man. Of such the mighty theme,
That takes supreme possession of the soul,
The bosom swelling, glowing on the lips,
Is Christ, the Lord of Life, dying to give
Blest immortality to wretched foes ;
Exchanging, in the plenitude of love,
His own imperishable crown of light
For man's mock diadem of wreathed thorns,
The praise of angels for the scoff of worms,
The infinite beatitude of heaven
For pain unutterable on the cross.

In man's redemption what o'erwhelming proof

Of God's benevolence ! From first to last
'Tis one stupendous scheme for doing good.
'Tis not the power and wisdom, though immense,
But the unfathomable depth of love,
In it disclosed, that makes it what it is,
The hope of earth, the glory of the skies,
Of both the wonder. Needless 'tis to seek
Beyond it, for the excellence supreme
Of heaven's Almighty, and his chief delight.

But here, as if intent on robbing God
Of goodness, in revenge for being compelled,
Against the strongest wishes to confess
E'en his existence, with a fiendlike joy
The infidel exclaims, and thousands, wronged
In their own view if ranked with him, repeat,
With the same spirit the presumptuous cry,
Why were men ruined only to be saved ?
Why all destroyed that part might be restored ?
No answer needs perversion of the truth
So wilful, and its authors look for none,
Content with the relief of vented hate.
With thoughts less impious, others fondly ask,
Why was man suffered to destroy himself ?
Why was there one by previous wickedness
Prepared to tempt him to the fatal deed ?
Slept the Most High, while Satan, full of guile,
Lurked in the bowers of Eden, to seduce
From their allegiance the first happy pair ?
And after their revolt did he awake
Like one surprised, and, not to be quite foiled
By what was done and could not be undone,
Resolve on their redemption as a shift,
The best expedient of a straitened mind,
An unforeseen dilemma to escape ?
Or held he, when rebellion in the breasts
Of angels rose, the reins of government
With hand relaxed, till sin had worked its way
Into the heart of heaven ? and then in wrath
Resumed he them with more determined grasp,

To drive it thence? Lacked he the knowledge, power,
 Or vigilance, its entrance to prevent?
 If not, why left he, in the universe,
 One door unbarred, by which this enemy
 Could gain admission? Why not shut it out
 From his whole kingdom with a single word,
 As he excludes it now, and will henceforth,
 From all the heavenly regions? Other cause
 Than his eternal will, acting in view
 Of good to be effected by its means
 Under his full controul, is sought in vain
 By groping mortals. Of its origin,
 Its first conception in a heart upright,
 And in the power, too, of the Holy One,
 They nothing know, and nothing need to know,
 But that, created free, angels and men
 Fell from the height of rectitude and bliss
 Divinely pure, by their own willing act,
 Nor thwarted in the least God's perfect plan
 Unalterable, nor involved in guilt
 His character with theirs. A mystery this!
 A truth to be believed, and not explained!
 The proud demand of mortals, that its depths
 Be fathomed, and laid open to their view,
 To gain their faith, is vain impiety.
 'Tis prompted by a wish to take the throne,
 And, knowing good and evil, be as gods.
 Rather should thanks be offered, that while here
 That only is revealed to claim their thoughts,
 Which leads to present duty, and prepares
 For an eternity of light and joy.
 It best befits them, with absorbing awe,
 Childlike simplicity of mind and heart,
 And meek dependence on the Spirit of truth
 For needful aid, to make it their employ
 To learn what their Creator has declared
 In his pure oracles, and that receive
 Without a doubt or murmur, nor inquire
 Beyond it for the secrets of his will.

On many a sacred page resemblance clear
 Of that sublimer good, from sin controlled
 By God's benevolence to be secured
 To his great kingdom, shines in some event
 Of transient date. The picture is complete ;
 A hand divine has given, with matchless skill,
 The last bright touches ; and their beauty strikes
 More for the previous shades and darker ground.
 The whole transaction meets the view at once ;
 And, nothing doubting what part to ascribe
 To guilty men, what to their righteous King,
 We render homage, willing or constrained,
 To his transcendent grace, their wickedness
 Controlling, and directing to produce
 A tenfold blessing for the curse they meant :
 Their malice, burning only to destroy,
 He overrules in clemency to save.
 All darkness seems at first, and all along
 The following course ; but on the close is poured
 A flood of light, whose splendour, shining back
 O'er the past gloom, reveals to our dim eyes
 The golden thread of providence benign
 Through the dark tissue drawn, and brighter far
 Than if around it all had been as bright.

Since, then, in the events of days and years
 Our faint and limited vision oft discerns
 Evil, as used by the all-wise Supreme,
 To greater good redounding, wherefore doubt
 The like result of that grand system, formed
 Of these combined, as ocean of its drops ?
 Will goodness infinite expend itself
 On these inferior parts, and leave the whole
 Without its care, to a disastrous fate ?
 If either, sure the former were o'erlooked
 By heaven's great Monarch. Of his kind regard
 Both, as they need, receiving, both e'en now
 Were seen to be o'erruled alike for good
 Were they alike complete, and brought within
 The sphere of vision now the lot of man.

Of God's whole plan, in its infinitude
 Of length and breadth, how little, in this state
 Of imperfection, can we mortals know !
 What influence of great moment hid from us
 The part revealed may have beyond itself,
 On universal being, none can tell.
 In his obscure economy below,
 Designs the Governor of all may have,
 Of which no human mind has ever dreamed.
 Earth, with its mingled scenes of good and ill,
 Judgment and mercy, to the universe
 For which he acts, may bear, beside its known,
 Other relations, of extent immense,
 And infinite weight. Were myriads of stars
 Made but for nightly lamps to this one globe,
 When hung so high in the cerulean vault,
 That all the feeble scattered rays, prolonged
 Down to this depth, scarce make the darkness less ?—
 And when a single orb, low in the sky,
 Outshines them all ? If, rather, like our own,
 Suns to attendant spheres they kindly roll ;
 Rising and setting to give interchange
 Of light and darkness ; vallies, hills, and plains
 Clothing with yearly or perennial fruits,
 And flowery verdure ; shine they not to bless
 Creatures of rational immortal kind,
 Throughout their wide dominion ? Or has God,
 All spirit and intelligence himself,
 And these esteeming infinitely best
 Of all his works, and when recorded stands
 His declaration, that he formed the earth
 To be inhabited, and not in vain,
 Built the whole fabric of celestial orbs
 But to exist a mass of matter void,
 A wilderness enormous, where are none
 Of the delightful sights and sounds of life,
 But awful silence, splendid barrenness
 And desolation ? Ill conceived of thee,
 Father of lights ! Thy wisdom prompts the thought

That here must be the populous abodes
Of beings, formed to serve thee, and enjoy.
These all, perhaps, are sinless, and now reap
The fruits of their obedience ;—feel no pain
And fear no evil ; in communion live
With God and angels ; and, forever near
The world of glory, bask in its full blaze.
And he, in understanding, may not err,
More than in heart, who oft, at peaceful eve,
Looks on the sky as filled with peopled orbs,
Whence universal hymns of praise ascend
To the third heaven—till, earth and e'en himself
Forgetting, living like a spirit free,
In thoughts ethereal rapt, he seem to hear
The distant melody. As in a day,
When earth is darkened by thick stormy clouds,
The sun, above those clouds, shines unobscured,
Covering their restless waves with changing hues,
Spangles, and rainbows ; and on high is nought
But one immensity of radiance bright,
Of clear and tranquil beauty one expanse ;
So, in the intelligent creation, all
Beyond this world and that of hell beneath,
Beyond the gloom that overhangs this scene,
All may be light, and purity, and peace,
And perfect loveliness. This, and the world
Infernal, may then, haply, be set forth
Examples for the subjects of a realm
Extended o'er the globes, the systems wide,
Lighted by eighty millions of bright suns,
Whose beams the telescope has brought to earth,
And by those millions more, in the blue deep
Yet undescried—examples for their good ;
The one of justice, for their warning given ;
The other of sweet mercy, for their faith.
The Ruler of a kingdom thus immense
In its extent, and weighty in its charge,
Might deem it best that his whole character
Be tried and proved ; that righteousness and grace,

Seeming at variance, be together brought
 In union wonderful, and thus displayed,
 Before all eyes, in living monuments,
 Like other attributes in other works.

But cease these fancies ! death may dissipate
 The whole at once, for a more glorious scene.
 To firmer ground I gladly turn for rest.
 Though on this theme, the wonder of the sage
 In every country, and the scoff of fools,
 In spite of reason and conjecture, much
 Remain unsolved, and must while time endures,
 Enough is seen in providence, and fixed
 By sacred promise, for unwavering trust,
 Till the full end, when vision will be full.
 Assured that sin the limit cannot pass
 Of Heaven's permission, that omnipotence
 Has bounded its proud waves, and that, at length,
 The eternal Being, who surveys the end
 From the beginning, will reveal its use,
 In that superior good, to be wrought out .
 From all its evil, wherefore should we scorn
 The wisdom bidding us our murmurs hush
 And vain alarms, renounce our arguments
 And fond surmises, and in silence wait
 Till the great terminating scene arrive ?
 Why should we be like savages untaught,
 Who, while the sun is shrouded in eclipse,
 Raise their tumultuous outcries, thence to drive
 The fancied monster, in their narrow view
 Extinguishing the luminary of day,
 When standing still an hour, with watching eye,
 Would show him moving onward as before,
 With lustre unimpaired ? Why should we fear
 The blotting or diminishing of the light
 Of heaven and earth, the glory of their King,
 Ere the result of what may seem awhile
 Mysterious interruption ? Why pronounce
 The scheme of providence in aught unwise
 Or undesirable, till it be known

E'en to the end ? The end is coming on ;
 The issue of these mixed events below,
 The winding up of all terrestrial scenes ;
 The day of consummation ;—solemn close
 Of past eternity, of that to come
 Beginning grand ;—a common centre, both
 In one uniting, like a strait between
 Two shoreless oceans, at which all things meet,
 Their only passage ;—rendezvous sublime
 Of angels and of men, in that dead pause
 Between the old creation and the new,—
 What time harmonious orbs in stillness wait,
 Their changes broken, for Jehovah's voice
 To bid their moving concert be resumed ;—
 Of all things, great and small, evil and good,
 A full review, when the first heaven and earth
 Have pass'd away, and ere a second rise.

The set time this to ope the sealed book
 Of providence, before assembled worlds.
 Come all and meditate the wondrous scenes,
 The joyful and the terrible, that pass
 In order, at the opening of each seal.
 See the disclosure, now, of hidden things
 In God's impartial plan ; of others, wrapt
 In dubious gloom the evolution full.
 See now the clearing up of time's dark day,
 The clouds dispersed, the elements at rest,
 And all more beautiful than ere the storm :
 The sun sends forth a brighter blaze of beams ;
 Glad nature rings with more melodious notes ;
 And sweeter smiles, with renovated charms,
 Beneath a purer and serener sky.

Thus when this growing system is mature ;
 When it has reached its limits, and the day
 Set for the full review of its concerns
 Varied and countless, has arrived, and passed,
 Then shall the morning of eternity,
 Its inexpressible perfection show.
 'Tis now like the creation in the midst

Of that eventful week, in which the work
 Was in its progress under God's right hand,
 But half completed ; when illumined here,
 There darksome still ; exulting here with life,
 There wholly desolate ; here finely formed,
 And there yet shapeless. But, as at the end
 Of that grand period the Creator viewed,
 With infinite delight, his finished works,
 And their surpassing excellence pronounced,
 So shall it be at the concluding scene
 Of checkered time. Then, too, the morning stars
 Shall sing together ; the bright sons of God
 Shall shout for joy ; and heaven a loud response
 From all her ransomed multitudes resound.

Now from all quarters of the universe,
 Streams of pure glory, due to Him who thus
 In the supremacy of goodness reigns,
 Come pouring into paradise, that vast
 And central ocean. At the gathering flood
 Transported gaze, they, who for this result
 Waited with humble confidence in time.
 Of the Most High, his various works and ways,
 Immeasurably more they now behold
 In one glad hour, than, in their mortal state,
 Imagination, though by faith enlarged,
 And purified by love, had e'er conceived.
 All former knowledge shrinks to nothing now.
 The wisest of astronomers, when a child,
 What knew he of the sun, and starry hosts ?—
 Their revolution, distance, magnitude,
 And order intricate and yet complete ?
 What saw he in the lighted sky at eve,
 But twinkling sparks, as in the dusky air,
 Almost within the reach of his fond hands,
 Thrown upward in the wildness of delight ?
 A Newton in his infancy, is he,
 Who, while on earth, is future heir of heaven.
 Yet, when, in full maturity, he comes
 To his inheritance, he but begins

The glories of the Godhead to discern,
 And of a few know something ; destined thence
 To make sublime advances without end,
 In this the only knowledge of true worth.
 More of that universal government,
 Established and administered in love,
 He still discovers, after ages spent
 In contemplation on the wondrous theme.
 As up the heights of immortality
 He climbs unwearied, to his ravished eye
 The prospect larger grows on every side,
 The firmament swells upward and around,
 While its apparent splendours every hour
 In number and in brilliancy increase.
 Thus, in progression endless, toward the Source
 Of light, move onward all the saints above,
 With joyful ardour, never to be quenched.

But where are now the men of stubborn heart,
 Who, all the season allotted to make peace
 With their Creator, placable though just,
 Stood out against him ? In what guise appear
 Before the last tribunal, they, who oft,
 Despising faith where comprehension fails,
 At reason's bar pronounced their Judge unjust,
 Because his footsteps were unsearchable,
 Now in the clouds, and now along the deep ?
 They stand convinced, appalled, and silently
 Await their doom. Now the rebellious words,
 Utter'd against the providence of Heaven,
 Whene'r it frown'd on them, or seem'd to frown,
 Like arrows impiously and vainly shot,
 By Thracians, at the lowering thundercloud
 When low and near, on their own heads return
 In righteous vengeance. Now in agony
 They own the justice of the Lord of all,
 While under its condemning power they sink
 To uttermost perdition, the desert
 Of unrepented sin, their destiny
 Ordained by thee, thou Arbiter supreme.

The certainty, and rectitude, of this
 Thy dread decree, what mortal dare deny ?
 Great Lawgiver of all worlds, 'tis thine to fix
 The statutes of thy kingdom, and enforce
 Their due observance, by the penalty
 In thy unerring wisdom deem'd the best.

No pleasure from the misery of his foes
 Can God derive ; His character and word
 Forbid, that, like a tyrant, he should feast
 Upon their torments. His benevolence,
 Shown in the blessings lavished on them here ;
 In that transcendent gift, forfeited heaven
 To purchase for them ; in the offer made
 Of pardon on repenting, made again
 Oft as rejected, with entreaties pressed
 And warnings merciful, forbids the thought.
 But from their punishment, in its effects
 Upon a government with wisdom planned,
 He does derive such pleasure as becomes
 A gracious Monarch, who the welfare loves
 Of his whole kingdom, more than that of those
 Who break its sacred laws, madly abuse
 All clemency, and enemies remain
 Incurable. 'Tis the general weal,
 That calls for vengeance on the rebel's head.
 Thus justice to benevolence is changed,
 And judgment into mercy. Hell is made
 The woful dungeon of the universe,
 Where universal foes, and only such,
 In sad imprisonment forever lie.
 Its depths were hollowed out, its gloomy walls
 Raised, for the peace of heaven ; and for the peace
 Of God's whole empire they remain, and will
 Until rebellion be no more a crime.
 Those everdaring chains were forged in love
 Impartial ; perfect goodness binds them on,
 And turns the fatal key, that locks up all,
 Who enter once that dreadful gate, unlocked
 To none returning. To the inmost seat

Of feeling tortured by this thought, how writhe
 The guilty sufferers! Could they but discern,
 On the white throne above, the slightest stain
 Of cruelty or injustice, 'twere enough
 To give them fortitude to bear the worst.
 But how can they be strong, in hand or heart,
 To suffer or resist, when they behold
 Benevolence and equity combined,
 In their eternal exile from the climes
 Of light and happiness? How can they meet
 Love armed in the dread panoply of wrath,
 To take its righteous vengeance? How endure
 From their Redeemer to receive their doom?
 How can they stand before the Lamb incensed?
 The meek, the spotless, self-devoted Lamb?
 How will it give to their despair a sting
 Of keen and piercing agony, to think
 That He, who on the seat of judgment high,
 Arrayed in robes of majesty supreme,
 Sits to condemn them, is that Prince of Peace,
 Who once, in accents of compassion sweet,
 Of weeping condescension infinite,
 Pleaded for their acceptance of his love!
 Ah me! what bitterness, to drink, and drink
 Forever, of the cup of penal wrath
 Unmingled, from the hand that once held out
 The cup of free salvation; from that hand,
 Which always gladly healed the broken heart,
 And bound up all its wounds; from that same hand
 Once stretched upon the cross, streaming with blood!

If, in that great development to come,
 Of all things hidden, sin reflect no blame
 On heaven's high Ruler, then will misery none;
 For, sin admitted, misery should ensue,
 Whither it goes should follow, where it dwells
 Should with it dwell, inseparably joined;
 A world of guilt should be a world of pain.
 And if, from the insufferable woes
 Of an undone eternity, no cry

Of just reproach ascend to heaven, then none
From all the slight calamities of time
Can e'er ascend. But wherefore will not God,
E'en now, from ills, on others brought, exempt
The offspring of regenerating grace,
The children of his love ? Imperfect yet,
They need the chastenings of paternal care,
To save them from the wily blandishments
Of error, and to win their hearts away
From the polluting, ruining joys of earth.
Though from its height of sole authority,
O'er all the moving principles within,
Sin be deposed, it struggles to regain
Its lost dominion, till they half consent,
When all their trust is not in borrowed might,
To yield the conflict. Though his head be crushed,
The serpent lives, and shows what spite he can,
E'en till their sun go down. Not chastened then,
No proof were given they were not past reform,
And left as reprobate, to be prepared
By mercies for an aggravated doom.
See they not often now, and will they not
Hereafter see, that when they murmured most
They should have sung the highest notes of praise ?
When from the skies they cast a look below,
Methinks they will esteem their path too smooth
And level, for transgressors bound to heaven.
O, had it been a steeper, rougher ascent,
Then had they risen more rapidly, and gained
An exaltation of superior bliss !
Becomes it them, to eye with sad distrust,
That hand of a compassionate Parent, laid
Heavily on them, while for their support
His other is extended underneath,
And filled with richer blessings in reserve ?
Should they not rather welcome the kind stroke,
That humbles but to fit them for a throne ?
Should they not even beg their heavenly Guide
To bar up, or to plant with thorns, each path,

However flowery, that would lead astray ;
And to imbitter all forbidden fruit
Soliciting their taste, however fair ?
Were not the world to them unlovely made,
Heaven were forgotten, or without desire
Remembered, and without foretasting faith.
Like the thick grove, that only when deprived
Of its gay foliage, through it shows, beyond,
Green fields, the ocean, the resplendent sky,
Earth must be stript of charms, to let them see
The loveliness of paradise beyond,
The vast bright prospect of eternity.
Were nothing but enjoyment theirs below,
Were all prosperity, their hearts were here,
And here their portion. Were they undisturbed,
Their day of trial were spent in fatal sleep.
'Tis when the world disowns them, turns them out
From every resting place as none of hers,
That they pursue with quick and vigorous step
Their pilgrimage, and muse upon its end
With panting hope and elevating joy.
When by affliction purified, and weaned
From sublunary toys, with what delight
They cleave to Him in whose embrace is found
The only rest, and welcome the approach
Of that great change of being, to be passed
Only to wing them for a speedy flight
Into his unveiled presence, there to find
Pleasures augmented by griefs left below !
There, long possessed, the due inheritance
Of angels, whom no suffering ever reached,
Is sweet indeed ; but, the reward of saints,
Rest after toil, and after conflict peace,
Light out of darkness, out of sorrow joy,
Life from the grave, and paradise from earth,
Nay, from the brink of hell, how passing sweet !
There with what loveliness the spirit shines,
When, through afflictions, from defilement deep
Raised to angelic purity, from death

To the perfection of celestial life !
 So from the filthy bottom of the pool,
 Up through its waters, to the surface springs
 The lily, and there blooms a perfect flower,
 Of brilliant whiteness, beautifully pure.
 And what more lovely object here below,
 Or more exalted, than a mortal, weak
 And tender, looking upward in the midst
 Of painful visitations, with an eye
 By faith illumined, and a brow serene
 From heartfelt peace and acquiescence full
 In Heaven's high will ; and out of deep distress
 Rising invigorated, and prepared
 For generous deeds impossible before ?
 'Tis resignation, so unfeigned, entire,
 And happy, by severe affliction proved,
 When nature in her tenderness resists,
 That shines the fairest victory of grace.

In early wedlock joined, when all things wore
 An aspect bright with promised happiness,
 Orville and Charlotte were a pair beloved
 For intellectual and moral worth ;
 For knowledge, both the useful and refined.
 Taste uncorrupt, feeling benevolent,
 Sweetness of temper, gentleness of mien,
 And undissembled piety, the soul
 Of all their virtues. Undisturbed, awhile,
 In their felicity, they passed along,
 One in their studies, duties, pleasures pure,
 Guiding and guided each, blessing and blessed.
 Sweet intercourse between congenial minds !
 And sweeter interchange of kindred hearts !
 Together they with like devotion scanned
 The heavenly orbs, traversed the map of earth
 With equal skill, dwelt on her history
 With like astonishment at human crimes
 And God's forbearance, to exalted verse
 Gave vocal melody with equal gust.
 Nor did they for the fashionable muse

The classic quite forsake. Nigh them they kept
The poet of humanity and truth,
Of simple nature and religion pure,
The lovely Cowper ; and, at every word
Against his fame, felt wounded in a friend.
Nor to the crowded shelf, to be forgot,
Was Milton e'er removed ;—seraphic bard !
Sweetly sublime, in paradise above !
In paradise below, sublimely sweet !
There lofty numbers, and melodious here,
Grandeur and beauty every where, command
Breathless attention, and within them wake
Those finer strings, that, at the thrilling touch
Of mighty genius, quiver with keen delight.
Together over flowery fields and woods
They rambled, in the not unuseful search
Of plants to be inspected in each part,
With nicety botanic ; nor e'en passed
Unheeded any delicate shapely brake,
Or tuft of moss, upon bleak mountain rocks,
Like frostwork, fine, and white, and crumbling quick
Beneath the foot ; on the low shady bank,
Like velvet, green and soft, or like a grove
Of pines inch-high, with noiseless pliancy
All bending prostrate at the lightest tread,
Or gentlest pressure of the stroking hand,
Then with elastic liveliness again
Rising unhurt. Not less in these minute,
Than in the vast of the Creator's works,
They loved to trace his hand, in every touch
Inimitably fair. The house of want,
Of ignorance, of mourning, of disease,
Together oft they humbly cheered with alms,
Instruction, sympathy, attendance kind.
Each weekly and each daily season, made
Sacred to acts of worship, with delight
Duly observing, oft, at other times,
They knelt together in devotion sweet,
As aught of signal interest called for thanks,

Or supplications of appropriate warmth ;
And oft, at other times, together sung,
Not unassisted by the solemn chord,
Anthems of praise. Thus happily they lived,
Till, in their arms, a second pleasant babe
With a faint smile intelligent began
To answer theirs, and with a brighter that
Of its fond sister, standing by their side,
With frequent kisses prattling in its face ;
While in its features, with parental joy,
And love connubial, they began to mark
Theirs intermingled ;—when, with sudden stroke,
The blooming infant faded, and expired.
And soon its lonely sister, doubly dear
Now in their grief, was in like manner torn
From their united grasp. With patience far
Beyond her years, the little sufferer bore
Her sharp distemper, while she could behold
Both parents by her side ; but, when from sleep
Transient and troubled waking, wept aloud,
As terrified, if either were not there.
To hear their voices singing of the love
Of her Redeemer, in her favourite hymn,
And praying for his mercy, oft she asked
With eagerness, and seemed the while at ease.
When came the final struggle, with the look
Of a grieved child, and with its mournful cry,
But still with something of her wonted tone
Of confidence in danger, as for help,
She called on them, on both alternately,
As if by turns expecting that relief
From each the other had grown slow to yield ;
At which their calmness, undisturbed till then,
Gave way to agitation past control.
A few heart-rending moments, and her voice
Sunk to a weak and inarticulate moan,
Then in a whisper ended ; and with that
Her features grew composed and fixed in death ;
At sight of which their lost tranquillity

At once returned. 'Twas evening ; and the lamp,
Set near, shone full upon her placid face,
Its snowy white illuming, while they stood
Gazing as on her loveliness in sleep,
The enfeebled mother on the father's arm
Heavily hanging, like the slender flower
On its firm prop, when loaded down with rain
Or morning dew ; and laying her pale cheek
Upon his shoulder, with the simple air
Of infant weakness and dependence sweet.
Their lifeless child they tenderly bemoaned,
Yet opened their sad hearts, and not in vain,
To holy consolation from on high.
With unrepining sorrow, they beheld
That little cherished frame of beauteous clay
Apparelled for the grave, and covered deep
In its cold bosom. When, day after day,
No cheering sound of playful childhood broke
The stillness of their dwelling, and they felt
The new uneasiness of empty arms,
They sometimes wept together, but in tears
Showed a submissive look, almost a smile.
Now came the last and sorest in the train
Of their afflictions, the dissolving blow
To nature's first and most endearing ties.
By her loved little ones, ere yet the turf
Upon their graves its unsoiled green regained,
Charlotte, the amiable wife was laid ;
And thus the partner of her bosom left,
To mourn in solitude the loss of all.
By her bed side, with unremitting care,
In all her painful sickness, day and night,
He watched, anticipating every want,
And sharing every pang. From a full heart,
Now audibly, now silently he poured
Incessant supplications for her life,
Or happiness in death ; and when the hope
Of her recovery failed, with gratitude
He saw unshaken to the last, her trust

In His compassion, whom in health she served
With willing mind. Her end was full of peace,
Fitting her uniform piety serene.

'Twas rather the deep humble calm of faith,
Than her high triumph ; and resembled more
The unnoticed setting of a clear day's sun,
Than his admired departure in a blaze
Of glory bursting from a clouded course.
When from her burial to his home returned
The broken-hearted Orville, and beheld
Around all still, all desolate within,
A feeling of his utter loneliness
Rushed on his soul with overwhelming power.
Entering his door ungreeted and unmet,
Missing her face that always brightened quick
At his approach, her voice that sweeter grew,
On the first seat presented, down at once,
As if all strength were in a moment gone,
He sunk, dissolving in a flood of tears ;
Then, rising suddenly, walked to and fro,
And in impassioned accents mourned aloud.
When at his table, in her wonted seat
He first beheld another ; when he saw
The last unfinished labours of her hand ;—
Her needle, pen, and pencil, at his wish,
Untouched remaining, just as left by her ;—
And when he cast an eye upon her plants
Perennial, and her aromatic shrubs,
In their neat vases, left unwatered long,
Dropping untimely leaves and blighted buds ;
His rising grief no effort could suppress.
If in his house, through its disordered rooms,
He wandered, or through alleys weedy grown
In his neglected garden, or along
The sylvan walks of her accustomed choice,
At every step, some object called to mind
Her worth, or her affection, and thus kept
Opening afresh the wound within his breast.
Yet though severely pained, he ne'er refused,

In sullen or in passionate despair,
The sympathy of friendship; ne'er returned
With coldness the warm pressure of the hand,
Nor heard unmoved from undissembling lips
Gentle condolence. E'en the pity shown
By giddy youth, in checking their loud mirth
While passing his lone dwelling, with an eye
Turned toward it oft, attracted by the sight
Of doors all closed and window curtains down,
Touched him with grateful joy, while it awaked
A sigh at the remembrance of his loss.
But other consolation, far above
Whate'er this world of vanity can yield,
He needed, with ethereal fervour sought,
And in abundance found. So full his trust,
So high his joy, in Him, whose government
Is always equitable, always good,
And to the penitent of human kind
In all things merciful, that they who looked,
At first, to see his tender nature sink,
Ere long with admiration saw it changed
To exalted firmness;—not, indeed, his own;
Not the quick growth of philosophic pride,
But of the infused virtue of that grace
From heaven descending. In his grief, he seemed
Like the young tree, bowed low, as from its top
Some strong hand tears away the clinging vine,
Breaks by degrees the innumerable ties
Of branches and soft tendrils intertwined,
But, when quite parted, rising, and, despoiled
Of all its own with all its borrowed bloom,
Standing, in naked loneliness, sublime.
Thus stript, a solitary being, left
To feel united to the earth no more
By any outward bond, he looked on all
That he possessed, once valued for the sake
Of others dearer than himself, as now
No longer his, to be enjoyed alone;
And with a richer treasure in his view,

Restored it to the Giver, to augment
 The knowledge of his will, and of his grace
 The victories, among immortal men.
 Not in a fit of discontented gloom,
 But with the sober constancy of faith,
 He viewed himself thenceforth a stranger here,
 And looked on all the world, in all its charms,
 As nought to him, intent upon his home,
 And on whatever intervening means
 Might best and soonest fit him for its joys.
 By learning and meek piety prepared
 To be the messenger of truth and grace,
 Now doubly by affliction, and desire
 Benevolent kindled to a quenchless flame,
 And inly prompted by the Spirit divine
 Inhabiting his bosom, forth he went
 From all the abodes of elegance and ease,
 To publish in the wilderness, to men
 In mind and manners rude, dwelling in huts
 Uncouth and comfortless, the welcome words
 Of heavenly mercy, through the ransom high
 On Calvary paid. From hardships, that would once
 Have crushed him, gathering vigour in his course,
 Onward till death, in this angelic work,
 He pressed, with growing ardour and delight.
 When in the great assembly of the just,
 Walking in white,—his happy wife and babes,
 Beautiful cherubs, smiling at his side,—
 He meets with those by his exertion saved,
 Beholds their glory, hears their rapturous songs,
 And, forward looking with an angel's ken
 (Along the vista of unlimited years, *eternal*)
 Contemplates their uninterrupted march
 In excellence and bliss, and in them views
 Immortal trophies of the Prince of Life,
 Forever yielding honour to the love
 Omnipotent of this his dearest friend,
 How will the day of his bereavement here,
 Like morning, break from its terrestrial gloom,

And shine of all his days most luminous
 In heaven's reflected and concentrated light !
 And how will his unchanging confidence
 In God's mysterious goodness, with its fruits
 Of rich and lasting growth, the height sublime
 Of wisdom prove, and virtue, to the joy
 Triumphant of his never-ending life !

If such the future good, the glory bright,
 The bliss ineffable, of them that bear,
 With holy fortitude of heart, the ills
 Of vile mortality, and rise beneath
 The accumulated weight to higher deeds,
 Then let the deepest in affliction lift
 The drooping head, beneath the heaviest load,
 And, fired with hope, run with unfaltering step
 Their sublunary course. The woes of earth
 May thicken, and severer grow, till death ;
 But that last pang, like the last paroxysm
 Of some long painful dream, waking the soul
 To life and transport, makes amends at once
 For all past sufferings, in a moment all
 Forgotten in that plenitude of joy.
 And if so glorious be the end of faith,
 In that good providence, minutely employed
 On its possessor ; faith in God's kind care
 Of his great kingdom of victorious grace,
 With what transcendent glory will it reach
 Its consummation ! Of this last reward
 E'en now the frequent prelibation cheers
 The saddened spirit, when events within
 This rising kingdom, seeming for a while
 Disastrous, turn to unexpected good,
 In greatness and extent surpassing far
 The threatened ill. The good man, eminent
 In station and endowments, one to whom
 The virtuous of whole nations look with joy
 And expectation high, dies in the prime
 Of active excellence ; but soon, to calm
 The general grief, and all distrust reprove,

From his removal are divinely wrought,
 And visibly to all, effects above
 The highest ever hoped from life prolonged.
 Few are the days, in which the friends of man,
 With looks of fearful sorrow, when they meet,
 Untimely and calamitous pronounce
 His early death. On all the darkness thick,
 Involving it at first, light shines anon,
 With added glory ; as when radiance bright,
 After the sun's departure in deep gloom,
 Suddenly shines on all the clouds of heaven,
 And adds a splendour richer than of day.

In grand pre-eminence o'er every truth
 Rises the goodness, pure and measureless,
 Of that eternal Being, in whose hands
 Are all things, at his sole disposal held,
 And with a grasp that nothing can resist.
 No matter what is truth, if this be not ;
 All is forever lost ; despair like death
 Reigns, and a horror of great darkness spreads,
 O'er a lost universe. If this be truth,
 No matter what is not ; all, all is safe ;
 The living light of hope creation cheers.
 This is enough for creatures of the dust
 To know of their great Maker ; of his will
 And providence, in all their mysteries.
 Let this suffice the wavering to confirm,
 To hush the murmuring, and the sinking raise ;
 To drive from every breast rebellious thoughts
 And sorrowful, and win the love supreme
 Of every heart, the confidence entire ;
 And into each infuse divine delight,
 Unmingled and unfailing as its source.
 Sublimer consolation heaven has none
 To give to mortals, no sublimer joy
 For angels, than from the assurance flows,
 That all is goodness in the government,
 And in the character, of Him who reigns
 Head over all things ; that his holiness

Is but benevolence kindled to a flame,
 Refining and consuming for like end,
 His wisdom but the knowledge and the will
 To make the height of happiness secure,
 His justice a wall of fire about his throne
 To guard it from defilement ruinous,
 His truth the immutability of grace,
 And his omnipotence the might of love.

Great is thy goodness, Father of all life,
 Fount of all joy. Thou high and holy One,
 Whom not thy glorious sanctuary, heaven,
 Can e'er contain ; Spirit invisible,
 Whose omnipresence makes creation smile,
 Great is thy goodness, worthy of all praise
 From all thy works. Then let earth, air, and sea ;
 Nature, with every season in its turn ;
 The firmament, with its revolving fires ;
 And all things living ; join to give thee praise.
 Thou glorious sun, like thy Original,
 A vital influence to surrounding worlds
 Forever sending forth, yet always full ;
 And thou fair queen of night, o'er the pure sky,
 Amid thy glittering company of stars,
 Walking in brightness, praise the God above.
 Ocean, forever rolling to and fro
 In thy vast bed, o'er half the hollowed earth ;
 Grand theatre of wonders to all lands,
 And reservoir of blessings, sound his praise.
 Break forth into a shout of grateful joy,
 Ye mountains, covered with perennial green,
 And pouring crystal torrents down your sides ;
 Ye lofty forests, and ye humble groves ;
 Ye hills, and plains, and valleys, overspread
 With flocks and harvests. All ye feathered tribes,
 That, taught by your Creator, a safe retreat
 Find in the dead of winter, or enjoy
 Sweet summer all your days by changing clime,
 Warble to him all your melodious notes ;
 To him, who clothes you with your gay attire,
 And kindles in your fluttering breasts the glow

Of love parental. Beasts, that graze the fields,
 Or roam the woods, give honour to the Power,
 That makes you swift to flee, or strong to meet,
 The coming foe ; and rouses you to flight
 In harmless mirth, or soothes to pleasant rest.
 Shout to Jehovah with the voice of praise,
 Ye nations, all ye continents and isles,
 People of every tongue ; ye that within
 The verdant shade of palm and plantain sit,
 Feasting on their cool fruit, on torrid plains ;
 And ye that in the midst of pine-clad hills,
 In snowy regions, grateful vigour inhale
 From every breeze. Ye, that inhabit lands,
 Where science, liberty, and plenty dwell,
 Worship Jehovah in exalted strains.

But ye, to whom redeeming mercy comes,
 With present peace, and promises sublime
 Of future crowns, and mansions in the skies,
 Imperishable, raise the loudest song.

O, sing forever, with seraphic voice,
 To Him, whose immortality is yours,
 In the blest union of eternal love !

And join them, all ye winged hosts of heaven,
 That in your Maker's glory take delight ;
 And ye, too, all ye bright inhabitants
 Of starry worlds ; and let the universe,
 Above, below, around, be filled with praise.

Though held thus long in contemplation sweet
 On heaven's high King, I may not leave his court
 Till I have marked the godlike myriads
 Of bright intelligences, that attend
 In state celestial, ranged in order round
 His throne adoring ; at his bidding fly,
 Swiftly and silently as beams of light,
 From world to world, to execute his will ;
 From their creation this their blest employ,
 And theirs for an eternity to come.
 Not from the need of their almighty Lord,
 To propagate the impulse of his hand
 Beyond its reach, serve they throughout his realm.

Nor is his service deemed a menial task ;
 'Tis their high privilege, their whole delight.
 Were they disbanded, and employed no more,
 Their hearts would pine as o'er departed bliss,
 Their station forfeited, their glory lost.
 On errand sent of love or righteous wrath,
 They oft appeared on earth, from that sad hour
 When cherubs stood to guard, with sword of flame,
 Fair paradise and its live-giving tree
 From all access of banished ruined man,
 To that most memorable day, when heaven
 Sent down the flower of her exulting hosts,
 To celebrate his birth in Bethlehem born.
 Him they acknowledged as their Sovereign still,
 Though clad in flesh, and to his human wants
 Administered while in the lonely wild,
 Strengthened his mortal frame when in the shades
 Of sad Gethsemane it almost sunk,
 Borne down by that insufferable load
 Of a world's guilt ; and legions, hovering near,
 Gazing with trembling wonder, waited leave
 To screen from danger his devoted head,
 And pour contempt and ruin on his foes.
 In shining garments mighty angels came,
 To ope the tomb, and hail their rising Lord ;
 And came again—let gently down to earth
 The golden cloud that bore him up the sky,
 And them who gazed of his last coming warned.
 That coming all his angels shall attend,
 The trump to sound, and gather his elect
 From the four winds, ere his avenging wrath
 Come on the world, and bury it in flames.
 Meanwhile they minister to saints below,
 The tempted to deliver, and to guide
 The wandering ; hope to whisper to the sad,
 And to the dying peace. Round the death bed
 They take their stand, with wings invisible
 And noiseless fan upon the burning brow
 The cooling air, and light the lifted eye
 With glimpses of celestial glory bright.

They wait, with arms extended, to receive
The liberated spirit, and 'up to climes
Of immortality, their happy home,
Bear it with the rapidity of thought.
Benevolence reigns a passion in their breasts,
While in the presence of their King they stand,
Begirt to fly the moment when he bids.
It spreads their pinions, quickens, and supports,
And guides them far and wide, on every wind,
Downward, and upward, and along the earth
From land to land, wherever virtue dwells.
Listening delighted, in assemblies, met
To join entreaties for the coming quick
Of the great kingdom of redeeming love,
They mingle; and in those of every name,
Combined its promised welfare to promote.
They cheer with glad attendance them that go,
Life to the dying nations to proclaim;
And with the tidings of each penitent
Hasten to heaven, to give new rapture there.
And if o'er one regenerated soul
They all rejoice, what shouts of joy, increased
A thousand fold, shall burst from glowing lips,
Ring round and round the everlasting hills,
From choir to choir repeated long and loud,
And swell the whole grand chorus of the skies,
When in one day a nation shall be born!
A Gabriel's now is every humbler harp,
And his attuned to notes unheard before.
If angels bear a beggar to the skies,
If they have borne home solitary saints,
Amidst unholy millions well nigh lost,
How will the air and heavens be all alive,
With motion swifter than the lightning flash,
From their ascending and descending bands,
Meeting, and intermingling, night and day,
When from each shore, and island of the sea,
And mount, and vale, around the populous globe,
Spirits regenerate shall depart each hour,
In all a countless throng! From heaven to earth

Pass and re-pass bright angels, in a train
So constant, and so thick, they lighten up
Another galaxy along the sky,
A radiant pathway o'er the starry realm
To realms of bliss. Behold the saints ascend,
No longer one by one, and far apart ;
They go in companies, they fly like clouds
Of sunny whiteness, on a vernal day,
Hurrying in thick succession o'er the heavens ;
In one continual multitude they rise.
Oft hovering for a moment, on their way,
To clap their pinions with triumphant joy,
Angels attend them ; angels, too, on watch,
Look from the garnished battlements of heaven,
Their coming to proclaim, soon as beheld,
Far down, a living constellation, fast
Ascending, widening, brightening, shedding light
On the dim orbs that roll around its path.
Their city's twelve transparent gates of pearl,
Till this glad day all barred save one alone,
Angels with joyful haste throw open wide,
To let whole armies in ; and angels pour
From each, to greet them, with endearing words,
And smiles benignant ; and through dazzling ranks,
Into the centre of their blest abode,
Before that face whose glory is their sun,
Conduct them, all, with tuneful voices loud,
And the sweet symphony of golden harps,
Uniting in hosannas to the Lamb.

While thus with all the native sons of heaven,
In their adoring acclamations, join
Those ransomed from the earth, they feel the fire
Of their benevolence, in its purity,
Burning within, enkindling joy like theirs,
And prompting to like action. Yes, the love
Of giving and beholding happiness,
First wakened in their hearts amid the sins,
The griefs, and frailties, of mortality,
When these remain no more to chill its zeal,

Shall live, the bosom's sole inhabitant ;
There reign, and to angelic fervour rise.
Love is the only amaranthine flower,
In this inclement world, this land of death.
While faith and hope, are blasted in the grave,
The wintry grave, with other flowers of time,
Thou, sacred charity, shalt still survive,
And in a soil and clime, where all is life,
Shalt grow, and flourish, in eternal spring,
And with unwasting sweetness fill the groves
And vales of paradise. There all is love,
In every happy breast, through every rank,
E'en to the humblest ; love without a taint
Of hidden selfishness, without a drop
Of bitterness, from fear, or hope deferred.
None pine with jealousy, at sight of bliss
Their own transcending. To behold a crown
Of fairer light than theirs, or hear a harp
More tuneful, wakens discontent in none,
But livelier joy. The happiness of each
Is ever that of all. Love makes the heaven
Of every bosom ; gives to every face
Its winning beauty, to the cheek its bloom
Unfading, to the lips their living glow,
Its pure ethereal lustre to the eye,
And to the whole its everlasting smile.
On all the multitudes, spread o'er the plains
Of immortality, from his high throne
The God of love, through the transparent cloud
Of glory round him, casts a fixed look
Of calm complacence, in their union sweet
Rejoicing, in their charity sublime,
In their consummate likeness to himself.

THE
AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.

EXTRACTS FROM BOOK II.

DESCENDING to this sublunary orb,
From the third heaven th' empyreal realm of love,
Its native element, (sublimely pure,
And all pervading) how am I thrown,
As from the glowing centre of the sun,
Down to earth's frozen and benighted pole.

Will no kind visitant from heaven, reveal
By what unerring sign apostate man
May know himself preparing to regain
Lost paradise, its innocence and bliss?
Tis nothing less than that same image lost,
Effaced by sin, new stamp'd upon the soul.
What else, but God's own likeness, could prepare
Angel or man, his presence to enjoy?
What, but the temper of the heavenly world
Could fit a being to be happy there?
This temper and that likeness meet in love.
Love is the watch-word at the gate of heav'n.
Religion comes to mortals richly fraught
With this celestial grace, and scatters round
Its heav'n-born fragrance in this distant soil,
As spices, when exposed in foreign climes,
Breathe out the native odours of their own.

* * * * *

Time well employ'd is Satan's deadliest foe :
 It leaves no opening for the lurking fiend :
 Life it imparts to watchfulness and prayer,
 Statues, without it in the form of guards.

The closet which the saint devotes to prayer,
 Is not his temple only, but his tower,
 Whither he runs for refuge, when attack'd,
 His armory, to which he soon retreats
 When danger warns, his weapons to select,
 And fit them on. He dares not stop to plead
 When taken by surprise and half o'ercome,
 That now to venture near the hallow'd place
 Were but profane ; a plea that marks a soul
 Glad to impose on conscience with a show
 Of humble veneration, to secure
 Present indulgence, which, when once enjoy'd,
 It means to mourn with floods of bitter tears.

The tempter quits his vain pursuit and flies,
 When by the mounting suppliant drawn too near
 The upper world of purity and light.
 He loses sight of his intended prey,
 In that effulgence beaming from the throne
 Radiant with mercy. But devotion fails
 To succour and preserve the tempted soul,
 Whose time and talents rest or run to waste.
 Ne'er will the incense of the morn diffuse
 A salutary savour through the day,
 With charities and duties not well filled.
 These form the links of an electric chain
 That join the orisons of morn and eve,
 And propagate through all its several parts,
 While kept continuous, the ethereal fire ;
 But if a break be found the fire is spent.

* * * * *

Too long I've wandered, though by truth led on ;
 But still the strong enchantment which unmans

The pensive lovers of the calm sublime,
And which, unbroke, upon the lap of ease
Lays them to sleep, wrapt up in selfish gloom
Unmindful of the claims of social life,
Demands regard, ere yet I quite return.

How rich in scenes that nurse in pensive souls
A tenderness voluptuously soft,
Till grown to indolent and morbid gloom,
Fatal to active usefulness, to peace with heaven,
Is nature's varied field. A mind in love
With mournful musing, never turns in vain
To nature for some dear congenial scene ;
But scenes there are, so fraught with soothing power,
They woo the pensive mind when unemployed.

A sultry noon, not in the summer's prime
When all is fresh with life, and youth, and bloom,
But near its close when vegetation stops,
And fruits mature, stand ripening in the sun,
Sooths and enervates with its thousand charms,
Its images of silence and of rest,
The melancholy mind. The fields are still ;
The husbandman has gone to his repast,
And, that partaken, on the coolest side
Of his abode, reclines, in sweet repose.
Deep in the shaded stream the cattle stand,
The flocks beside the fence, with heads all prone
And panting quick. The fields for harvest ripe,
No breezes bend in smooth and graceful waves,
While with their motion, dim and bright by turns,
The sun-shine seems to move ; nor e'en a breath
Brushes along the surface with a shade,
Fleeting and thin, like that of flying smoke.
The slender stalks, their heavy bended heads
Support as motionless, as oaks their tops.
O'er all the woods the top-most leaves are still,
E'en the wild poplar leaves, that, pendant hung
By stems elastic, quiver at a breath,
Rest in the general calm. The thistle down

Seen high and thick, by gazing up beside
 Some shading object, in a silver shower
 Plumb down, and slower than the slowest snow,
 Through all the sleepy atmosphere descends ;
 And where it lights, though on the steepest roof,
 Or smallest spire of grass, remains unmoved.
 White as a fleece, as dense and as distinct
 From the resplendent sky, a single cloud
 On the soft bosom of the air becalmed,
 Drops a lone shadow as distinct and still,
 On the bare plain, or sunny mountain's side ;
 Or in the polished mirror of the lake,
 In which the deep reflected sky appears
 A calm sublime immensity below.

* * * * * Beneath a sun
 That crowns the centre of the azure cope,
 A blaze of light intense o'erspreads the whole
 Of nature's face ; and he that overlooks,
 From some proud eminence, the champaign round,
 Notes all the buildings, scattered far and near,
 Both great and small, magnificent and mean,
 By their smooth roofs of shining silver white,
 Spangling with brighter spots the bright expanse.
 No sound, nor motion, of a living thing
 The stillness breaks, but such as serve to soothe
 Or cause the soul to feel the stillness more.
 The yellow-hammer by the way-side picks,
 Mutely, the thistle's seed ; but in her flight,
 So smoothly serpentine, her wings outspread
 To rise a little, closed to fall as far,
 Moving like sea-fowl o'er the heaving waves,
 With each new impulse chimes a feeble note.
 The russet grasshopper, at times, is heard,
 Snapping his many wings, as half he flies,
 Half hovers in the air. Where strikes the sun
 With sultriest beams, upon the sandy plain,
 Or stony mount, or in the close deep vale,

The harmless locust of this western clime,
At intervals, amid the leaves unseen,
Is heard to sing with one unbroken sound,
As with a long-drawn breath, beginning low,
And rising to the midst with shriller swell,
Then in low cadence dying all away.
Beside the stream collected in a flock,
The noiseless butterflies, though on the ground,
Continue still to wave their open fans
Powder'd with gold ; while on the jutting twigs
The spindling insects that frequent the banks,
Rest, with their thin transparent wings outspread
As when they fly. Oft times, though seldom seen,
The cuckoo, that in summer haunts our groves,
Is heard to moan, as if at every breath
Panting aloud. The hawk in mid-air high,
On his broad pinions sailing round and round,
With not a flutter, or but now and then,
As if his trembling balance to regain,
Utters a single scream but faintly heard,
And all again is still. The cooling shade
The listless rambler seeks, perhaps beside
Sad willows planted round the garden pool,
Whose slender leaves and long untapering limbs
Hanging plumb down with gracefulness,
Drip with a constant shower of scattered drops
Hung from the spouting column in the midst ;
Or in the forest by the clear cold rill,
That falls in short cascades as by thick steps
Down the long steep, mid slaty stones o'ergrown
With fresh green moss, beneath the umbrage dark
Of pine and fir : while oozing from the rocks
Trickle cold springs, and on the banks, the cups
Of flowers unsunned, day after day, retain
The rain of heaven. Here musing he reclines,
Cooled by the freshness, by the murmurs lulled,
And softly saddened by the verdant gloom.

At evening in the unfrequented door,

Fronting the west, he takes his wonted stand,
 Leaning against the post with folded arms ;
 Or at his chamber window, open thrown,
 He seats himself, his forehead bared to meet
 Each cooling breeze, his elbow on the sill,
 And his bare temple resting on his palm.
 He looks abroad and much he finds to please
 A soul depressed and sink it lower still.
 The meadows are no longer spangled bright
 As ere mid-summer, with the nightly swarms
 Of fireflies thick, whose intermittent sparks
 Direct the hands of childhood, following close
 To catch them as they climb the blades of grass,
 Or flit along the air. Now other swarms
 Of various insects in the grass unseen,
 Sooth with a dull monotony of sounds ;
 Some shriller than the rest in minute strains
 Trilling alone ; and some without a stop
 All night prolonged in feeble plaintive tones
 Continuous as the throbbings of the pulse
 And similar as they. Far off and low in
 The horizon, from a sultry cloud
 Where sleeps in embryo the mid-night storm,
 The silent lightning gleams in fitful sheets,
 Illumes the solid mass, revealing thus
 Its darker fragments, and its ragged verge ;
 Or if the bolder fancy so conceive
 Of its fantastic forms, revealing thus
 Its gloomy caverns, rugged sides and tops
 With beetling cliffs grotesque. But not so bright
 The distant flashes gleam as to efface
 The window's image on the floor impressed,
 By the dim crescent ; or outshines the light
 Cast from the room upon the trees hard by,
 If haply to illumine a moonless night
 The lighted taper shine ; though lit in vain
 To waste away unused, and from abroad
 Distinctly through the open window seen

Lone, pale, and still as a sepulchral lamp.

The sultry summer past, September comes,
Soft twilight of the slow-declining year.
All mildness, soothing loneliness and peace ;
The fading season ere the falling come,
More sober than the buxom blooming May,
And therefore less the favorite of the world,
But dearest month of all to pensive minds.
Tis now far spent ; and the meridian sun
Most sweetly smiling with attempered beams
Sheds gently down a mild and grateful warmth.
Beneath its yellow lustre groves and woods
Checked by one night's frost with various hues,
While yet no wind has swept a leaf away,
Shine doubly rich. It were a sad delight
Down the smooth stream to glide, and see it tinged
Upon each brink with all the gorgeous hues,
The yellow, red, or purple of the trees
That singly or in tufts or forests thick
Adorn the shores ; to see perhaps the side
Of some high mount reflected far below
With its bright colours, intermixed with spots
Of darker green. Yes it were sweetly sad
To wander in the open fields and hear
E'en at this hour, the noon-day hardly past,
The lulling insects of the summer's night ;
To hear, where lately buzzing swarms were heard,
A lonely bee long roving here and there
To find a single flower, but all in vain ;
Then rising quick and with a louder hum,
In widening circles round and round his head,
Straight by the listener flying clear away,
As if to bid the fields a last adieu ;
To hear within the woodland's sunny side,
Late fall of music, nothing save perhaps
The sound of nut-shells by the squirrel dropt
From some tall beech fast falling through the leaves.

The sun now rests upon the mountain tops ;
Begins to sink behind—is half concealed,
And now is gone : the last faint twinkling beam
Is cut in twain by the sharp rising ridge.
Sweet to the pensive is departing day
When only one small cloud so still and thin,
So thoroughly imbued with amber light,
And so transparent, that it seems a spot
Of brighter sky, beyond the farthest mount
Hangs o'er the hidden orb; or where a few
Long narrow stripes of denser, darker grain,
At each end sharpened to a needle's point
With golden borders, sometimes straight and smooth
And sometimes crinkling like the lightning stream,
A half hour's space above the mountain lie ;
Or when the whole consolidated mass
That only threatened rain, is broken up
Into a thousand parts, and yet is one,
One as the ocean broken into waves ;
And all its spongy parts, imbibing deep
The moist effulgence, seem like fleeces dyed
Deep scarlet, saffron light, or crimson dark,
As they are thick or thin, or near or more remote,
All fading soon as lower sinks the sun,
Till twilight end. But now another scene
To me most beautiful of all appears ;
The sky without the shadow of a cloud
Throughout the west, is kindled to a glow
So bright and broad, it glares upon the eye,
Not dazzling but dilating with calm force
Its power of vision to admit the whole.
Below, 'tis all of richest orange dye,
Midway the blushing of the mellow peach
Paints not but tinges the ethereal deep ;
And here in this most lovely region shines
With added loveliness, the evening-star.
Above, the fainter purple slowly fades
Till changed into the azure of mid-heaven.

Along the level ridge o'er which the sun
 Descended, in a single row arranged
 As if thus planted by the hand of art,
 Majestic pines shoot up into the sky,
 And in its fluid gold seem half dissolved.
 Upon a nearer peak, a cluster stands
 With shafts erect and tops converged to one
 A stately colonade with verdant roof ;
 Upon a nearer still, a single tree
 With shapely form looks beautiful alone,
 While farther northward through a narrow pass
 Scooped in the hither range, a single mount
 Beyond the rest, of finer smoothness seems,
 And of a softer more ethereal blue,
 A pyramid of polished sapphire built.

But now the twilight mingles into one
 The various mountains ; levels to a plain
 This nearer, lower landscape, dark with shade,
 Where every object to my sight presents
 Its shaded side ; while here upon these walls
 And in that eastern wood upon the trunks
 Under thick foliage, reflective shows
 Its yellow lustre. How distinct the line
 Of the horizon parting heaven and earth.

* * * * *

In such a night, 'twould sadden mirth to hear
 The lulling sound of distant waterfalls
 By intervening hills so broke and spread
 That whence it comes the ear no more discerns,
 Seeming diffused alike on every side,
 A gentle murmur filling all the air ;
 As if all nature charg'd with life intense,
 Breathed softly in one universal sigh.
 The thrilling tones of an Eolian harp
 In such a night would half entrance the sad,
 Its deep vibrations, shook from chords that quake

As with the touch of quiv'ring fingers hid
 From mortal sight, would sink into the soul
 And half persuade fond fancy that the hand
 Of some departed sympathizing friend
 Dearly beloved and deeply mourned, was there.

Now drowned in sweet repose are man and beast,
 While swift and silent as on angel's wings
 Time by them flies. * * *

'Tis midnight : o'er the marshy meadows rest
 Damp vapours thin and pale ; while overhead
 Hangs far aloft beneath the firmament,
 And just beneath, a cloudy canopy,
 Milk-white and curdled in thick spots, oft called
 The seeds of coming rain, but to the eye
 Of fancy seeming like a flock of swans
 In mid-air hovering still. All nature sleeps
 Beneath a tranquillizing shower of light.
 O what a night for grief to watch and weep.

* * * * *

I seem alone 'mid universal death,
 Lone as a single sail upon the sea,
 Lone as a wounded swan, that leaves the flock
 To heal in secret or to bleed and die.

* * * * *

'Tis morn once more, and morning with my song.
 The muse awakes from her long nightly dream,
 And summons truth to interpret it by day.
 If she divine aright, to such as seek
 For solitude and peace in scenes like these,
 A mild delirium to enjoy secure
 And nurse a tender gloom, it bodes no good,
 But useless life and miserable age.

THE
AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.

EXTRACTS FROM BOOK III.

Who scorn the hallowed day, set heaven at naught.
Heav'n would wear out whom one short sabbath tires.
Emblem and earnest of eternal rest,
A festival with fruits celestial crown'd,
A jubilee releasing him from earth,
The day delights and animates the saint.
It gives new vigour to the languid pulse
Of life divine ; restores the wandering feet,
Strengthens the weak, upholds the prone to slip,
Quickens the lingering, and the sinking lifts,
Establishing them all upon a rock.
Sabbaths, like way-marks, cheer the pilgrim's path,
His progress mark, and keep his rest in view.
In life's bleak winter they are pleasant days,
Short foretastes of the long, long spring to come.
To every new-born soul, each hallowed morn
Seems like the first when every thing was new.
Time seems an angel come afresh from heav'n,
His pinions shedding fragrance as he flies,
And his bright hour-glass running sands of gold.
In every thing a smiling God is seen.
On earth his beauty blooms, and in the sun
His glory shines. In objects overlooked
On other days he now arrests the eye.

Not in the deep recesses of his works,
 But on their face he now appears to dwell.
 While silence reigns among the works of man,
 The works of God have leave to speak his praise
 With louder voice, in earth, and air, and sea.
 His vital Spirit, like the light, pervades
 All nature, breathing round the air of heaven,
 And spreading o'er the troubled sea of life
 A halcyon calm. Sight were not needed now
 To bring him near, for Faith performs the work,
 In solemn thought surrounds herself with God,
 With such transparent vividness, she feels
 Struck with admiring awe, as if transform'd
 To sudden vision. Such is oft her power
 In God's own house, which in th' absorbing act
 Of adoration, or inspiring praise,
 She with his glory fills, as once a cloud
 Of radiance filled the temple's inner court ;
 At which display she cries with trembling awe
 How dreadful is this place ! while love responds,
 How amiable thy courts, my King, my God !

* * * * *

* Thou too, Napoleon, how didst thou exult
 In all thy might and fame. Now too how changed !
 Thy kingdom gone, how art thou driven from men,
 From the great world, to spend thy days alone,
 To make thee know there is a God that reigns
 And gives the crowns of earth to whom he will.
 By mad ambition led, how didst thou ride
 With streaming colours o'er the restless waves
 Of human glory. Now how art thou cast
 Upon a cheerless rock, in deep disgrace,
 A spectacle and warning to the world ;
 Thy fortunes the career, thy fate the end

* Written while Napoleon was at St. Helena.

Of earthly greatness, in its proudest form.
How art thou fallen ! so low that e'en thy foes
Lose half their indignation at thy crimes
In pity for thy melancholy fate.
Kept in thy rocky tower, thou now art viewed
With safety, though with trembling, as long known
The tiger that had ravaged half the world.
The wand'ers of the sea who pass thine isle
And mark the spot, how small, and wild, and lone,
With wagging head and taunting lips inquire,
Is this the man that caused the earth to quake ?
That burnt her cities, laid her countries waste,
And shook her thrones and kingdoms to the dust ?
Where now the objects of thy heart's delight,
Where now the pomp of armies in array,
The waving banners and the dazzling arms,
The trumpet's clang, the neighing of fierce steeds,
The din of martial bands, the word, the shout,
That rouse and fire and madden all the soul
While panting for the onset, or amidst
The heat of battle ? Where the victory proud,
The rattling of thy furious chariot wheels
O'er crumbling crowns and plains of bleaching bones,
The spoil of nations ? the triumphal train ?
The acclamation of saluting crowds,
And all the ensigns of renown and pow'r ?
Gone like the pageants of a maniac's brain.
Poor solitary man, what hast thou more,
What hast thou left congenial to thy mind
To busy its dread workings, and content
Its boundless longings ? What to give support
To thy faint heart in all its sinking hours ?
Ah, what to smooth the rough decline of life
And light thee through the shadowy vale of death ?
Hadst though not cast away the truth of God,
Denied thy Saviour, turned thy back on heaven
And braved the wrath to come from early youth,
In some desponding hour, when self-immured,

Or in some lonely walk o'er bloodless plains
 Or heights from which thick ranks of coming waves
 Are seen afar, as if from Europe sent
 To bear to thee dread visions of the past,
 And roar and dash around thy rocky isle
 To wake thy conscience from its torpid sleep,
 The hope were strong that mem'ry thus beset
 Would bring thy crimes in long and black array
 To thy astonished view, nor rest permit
 Till by omnipotence an entrance wide
 Were opened for conviction and remorse
 Into each fortified recess within.
 How would the generous heart of every land
 Rejoice, should penitence yet mark the close
 Of thy eventful life, and mercy wash
 Thy spirit pure in its all cleansing fount !
 How welcome were the tidings that the peace
 Of heaven, the fruit of child-like faith and love,
 In thy tumultuous bosom had begun
 Its gentle reign. How far from hateful, nay
 How lovely and how truly great wert thou
 On bended knees at thy Redeemer's feet,
 Dumb with confusion or with loud lament
 O'er thy offences, pleading for his grace,
 And bowing to his will with pride subdued.
 That were the vict'ry of a noble mind.
 Thy triumphs o'er mankind have made thee known,
 A vict'ry o'er thyself would make thee great.
 The conquest of the world were mean to this,
 More than an earthly diadem were thine,
 And more than immortality in name.

But if no season of relenting come
 With hope attendant, one will come at last
 Fraught with despair eternal and intense.
 Though thou hast peopled the dark realms of death
 These many years with an unfeeling heart,
 A scene is coming which will make thee feel.
 With all thy hardihood thou canst not stand

Unmoved a moment, when before the bar
 Of stern impartial justice, millions slain
 By thy ambition, cut off unprepared
 And sent to judgment, millions more bereaved,
 All cry for vengeance on thy single head.
 Then shall past glory but increase thy shame.
 Then wouldst thou gladly into nothing shrink,
 Or be the most obscure of all the slaves
 That ever crouched and trembled at thy nod.

* * * * *

Among the chief occasions which invite
 The patriot, philanthropist and saint
 To great exertions, what more loudly calls
 On either, than the miserable state
 Of Afric's sons in iron bondage held ?
 Where held in bondage ? In what savage land ?
 Where learning and religion never shed
 Their meliorating beams ; and where the rights,
 The natural rights of man were never known ?
 In no such land, such corner of the world ;
 But in the midst of the united realm
 Of learning and religion ; and where, too,
 The natural rights of man are clearly known ;
 Nay, more, are owned, and made a public boast.
 All are born free, and all with equal rights.
 So speaks the charter of a nation proud
 Of her unequal'd liberties and laws,
 While in that nation, shameful to relate,
 One man in five is born and dies a slave.
 Is this my country ? this that happy land,
 The wonder and the envy of the world ?
 O for a mantle to conceal her shame !
 But why, when Patriotism cannot hide
 The ruin which her guilt will surely bring
 If unrepented ; and unless the God
 Who pour'd his plagues on Egypt till she let

The oppressed go free, and often pours his wrath
 In earthquakes and tornadoes on the isles
 Of western India, laying waste their fields,
 Dashing their mercenary ships ashore,
 Tossing the isles themselves like floating wrecks,
 And burying towns alive in one wide grave
 No sooner ope'd but closed ; let judgment pass
 For once untasted till the general doom,
 Can it go well with us while we retain
 This cursed thing ? Will not untimely frosts,
 Devouring insects, drought, and wind and hail,
 Destroy the fruits of ground long till'd in chains ?
 Will not some daring spirit born to thoughts
 Above his beast-like state, find out the truth
 That Africans are men ; and catching fire
 From Freedom's altar raised before his eyes
 With incense fuming sweet, in others light
 A kindred flame in secret, till a train
 Kindled at once, deal death on every side ?
 Cease then, Columbia, for thy safety cease,
 And for thine honour, to proclaim the praise
 Of thy fair shores of liberty and joy,
 While thrice five hundred thousand wretched slaves
 In thine own bosom, start at every word
 As meant to mock their woes, and shake their chains,
 'Thinking defiance which they dare not speak.
 Ye sons of Liberty, who rally round
 Her standard at her yearly festival,
 Flourish the sword and bid the cannon roar
 Defiance to all tyrants, shout huzzas
 O'er flowing bowls, and with exulting voice
 Sing " give us liberty or give us death ;"
 Your joy is merciless, while its glad sounds
 From more than half the land return in groans ;
 Throw down your banners lifted to the sky,
 They will not float on this impoisoned air.
 Away with feast and song, come fast and weep—
 Away with all defiance and disdain

Of foreign tyrants ; humbly mourn our own.
For who are tyrants ? they that make men slaves.
No more exult o'er kingdoms of the east
Where not a slave is found, till here are none.
Of more equality no longer boast.
Rail at usurping peers, when ye have shown
That fifty tenants to support a lord,
Is more at war with reason and with Heaven
Than fifty slaves a planter to support.
In personal rights and privileges dear
The monarch rises not so far above
The meanest free-born subject of his realm,
As does the master o'er the helpless slave.
With needful food supplied, the slave, say some,
Desires no more, and void of care is blest.
If by kind treatment it be sometimes thus,
What does it prove, but that the man debased
By his condition, knows no higher good
Than what the brute enjoys ? And is it just
To shut him from all rational delight
Until he feel no wants but those of sense,
Then call him happy to excuse the crime ?
Or is it then no blessing to be free ?
And were they fools who struggled to obtain
Our independence—to throw off a yoke
Far less oppressive than the one we bind
On Afric's sable sons ? Are they not tax'd ?
Yes ! to the very blood that warms their veins.
No rights have they, not one for self-defence.
The master may inflict whate'er he will
On this side death ! may lash, and maul, and kick,
All which these eyes have seen ; may chain and yoke
And if the sufferer but a finger lift
Against the madman to preserve his life,
The law condemns him, friendless and unheard.
Hail land of liberty ! Come all ye kings
And tyrants of the world, come near and view
This land of liberty, where men are free

To task, and scourge, and chain their fellow men
 At their own pleasure, and without the fear
 Of any human bar. What man can plead
 That such ill treatment is but seldom seen,
 When every master, e'en the most humane,
 Rules with the lash, and with the lash must rule :
 Slaves can be governed only by the lash.
 No obligations bind them, and no fears
 Ofought but corporal punishment restrain.
 Much more is granted, for their sake and ours
 They must be kept in ignorance till freed.
 A taste of knowledge would a torment prove,
 Like joyful music to the sad in soul ;
 Or like a view of land beyond the reach
 While sinking in the flood. Expand their minds
 And they will know their rights ; will learn the worth
 Of freedom, and up starting from the ground
 Will burst their chains and raise our mad'ning cry,
 " Or give us liberty or give us death."
 Keep them in ignorance and we are safe ;
 Press them to earth like brutes, and they will bear
 Nor rise against us till the judgment day.
 'Tis mockery to soothe whom we oppress.
 'Tis insult to attempt to put them off
 By mitigating means, to make amends
 For loss of liberty—to make them feel,
 And make mankind believe, that they are blest.
 All short of full deliverance is in vain.
 'Twill not suffice to lessen wrongs like theirs :
 To soften hardships so severe at best.
 No ! chains are chains, though half concealed with flowers,
 No ! Slavery is a tyger, even when it seems
 Most like a lamb. Its kindest smiles are frowns,
 Its tender mercies cruel as the grave.
 It is a monster that cannot be tamed ;
 Hard as a rock of adamant his heart.
 Then will ye play with him as with a bird ?
 Attempt to lead him with a silken string,

To stroke his bristled mane and gaily pat
His iron scales? Beware lest he despise
Such mock caresses; lest they stir him up
To put forth in a rage, his latent strength.
I will not say religion can do nought
To ease the heavy load of men enslaved:
Nor will I say, to teach them sacred truths,
Truths that require submission and content,
Tending to humble not elate the heart,
Will be to plant the seeds of civil war.
Much less would I be thought to intimate
That this is not our duty, or this all.
What then? Because religion is a balm
For every wound, may wounds be multiplied?
Because the martyr triumphed in the flames,
Was it the less a crime to light the fire?
Because religion made its converts yield
Subjection to each ordinance of man,
Even when Nero swam in christian blood,
Was persecution of its horrors stripp'd?
And so, because the slave when taught from Heaven,
May bear the worst in peace, without complaint,
Trusting in Him whose vengeance will repay,
Is slavery no oppression? What if some,
Finding in this strange land the precious pearl
Which they had always wanted in their own,
Will bless forever the once-cursed day
When they were torn from all that men hold dear,
Confined in irons and to bondage doom'd?
Does this afford the shadow of a plea
In our behalf? Or makes it ought the less
Our duty to emancipate the whole?
But when and how may this be safely done?
Done it should be; with safety if it can,
With danger if it must. It ill becomes
Our name to shrink from suffering in our turn,
We who have reaped the profits of their fall
Selfish in all, shall we expect to make

Their rise our gain ? Say not they are entail'd
 Our sad inheritance, and we must bear
 What we lament, but have not power to change.
 Lament and bear ! Is this the generous plaint
 Of charity perplex'd and sorely griev'd ?
 No, 'tis the plea of avarice, who pays
 Her court to charity to still her fears,
 While safe possession is the end in view.
 But more than calm endurance is our crime,
 And more than reaping what our fathers sow'd.
 Their very spirit lives, their very sin
 In all its horrors, lives in spite of law.
 Each year brings thousands o'er the groaning waves
 To be sent in by stealth through our wide bounds :
 And when discovered, forfeited like goods,
 Like them too they are seiz'd and advertis'd
 And sold at auction, to complete the crime.
 Will not Jehovah visit for such things ?
 Will he not be aveng'd on such a land ?
 Go ye, whose feelings custom has not steel'd,
 See men to market driv'n like fatten'd herds
 There to be sold and parted, friend from friend,
 Parted by scourges, yokes or galling chains,
 Then judge if slavery is no more our crime,
 But our calamity. Go first and view
 Fair freedom's temple, while her chosen sons
 From her confederated realms are met
 To pay their yearly off'rings at her shrinc.
 Enter and hear the clap of loud applause,
 When by some fav'rite voice, declaiming loud,
 To crouded aisles and galleries adorn'd
 With forms of beauty rang'd in brilliant rows,
 This matchless land is blazon'd to the stars
 For liberty, equality, and joy :
 Then go and view a drove of human souls,
 Immortal beings for whom Jesus died,
 To market driv'n, and by their fellow men
 Whose blackness lies far deeper than their skin.

Go listen to the lashes and the shrieks
That mingling rend the air, while clinging friends
Husband and wife, the mother and the child,
By various purchasers are torn apart
And doom'd to different regions of the land,
Never to see each other's faces more ;
Never to hear by letter or report
Of other's welfare dearer than their own ;
Never to know their death, till after years
'Tis learnt by meeting them beyond the grave.
O proud Columbia, hide thy towering head
Low in the dust, in shame and penitence,
Till from thy robes be wash'd the stain of blood ;
Then like a goddess rising from the sea,
Then rising in thy glory, prove thyself
"The queen of earth, the daughter of the skies."
I see thy glory with prophetic eye,
I see thee with thy crown of many stars
On thy fair head, and clothed in spotless robes,
Moving in state toward the Atlantic shore :
With one hand casting to the waves below
The last of all thy slave-oppressing chains,
And with the other holding to thy breast
The book of God. I hear the shouts of joy
That ring from end to end of thy domain.
I hear the sounds prolong'd from wave to wave
And now they strike and echo on the coast
Of joyful Africa. The time will come—
Sure as the groans of earth shall all be lost
In the hosannas of millennial bliss—
The time will come when slavery shall cease,
When this whole nation, like that favour'd part
Northward and eastward stretching from the shores
Of Susquehannah, shall enjoy the smiles
Of freedom, equal, common, as the air.
At such a prospect, who, that has a heart
With one remaining spark of generous fire,
Feels not an inward glowing of delight ?

Who that can pray, will cease to importune
 The Lord of all to hasten the event.
 From those who purchase of their own accord
 The blood and sinews of their fellow men,
 No pity is expected; but from them
 On whom the sad possession is entail'd
 Without the power to set the pris'ners free,
 At least from all the pious and humane,
 Much may be hoped in aid of every plan
 For hastening on the day of full release.
 These join'd with those whose blessing 'tis to live
 Among the hills and vallies of the north,
 " Where all born free inherit equal rights,"
 Will form a host not armed, but inspir'd
 By reason, right, humanity and Heav'n,
 To undertake and to effect the work
 Of liberating brethren from their chains.
 O for some Wilberforce to lead the van!
 To rise and say, " It must and shall be done ;"
 To rise the hundredth time, unaw'd by frowns,
 Undamp'd by failures, and repeat the same,
 Till vict'ry crown him with a fairer wreath
 Than hero ever won or poet feign'd.

The wrongs of Africa must be redress'd
 Extensive as her injuries, her claims
 For compensation are upon the world.
 A handful honoured with the christian name,
 Buried in dungeons in the savage coast
 Of Barbary, have summon'd from afar
 The fleets of mighty nations to their aid.
 'Twere noble, though but just, in nations once
 Inhumanly employ'd in forging chains
 For unoffending Africa, to draw
 A line of ships, to build therewith a wall
 Around her, to defend her helpless shores
 From ruffian out-laws; to explore the holds
 Of all suspected ships, whatever flag
 May dance on high, to cover what's below;

And from these loathsome dungeons, floating graves,
To raise to life, to light and liberty,
The pining, dying captives there confin'd,
Bound down in irons, and to hardships doom'd
That ending in the loss of half their lives,
Thus rob the murderers before they reach
Their destin'd port. In that tremendous day
When from her vast unfathomable depths
The opening sea shall yield her rising dead;
Oh! what a host, in one continuous line,
Marking to gazing worlds the wonted course
Of this infernal traffic o'er the main,
Through floods divided by the trumpet's sound,
Like that divided by the sacred rod
Of Israel's leader, shall ascend to fill
The persecuting nations with dismay.
Then let the nations tremble and reform.
Let those who have begun, pursue the work
Of restitution, till no slave be found.
And let my country be the first to pay
The full arrears of justice, still the due
Of injured Africa, that at the bar
Of final retribution, she may stand
The first forgiven, or the last condemn'd.

THE
AGE OF BENEVOLENCE.

EXTRACTS FROM BOOK IV.

THE good man's body ere it can ascend
To its appointed place 'mid angel forms,
Must drop its load of perishable flesh,
Its burden of infirmities and pains ;
Must throw off its corruption, and put on
The incorruption of a spirit pure.
Address'd for flight, it stretches its new wings
And with fresh immortality inspir'd,
Claps them in triumph o'er its empty grave,
Then springs aloft ; and like a bird uncag'd,
Flies far away from all its former haunts
With death and danger fearfully beset.
Henceforth not one of all those maladies,
So thick between the cradle and the tomb,
Clinging so close through all this mortal life,
Spurring it on more eagerly, the more
They load it down, can e'er molest or touch
The liberated body, in the realms
Of perfect bliss. No violent disease
Racks it with pain, its heart-strings breaks at once,
And tears it from its griping hold on life.
No pale consuming sickness by degrees
Drinks its vitality before it kills,
Leaving a breathing skeleton behind ;
Lays on its victim's head a gentle hand,
And flatters it to death ; its thoughtless guards

Decoys off one by one, and unawares
 Mines its deep way into the vital part.
 Th' imperishable frame knows no fatigue
 From long activity, and hence no need
 Of rest, or sleep, to strengthen or refresh.
 It fears no with'ring from the frost of age,
 And from its winter no decrease of warmth.
 It feels no lassitude from length of years,
 No feebleness of limbs, no blunted sense,
 No clogging of the wheels of life, no loss
 Of youthful relish for the sweets of heav'n.

* * * * *

If converse with Jehovah forty days
 Amid the terrors of mount Sinai, made
 A mortal's countenance like an angel's shiue,
 O how eternal converse with the Lamb,
 Upon mount Sion, 'mid its signs of peace,
 While all around is calm and beautiful,
 Will make the face of an immortal glow.
 How will his lips, in his Redeemer's praise
 Hosannas chanting, burn with fervour pure,
 His very fingers, flying o'er the strings
 Of his melodious harp, with rosy tinge
 Shall grow resplendent, half transparent grow,
 Like those of some fair hand before a lamp,
 Held near to guard it from the passing air.
 The saint redeem'd, his glory not innate,
 From his Redeemer constantly received,
 The mere reflection of his solar blaze,
 May, hence, perhaps, outshine an angel, clad
 With native splendour; as the moon, adorn'd
 With lustre borrow'd from the source of day,
 Outshines a star with light inherent deck'd.

* * * * *

Death is not a door
 That leads into some unknown abode

Of long forgetfulness, but a bright gate
 Which opens into paradise direct.
 The deathless spirit, disembodied flies
 As swift as thought to its eternal home.
 Transporting change! from earth to heav'n at once,
 Through no long, cheerless intermediate state.
 To fall asleep in this benighted world
 And in an instant wake in realms of day.
 Unnumber'd suns on this deep midnight rise,
 And harps unnumber'd this dead silence break.
 One moment, rack'd with pain, the good man lies
 Gasping in death, the next, he mounts on high
 Fir'd with the raptures of immortal life.
 One moment, he beholds himself confin'd
 Within a narrow chamber, hut obscure,
 Or dreary dungeon, and the next, through realms
 Of boundless joy, expatiating wide,
 Without restraint. One moment he beholds
 Himself 'mid weeping mortals, and the next
 'Mid seraphs smiling bright; one moment, hears
 The painful sobs of sympathizing grief,
 The next, the shouts of gratulating joy.
 With such a change before him, who would dread
 An early death, amid the fairest scenes
 And brightest prospects, that the earth presents?

The comfort of his parents, and the flow'r
 Of all their offspring, lovely from a child,
 For years devout, with genius bright endow'd,
 With academic honours crown'd, prepar'd
 For sacred functions, and withal betroth'd
 To one well worthy of his fondest love;
 Was young Horatio when consumption lit,
 High on his sunken cheek, her hectic flush
 Death's sure but timely warning, in its hue
 Distinguished from the ruddy glow of health,
 As the dead leaf of autumn from the rose,
 Nor less by its distinctness, unobscur'd
 By intermixture with the whiteness round.
 The nightly sweat, cold, clammy and profuse,

Left him each morning, scarce an infant's strength.
But while his tender frame was wasting fast,
Its vigour unimpair'd his mind retain'd,
Nay gather'd force as oft in that disease
Which weigh'd him down ; incurable, but kind
To suffering excellence. That sacred fire
Seem'd fed with the vitality consum'd,
And brighter shone through its decaying shrine.
Fresher and fairer grew th' ingrafted germ
Of immortality, the more its stock
Was gently stript of its degenerate bloom.
He saw his end at hand, and was the first
To give up ev'ry hope of longer life.
His friends began to flatter, to assume
A cheerful tone and wear a smiling look,
In his endearing presence, all but one
Who could not smile, so heavy was her heart ;
And when she tried to speak some cheering words,
Her feeble, trembling voice and starting tears
Betray'd the anguish of despairing love.
But all the kind attempts of friendship fail'd
To hide his danger from himself, or raise
The expectation of returning health ;
And soon he check'd them with far dearer hopes.
Calmly he turn'd his eyes away from earth
And fix'd them stedfastly on Christ and heav'n,
Till the one thought of his approaching change
Absorb'd his soul and fill'd it with delight
Unfelt before. Dismiss'd without a sigh
Were earthly plans and prospects ; in their stead
Shone so invitingly and now so near
Celestial glories. Ardent love to Christ
And the near view of heav'n inspired his heart
With such a longing to be on the wing,
That e'en to her, from whom his earthly schemes
For happiness deriv'd their brightest charm,
He spoke of his departure in a strain
Of mingled joy and tenderness, that calm'd
Her troubled mind. The evening ere his last,

While yet the window curtain drawn aside
At his request, show'd him the setting sun,
And all were speechless with prophetic grief
To see him gaze on that departing orb ;
By love embolden'd on his bed-side sate
This mourner dear, his cold and slender hand,
Of bloodless white, between her warm soft palms
Tenderly holding, on his alter'd face
Gazing intently with an eloquent look
Of fond solicitude, when as he turn'd
His eyes on her, and feebly press'd her hand,
Her struggling bosom and her gushing tears
Rous'd all his sympathy ; yet even then,
Soon as that momentary shock was past
He rais'd his thoughts and hers to fairer skies
Than these below, whose sun shall not go down,
And where these days of mourning have an end.
His few remaining hours were spent in prayer
For his own soul and for each friend apart ;
Save when employ'd in heav'nly converse sweet.
Soon as he felt the chilling touch of death,
For ev'ry absent member he inquir'd
Till the whole mournful family stood round,
When silence for one thrilling moment reign'd ;
First broken by a universal burst
Of sorrow, witness'd with a pitying eye
But with unshaken firmness, till he heard
The sympathetic cry of one too young
To know her loss, but not too young to love,
His little sister in her father's arms,
Lifted that she might see him and be seen.
Her mournful cry, and half-averted look,
Went to his heart, but soon compos'd again
He tried to soothe her with the kindest words ;
Then with his eyes suffus'd with glist'ning tears,
His parents thank'd for their unwearied care,
And bade them look for comfort from above,
To each one present gave that kind advice
Which suited each, repeated, and enforc'd

As the last counsel of a dying friend,
 Just leaving all things here for things unseen,
 The world of spirits and the God of heav'n.
 These duties done, awhile he lay absorb'd
 In deep devotion. On their elbows propp'd
 His wither'd arms were raised, and o'er his breast
 His fingers interlock'd. His eyes were closed
 As when in pleasant sleep ; his lips at times
 Mov'd gently, but no whisper could be heard.
 A fixed serenity not quite a smile,
 More sober, but as beautiful and sweet,
 O'erspread his countenance, until the pains
 Of dissolution, pains yet unreveal'd,
 Began to loose and break the tender strings
 That bind the spirit to its partner frail
 In mystic union ; when, at ev'ry pang
 A sudden brightness o'er his features came,
 As ev'ry pang the dying dolphin feels
 Sends a fresh lustre to its beauteous sides.
 Conven'd to witness his triumphant death
 Some friendly neighbours, strains of his own choice
 Were softly singing, when with lifted eyes,
 And aspect luminous as with the light
 Of heaven's opening gate, he strove to join
 His voice with theirs, and breathe out all he felt ;
 But in the effort feeble nature sunk
 Exhausted ; and while ev'ry voice was hush'd
 His fluttering spirit, struggling to get free
 Rose like the sky-lark singing up to heav'n,
 Follow'd in thought by friends devoutly still,
 And there at once, united with the blest
 In chanting hallelujahs to the Lamb.

THE RELIGION OF TASTE.

THE following Poem, which is mentioned in the Memoir as having been delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at New-Haven, is a Fragment. It appears from some brief notices, that Mr. Wilcox had relinquished the design of ever finishing the Age of Benevolence,—but had it in contemplation to throw all the unfinished parts of it into a new work, in the measure in which the following Poem is written. The outline of his plan, which is inserted on the succeeding page, was written at Danbury, and was among the last literary labours of his life. It will be seen that the poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society was intended for one Canto of the designed work.

CANTO I.

Home of my childhood—Orwell—School—Hills—Woods—Distant Mountains—Green-Mountains—Lake George—Mountains on fire—Hunting Deer—Story of Seth Miner—Philosophical, Moral and Religious Reflections.

CANTO II.

Phi Beta Kappa Poem enlarged.

CANTO III.

Georgia—Southern Scenery—Cyprus Forests—Live Oak—Jessamine—Magnolia—Orange—Cotton in Autumn—Rice Plantations—Slavery—Duelling. Story by Dea. C.

CANTO IV.

My Country—First Settlement, &c.—Ignorance—Intemperance—Profaneness—Sabbath-breaking. Must be high state of Intelligence and Morals.

CANTO V.

The World—The present Age.

THE
RELIGION OF TASTE.

Ye Quietists in homage to the skies.—NIGHT THOUGHTS.

I.

DEEP in a vale, half open to the sea,
With mountains half enclosed, there grew a wood
Of many a low and many a lofty tree,
Sheltering the sparrow's and the raven's brood ;
But not in its own native dress it stood,
Untrimmed and pathless, for within its heart
Dwelt an Enchantress of romantic mood,
And she had wrought of all with wondrous art
A labyrinth, from which, none entering could depart.

II.

Her name Imagination,—tall her form ;
Elastic with eternal youth her tread ;
Her high and polished brow defied each storm
Of grief and time ; o'er all her face was spread
A shade of happy thought that never fled,
But lighter grew or deeper, as she raised
Her large bright eyes and nature's volume read,
Or fixed them on the ground, or upward gazed
As in devotion wrapt while glory round her blazed.

III.

A band of Nymphs and Graces with her dwelt,
 Lived in her smiles, upon her accents hung,
 And by her impulse moved and thought and felt ;
 Love, Beauty, Pleasure, Hope, were first among
 The blooming troop, and nearest to her clung,
 Reflecting every charm till made their own,
 And till they bore her likeness, as if sprung
 From her, their foster-mother, on her thrown
 Till she had won each heart, and proud of each had grown.

IV.

I thought to paint them, but enamoured stopt :—
 Some muse, a pencil of soft sunbeams dip
 In heaven's pure dew on rose and lily dropt,
 To draw the brow, the cheek, the smiling lip,
 Tinged, as of cup enchanted, wont to sip,
 The eye in liquid light, the long bright hair,
 And all the slender, rounded forms that trip
 O'er the green earth half buoyant in the air,
 And with sweet glances thrown, unwary hearts to snare.

V.

I see them passing in the blended light
 Of their own forms, as in an atmosphere
 Of rosy lustre ;—but they mock my sight ;
 Now as they flit along in order clear
 Each seems herself, and now they all appear
 Lost in each other, like some sister band,
 Giving and taking loveliness, as here
 And there, they dance and mingle hand in hand ;
 Now in a sunny mist they vanish where they stand.

VI.

And let them go ;—two others rise to view,
 That may far better wake my deep-toned lyre,—
 Calm Contemplation with clear eye of blue
 And bright Enthusiasm with dark orbs of fire,—
 Each with a form and spirit that aspire
 To seeming rivalry with their loved queen,—
 One wrapt in thought, and one in high desire,
 One bold, one gentle, both of lofty mien,—
 A burning seraph one, a cherub one serene.

VII.

With the soft lustre of thick flaxen hair,
 And cheek of snowy white, that milder one
 Seemed of some land of tempered beams and air ;—
 The other's cheek was tinged as by the sun
 Of sultry climes ; but no eye sought to shun
 That pure transparent olive, while beneath
 The ~~bright~~ vermil blood is seen to glow and run,
 And tresses of the deepest chesnut wreath
 Her round and polished neck as light the zephyrs breathe.

VIII.

Wandering together oft, and oft alone,
 They mused o'er all the fair, the wild, and vast,
 And drank in pleasure, when all nature shone
 In sunny bloom and calm, and when o'ercast
 With solemn shade, or swept by stormy blast :—
 Deep and delicious was their waking dream.
 Through placid smiles, or warm tears falling fast
 How from each feature did their spirits seem
 To breathe in silence sweet, or in quick rapture beam.

IX.

'Twas by her own soft magic, or the charms
 Imparted to some favourite of her train,
 Their Queen would hush her captive's first alarms,
 Then lead him on as by a silken chain,
 Through all the windings of her fair domain,
 To fountain, lake, and grotto, grove and bower,
 'Mid murmuring brooks, or birds of tuneful strain,
 O'er grassy paths inlaid with many a flower,
 And at each bright and glad, or calm and fragrant hour.

X.

Oft with a motion of her wand, she wrought
 Some work of fresh enchantment ; to his view
 A long-forgotten scene of beauty brought,
 Made every feature clearer, every hue,
 And over all a lovelier aspect threw ;
 Or full before him visions of each clime,
 She spread as quickly, formed creations new
 Or changed her own loved wood, with art sublime
 Hastened, or backward turned, or stopt the wheels of time.

XI.

Just in the centre of that wood was reared
 Her castle, all of marble, smooth and white ;
 Above the thick young trees, its top appeared
 Among the naked trunks of towering height ;
 And here at morn and eve it glittered bright,
 As often by the far off traveller seen,
 In level sunbeams, or at dead of night
 When the low moon shot in her rays between
 That wide spread roof and floor of solid foliage green.

XII.

Through this wide interval the roving eye
 From turrets proud might trace the waving line
 Where meet the mountains green, and azure sky,
 And view the deep when sun-gilt billows shine ;--
 Fair bounds to sight, that never thought confine,
 But tempt it far beyond, till by the charm
 Of some sweet wood-note or some whispering pine
 Called home again, or by the soft alarm
 Of Love's approaching step, and her encircling arm.

XIII.

Through this wide interval, the mountain side
 Showed many a sylvan slope and rocky steep :—
 Here roaring torrents in dark forests hide ;
 There silver streamlets rush to view and leap
 Unheard from lofty cliffs to vallies deep :
 Here rugged peaks look smooth in sunset glow,
 Along the clear horizon's western sweep ;
 There from some eastern summit moon-beams flow
 Along o'er level wood, far down to plains below.

XIV.

Now stretched a blue, and now a golden zone
 Round that horizon ; now o'er mountains proud
 Dim vapours rest, or bright ones move alone :
 An ebon wall, a smooth portentous cloud,
 First muttering low, anon with thunder loud,
 Now rises quick and brings a sweeping wind
 O'er all that wood in waves before it bowed ;
 And now a rainbow, with its top behind
 A spangled veil of leaves, seems heaven and earth to bind.

XV.

Above the canopy, so thick and green,
 And spread so high o'er that enchanted vale,
 Through scattered openings oft were glimpses seen
 Of fleecy clouds, that linked together, sail
 In moonlight clear before the gentle gale :
 Sometimes a shooting meteor draws a glance ;
 Sometimes a twinkling star, or planet pale,
 Long holds the lighted eye as in a trance ;
 And oft the milky-way gleams through the white expanse.

XVI.

That castle's open windows, though half hid
 With flowering vines, showed many a vision fair :
 A face all bloom, or light young forms that thrid
 Some maze within, or lonely ones that wear
 The garb of joy with sorrow's thoughtful air,
 Oft caught the eye a moment ; and the sound
 Of low, sweet music often issued there,
 And by its magic held the listener bound,
 And seemed to hold the winds and forests far around.

XVII.

Within, the Queen of all, in pomp or mirth,
 While glad attendants at her glance unfold
 Their shining wings and fly through heaven and earth,
 Oft took her throne of burning gems and gold,
 Adorned with emblems that of empire told,
 And rising in the midst of trophies bright,
 That bring her memory from the days of old,
 And help prolong her reign, and with the flight
 Of every year increase the wonders of her might.

XVIII.

In all her dwelling, tales of wild romance,
 Of terror, love, and mystery dark or gay,
 Were scattered thick to catch the wandering glance,
 And stop the dreamer on his unknown way ;
 There too was every sweet and lofty lay,
 The sacred, classic, and romantic, sung
 As that Enchantress moved in might or play ;
 And there was many a harp but newly strung,
 Yet with its fearless notes the whole wide valley rung.

XIX.

There from all lands and ages of her fame,
 Were marble forms, arrayed in order due,
 In groups and single, all of proudest name ;
 In them the high, the fair, and tender, grew
 To life intense in love's impassioned view,
 And from each air and feature, bend and swell,
 Each shapely neck, and lip, and forehead, threw
 O'er each enamoured sense so deep a spell,
 The thoughts but with the past or bright ideal dwell.

XX.

The walls around told all the pencil's power ;
 There proud creations of each mighty hand
 Shone with their hues and lines as in the hour,
 When the last touch was given at the command
 Of the same genius that at first had planned,
 Exulting in its great and glowing thought :
 Bright scenes of peace and war, of sea and land,
 Of love and glory, to new life were wrought,
 From history, from fable, and from nature brought.

XXI.

With these were others all divine, drawn all
 From ground where oft, with signs and accents dread,
 The lonely prophet doomed to sudden fall
 Proud kings and cities, and with gentle tread
 Bore life's quick triumph to the humble dead,
 And where strong angels flew to blast or save,
 Where martyred hosts of old, and youthful bled,
 And where their mighty Lord o'er land and wave [grave.
 Spread life and peace till death, then spread them through the

XXII.

From these fixed visions of the hallowed eye,
 Some kindling gleams of their ethereal glow,
 Would oft times fall, as from the opening sky,
 On eyes delighted, glancing to and fro,
 Or fastened till their orbs dilated grow ;
 Then would the proudest seem with joy to learn
 Truths they had feared or felt ashamed to know ;
 The skeptic would believe, the lost return ;
 And all the cold and low would seem to rise and burn.

XXIII.

Theirs was devotion kindled by the vast,
 The beautiful, impassioned, and refined ;
 And in the deep enchantment o'er them cast,
 They looked from earth, and soared above their kind
 To the blest calm of an abstracted mind,
 And its communion with things all its own,
 Its forms sublime and lovely ; as the blind,
 Mid earthly scenes, forgotten, or unknown,
 Live in ideal worlds, and wander there alone.

XXIV.

Such were the lone enthusiasts, wont to dwell
 With all whom that Enchantress held subdued,
 As in the holiest circle of her spell,
 Where meaner spirits never dare intrude,
 They dwelt in calm and silent solitude,
 Rapt in the love of all the high and sweet,
 In thought, and art, and nature, and imbued
 With its devotion to life's inmost seat,
 As drawn from all the charms which in that valley meet.

XXV.

Of them and their religion, though by creed
 Or grave observance known not, Heaven inspire
 My wayward heart to sing as Truth shall lead,
 And Love, my lips shall hallow with her fire,
 And to her harmony shall tune my lyre :—
 Wide as the realm of taste I find my theme,
 And rich as nature's charms that never tire ;
 'Tis bright or dark as fancy's changing dream,
 Yet pure as truth and love in their united stream.

XXVI.

'Tis not for me, in weak revenge to war
 With beauty's reign, or e'en to wish it less ;
 'Tis not for me, ungratefully to mar
 Delight, so ready and so rich to bless
 That but to lift the eye is to possess ;
 Nor would I, with a soul that ill could brook
 To lose the sense of nature's loveliness
 For one short day, bid others cease to look
 O'er all the works of God, content with his one book.

XXVII.

To love the beautiful is not to hate
 The holy, nor to wander from the true ;
 Else why in Eden did its Lord create
 Each green and shapely tree to please the view ?
 Why not enough that there the fruitful grew ?
 But wherefore think it virtue pure and blest
 To feast the eye with shape and bloom and hue ?
 Or wherefore think it holier than the zest
 With which the purple grape by panting lips is prest.

XXVIII.

The rose delights with colour and with form,
 Nor less with fragrance ; but to love the flower
 For either, or for all, is not to warm
 The bosom with the thought of that high Power,
 Who gathered all into its blooming hour :
 As well might love of gold be love to Him,
 Who on the mountain poured its pristine shower,
 And buried it in currents deep and dim,
 Or spread it in bright drops along the river's brim.

XXIX.

Yet Taste and Virtue are not born to strife ;
 'Tis when the earthly would the heavenly scorn,
 Nor merely spread with flowers, her path to life,
 But would supplant when bound to cheer and warn,
 Or at the touch of every wounding thorn
 Would tempt her from that path, or bid her trust
 No truth too high for fancy to adorn,
 And turn from all too humble with disgust ;
 'Tis then she wakes a war, when in her pride unjust.

XXX.

But oft in Taste when mindful of her birth,
 Celestial Virtue owns a mortal friend,
 A fit interpreter of scenes of earth,
 And one delighting thought with hers to blend
 Amid their loveliness, and prompt to lend
 The light and charm of her own smile to all ;—
 Thus when to heaven our best affections tend,
 Taste helps the spirit upward at the call
 Of Faith and echoing Hope, or scorns to work its fall.

XXXI.

The path we love,—to that all things allure ;
 We give them power malignant or benign ;
 Yes, to the pure in heart all things are pure ;
 And to the bright in fancy, all things shine ;
 All frown on those that in deep sorrow pine,
 Smile on the cheerful, lead the wise abroad
 O'er Nature's realm in search of laws divine ;
 All draw the earthly down to their vile clod ;
 And all unite to lift the heavenly to their God.

XXXII.

The universe is calm to faith serene ;
 And all with glory shines to her bright eye ;
 The mount of Sion, crowned with living green
 By all the beams and dews of its pure sky,
 She sees o'er clouds and tempests rising high
 From its one fountain pouring streams that bear
 Fresh life and beauty, ne'er to fade and die,
 But make the blasted earth an aspect wear,
 Like that of its blest prime, divinely rich and fair.

XXXIII.

The eye which she has opened, rolls in light
 O'er a creation, in which God is viewed,
 In all that blooms by day and shines by night,
 Without him all a cheerless solitude ;
 The heart that with her spirit is imbued,
 At nature's mingled works of power and love
 Trembles with awe and swells with gratitude,
 And pants for the swift pinions of a dove,
 To waft the soul away to Him who reigns above.

XXXIV.

But while upon her high and holy ground
 Faith stands and makes the universe her own,
 Her votaries with its splendour to surround,
 To add to her pure light, and hers alone,
 And help to raise them to her promised throne,
 Slaves of fine sense there are, that think to climb,
 E'en by a path on which she never shone
 Up nature's lone steps to a height sublime
 Of triumph o'er the gloom of sin and death and time.

XXXV.

The Piety of faith from nature draws
 Her chief delight where most of love appears,
 Love in the round of its eternal laws,
 In the wide flow of light from rolling spheres,
 In genial showers, mild climes, and fruitful years,
 In sights of happy life and songs of praise,
 In all the care that wins the heart and cheers
 And all the bounty, like the sun's full blaze
 Pouring its tide of blessings o'er revolving days.

XXXVI.

The Piety of taste her pleasure finds,
 Where power in bright pre-eminence is seen,
 By tender spirits and exalted minds,
 In all the grand and fair, wild and serene,
 In heaven's clear blue and earth's contrasted green,
 In mountain-tops and clouds around them driven,
 In boundless seas, high stars, and night's pale queen,
 In all the hues and notes of morn and even,
 In all the charms of earth and all the pomp of heaven.

XXXVII.

Who boasts the power of piety, so weak
 In all its loveliness, whene'er he deigns
 The book of God to open, turns to seek
 Its melting histories and lofty strains,
 Or learn what flowers once filled Judea's plains,
 What gems her mountains, and what beasts her wood,
 What cities flourished once where silence reigns,
 What deeds were wrought where monuments have stood,
 How earth from chaos rose, how rolled beneath her flood.

XXXVIII.

As o'er this field of poetry he strays,
 He culls what truths are lovely and sublime,—
 Existence with no first or last of days,
 And goodness with no bound of space or time,
 Souls from the earth kept ever in their prime,
 Angels attending men to virtue dear,
 A heaven where both towards their Maker climb,
 A day when all the dead his voice shall hear
 And o'er a world made new, songs burst on every ear.

XXXIX.

Thus on the fair in nature, and the vast,
 And on the truths revealed that charm the eye
 Of Fancy bright, and open through the past
 And future, many a range of vision high,
 And wide and glorious as the starry sky,
 He builds a proud religion ill refined,
 And from it hopes of immortality
 Draws for himself and all of kindred mind,
 The amiable and great and brilliant of mankind.

XL.

To these when gone he gives high seats among
 The robed in white, with joys on earth untold,—
 To all the beautiful among the young,
 And all the venerable amid the old,
 To bards, philosophers, and patriots bold,—
 Sweet rest he gives them in ambrosial bowers,
 With crowns of amaranth and harps of gold,
 While on their graves descend the gentlest showers,
 And brightest moonbeams sleep and bloom the earliest flowers.

XLI.

Such in the pride of all its glittering dross,
 To truth's revealed eternity so blind,
 Is that religion which o'erlooks the cross,
 While in a rose-bud it affects to find,
 Or in a mountain, much to fill the mind
 With thoughts of God, and fire the heart with love ;
 And yet e'en this, by genius oft enshrined
 In numbers sweet, with these alone can move,
 Or seem to move the heart, or lift the thoughts above.

XLII.

Who learns to hold communion with the God
 Of this material frame, by gazing o'er
 Its beauty near and vastness far abroad,
 While yet he never bowed the knee before
 The reigning God of love ? What sees he more
 To fill with joy or awe than he might see,
 Had earth and heaven no Maker to adore,
 Had they been always, or begun to be
 Without creating power, mid shouts of melody.

XLIII.

Grows he devout from all the spring's sweet bloom,
 Or all the pride of summer rich and gay ?
 From autumn's fading hues and placid gloom,
 Or pomp of winter in its white array,
 With sunbeams twinkling from each icy spray,
 And meteors shooting thick and howling storms ?
 Or from the lights and shades of night and day,
 In cloudless climes, with all the perfect forms
 Of grandeur that exalts, and loveliness that warms ?

XLIV.

Then wherefore are not they who dwell apart
 From the great world, upon some lofty plain
 Amid the Andes, nearest heaven in heart ?
 Why are not they whose home is on the main,
 The least unmindful of Jehovah's reign,
 In calm and storm, on every sea and shore ?
 Or why do men of creed and life profane
 Return not after earth is travelled o'er
 And half its mountains climbed, less impious than before ?

XLV.

Where are the virtues and the calm delights
 Of the lone cottage 'mid embowering trees,
 Far from the worlds tumultuous sounds and sights,
 On some hill-side o'erlooking smooth blue seas,
 Or in some vale where but the hum of bees,
 'The chant of birds, and the rill's murmur break
 The charmed air's stillness, and the roughest breeze
 Can stir no more than into life just shake
 'The green grove's perfect image in the glassy lake ?

XLVI.

Draw near ye sons of romance and behold
 Your boasted calm of happy virtue gone ;
 See foul intemperance and profaneness bold,
 And pride in rags as rank as if in lawn ;
 See all enchantment from the scene withdrawn
 By the first touch of truth's celestial ray ;
 As golden dreams all vanish at the dawn,
 So quick your bright creation fades away,
 And your ethereal beings sink to things of clay.

XLVII.

Leave bards behind and seek the hermit's cell,
 High converse holds he, in his solitude,
 With angels shedding round as by a spell
 A radiance into which no clouds intrude
 From earth, or earthly passions unsubdued ?
 Or musing on bright skies and mountains wild
 Communes he with their Maker, till imbued
 With pure and lofty thoughts and feelings mild,
 By error duped no more, no more by sin defiled.

XLVIII.

But love of nature feasted high and long
 Without controlling faith, while it inspires
 No heavenly flame, oft feeds amid a throng
 Of fancies soft and wild, far other fires,—
 False feeling, airy hopes, and foul desires,
 And helps to form an idler unconfined,
 Or visionary, whom the truth soon tires,
 Or profligate, or hater of mankind,
 Or all in one, and more, a skeptic cold and blind.

XLIX.

All these was Byron, and was doubly these
 From his unhallowed genius revelling free
 Amid the charms of loveliest lands and seas :—
 'Twas here he nursed the daring liberty
 Of dreaming what man is, and is to be,
 In spite of all the unimpassioned prose
 Of truth divine, when with sweet poetry
 All nature lives, luxuriates and glows,
 Tempting to pleasure here, leaving to fate its close.

L.

How did he send to Heaven defiance proud,
 While bounding lightly o'er the billowy world,
 Or gazing round him when the midnight cloud
 Its massy folds o'er Alpine heights unfurled,
 And round from cliff to cliff its light'nings hurled,
 With dark red gleams now showing wood and lake,
 Swept in broad waves, or in deep eddies whirled,
 Now leaving all a blank, while thunders break
 In one redoubling peal and all the mountains shake.

LI.

And when with all the elements at peace
 He breathed the air of Italy's soft vales,
 Or of the verdant shores and isles of Greece,
 To him the deities of classic tales
 Seemed to return to groves and hills and dales,
 Their former haunts, made theirs from beauty bright
 As on Arabian plains, by poisonous gales
 And burning suns laid waste, the skies of night
 With deities are filled for their cool placid light.

LII.

To him the Cyprian queen resumed her throne
 Where once the pencil, pen, and chisel vied,
 By borrowing nature's charms to raise her own ;—
 On roses she must feed and sleep, must glide
 A form of light o'er the cerulean tide,
 Or towards her temple through green shady groves
 With garlands crowned, in pomp serene must guide
 Her ivory chariot drawn by swans and doves,
 With Graces dancing round and all her winged Loves.

LIII.

Tis oft the unhallowed fancy that delights
 O'er the sublime and fair of earth to glance,
 To wander long where earth with heaven unites,
 To sail on smooth wings o'er the blue expanse,
 Or on bright clouds in a voluptuous trance,
 Or soar 'mid worlds, above, below, around,
 Approaching and retreating in a dance
 Of light and harmony, and with that sound
 Of fabled music sweet, filling the vast profound.

LIV.

From flights so high, how quick can man descend,—
 From realms so bright and calm,—and roll in dust,
 A slave to passions that like vultures rend
 Ere they devour, and from the bosom thrust
 All feelings kind and pure, and wake mistrust
 Of every friend, and enmity to all
 The good and happy, from the cold disgust
 Of senses pampered till their pleasures pall ;
 When at the world he murmurs, to revenge his fall.

LV.

Sick of the world, a glad farewell he sings
 To all its living scenes; and, worse than vain,
 Sighs without meaning for the dove's light wings,
 To waft him to some island of the main,
 Or far-off desert, where he may complain
 To woods and waters, fortune may defy,
 And there restored to nature's boasted reign,
 Feel free to pour contempt on every tie,
 That man to man unites, and to the God on high.

LVI.

Or weary of his life, he madly throws
 The burden down, or drags it on in dread
 Of each day's added weight, while no repose
 He looks for here, but longs to lay his head
 Among the silent and forgotten dead;—
 And this is greatness that the young betimes
 Learn to admire; and though his joys are fled,
 Still in the fancies from which sprung his crimes
 They think to find their joys, as if in fairy climes.

LVII.

They seek a paradise that from them flies
 And leaves them oft bewildered, like the band
 Of Indian youths, who searched with eager eyes
 Through Florida's vast swamp for unknown land,
 By hunters praised as rising with firm strand
 Just in their utmost need, and in full view,
 Where waving many an inviting hand,
 The daughters of the sun to safety drew,
 And cheered them with rich fruits, their labours to renew.

LVIII.

But when with those immortal ones they thought
 To live and share in their unfading prime,
 They saw them flee; and when they fondly sought
 To follow to their chosen isle, and climb
 Its verdant shores and cloudless heights sublime,
 The waters round them rose with threatening roar,
 The isle receding vanished many a time,
 Then re-appeared but distant as before,
 As if to bid them go content and seek no more.

LIX.

And thus do nature's scenes of beauty give
 The spirit rest, when but an hour enjoyed ;
 Life's fainting traveller thus they oft revive,
 They calm the soul by earthly cares annoyed,
 Refine the sense by earthly pleasures cloyed,
 The sad heart cheer, and ease the toiling mind ;
 But sought life's ills and labours to avoid,
 They mock with visions of delight that blind
 The eyes to truth, then fly, and leave despair behind.

LX.

And in the tender gloom of that despair
 All vigour dies, all virtue high and bold,
 The will to labour and the strength to bear ;
 And man becomes a thing of passive mould,
 As helpless as the Sybarite of old,
 Who on his bed of roses could not rest,
 If but a leaf retained a single fold ;
 Listless inquietude pervades his breast,
 And trifles from without, each moment's peace molest.

LXI.

All at the mercy of surrounding things,
 A passing cloud or bird of thrilling strain,
 Bears him away through wild imaginings,
 Like and unlike, combined in one long train ;
 Or all resigned to fancy's gloomy reign,
 He melts in reveries, begun from nought,
 Prolonged at random and then closed in vain,
 A mere delirium of soft feeling wrought,
 With but the semblance left, of deep, continuous thought.

LXII.

But his is sickly feeling ill refined,
 Nursed in the luxury of causeless tears,—
 Tears that foment a fever in the mind,
 Yet chill and harden all within that cheers
 This mournful life, and man to man endears ;
 Like Niobe he weeps himself to stone ;
 Nought now of others woes he sees or hears,
 With his lost hopes his sympathies are flown,
 And in a social world, he lives and dies alone.

LXIII.

Or if his feeling e'er the heart dilate
 With touch of pity till a tear be shed,
 'Tis more for trifles than for things of weight,
 Resembling much the superstitious dread
 The Hindoo feels, lest his incautious tread
 Should crush an insect, while he views unmoved
 The living mortal burning with the dead,
 A sacrifice by favourite gods approved,
 And by his listless spirit borne till it is loved.

LXIV.

Rosseau could weep,—yes, with a heart of stone
 The impious sophist could recline beside
 The pure and peaceful lake, and muse alone
 On all its loveliness at even tide,—
 On its small running waves in purple died
 Beneath bright clouds or all the glowing sky,
 On the white sails that o'er its bosom glide,
 And on surrounding mountains wild and high
 Till tears unbidden gushed from his enchanted eye.

LXV.

But his were not the tears of feeling fine
 Of grief or love ; at fancy's flash they flowed,
 Like burning drops from some proud lonely pine
 By lightning fired ; his heart with passion glow'd
 Till it consumed his life, and yet he showed
 A chilling coldness both to friend and foe,
 As Etna, with its centre an abode
 Of wasting fire, chills with the icy snow
 Of all its desert brow the living world below.

LXVI.

Was he but justly wretched from his crimes ?
 Then why was Cowper's anguish oft as keen,
 With all the heaven-born virtue that sublimes
 Genius and feeling, and to things unseen
 Lifts the pure heart through clouds, that roll between
 The earth and skies, to darken human hope ?
 Or wherefore did those clouds thus intervene
 To render vain faith's lifted telescope,
 And leave him in thick gloom his weary way to grope ?

LXVII.

He too could give himself to musing deep,
 By the calm lake at evening he could stand,
 Lonely and sad, to see the moon light sleep
 On all its breast by not an insect fanned,
 And hear low voices on the far-off strand,
 Or through the still and dewy atmosphere
 The pipe's soft tones waked by some gentle hand,
 From fronting shore and woody island near
 In echoes quick returned more mellow and more clear.

LXVIII.

And he could cherish wild and mournful dreams,
 In the pine grove, when low the full moon fair
 Shot under lofty tops her level beams,
 Stretching the shades of trunks erect and bare,
 In stripes drawn parallel with order rare,
 As of some temple vast or colonnade,
 While on green turf made smooth without his care
 He wandered o'er its stripes of light and shade,
 And heard the dying day-breeze all the boughs pervade.

LXIX.

'Twas thus in nature's bloom and solitude
 He nursed his grief till nothing could assuage ;
 'Twas thus his tender spirit was subdued,
 Till in life's toils it could no more engage ;
 And his had been a useless pilgrimage,
 Had he been gifted with no sacred power,
 To send his thoughts to every future age ;—
 But he is gone where grief will not devour,
 Where beauty will not fade, and skies will never lower.

LXX.

To that bright world where things of earth appear
 Stript of false charms, my fancy often flies,
 To ask him there what life is happiest here ;
 And as he points around him and replies
 With glowing lips, my heart within me dies,
 And conscience whispers of a dreadful bar,
 When in some scene where every beauty lies,
 A soft sweet pensiveness begins to mar
 The joys of social life, and with its claims to war.

LXXI.

'Twas one of summer's last and loveliest days,
 When at the dawn, with a congenial friend
 I rose to climb the mount, that with the gaze
 Of expectation high we long had kenned,
 While travelling towards it as our journey's end :—
 Height after height we reached that seemed the last
 But far above, where we must yet ascend,
 Another and another rose, till fast
 The sun began to sink ere all but one were past.

LXXII.

Upon that loftiest one awhile we stood
 Silent with wonder and absorbing awe ;
 A thousand peaks, the lowest crowned with wood,
 The highest of bare rock at once we saw,
 In ranges spread till seeming to withdraw
 Far into heaven, and mix their softer blue ;
 While ranges near, as if in spite of law,
 With all wild shapes and grand filled up the view
 And o'er the deep dark gulf fantastic shadows threw.

LXXIII.

Here billows heaved in one vast swell, and there
 In one long sweep, as on a stormy sea,
 Drawn to a curling edge, seemed held in air,
 Ready to move as from a charm set free,
 And roar, and dash, and sink, and cease to be ;
 While firm and smooth as hewn of emerald rock,
 Below them rose to points of one proud tree
 Green pyramids of pine, that seemed to mock
 In conscious safety proud, their vainly threatened shock.

LXXIV.

Here while the sun yet shone, abysses vast
 Like openings into inner regions seemed
 All objects fading, mingling, sinking fast,
 Save few that shot up where the sun yet beamed ;
 But soon as his last rays around us streamed
 Thick darkness wrapt the whole, o'er which the glow
 Of western skies in feeble flashes gleamed,
 While bright from pole to pole extending slow
 Along the wide horizon ere it sunk below.

LXXV.

'Twas midnight, when from our sequestered bower
 I stole with sleepless eyes to gaze alone ;
 For tis alone we feel in its full power,
 The enchantment o'er a scene so awful thrown :—
 Through broken flying clouds the moon now shone,
 And light and shade crossed mountain-top and vale ;
 While with imparted motion, not their own,
 The heavens and earth to fancy seemed to sail
 Through boundless space like her creation bright but frail.

LXXVI.

Ere long the clouds were gone, the moon was set ;
 When deeply blue without a shade of gray,
 The sky was filled with stars that almost met,
 Their points prolonged and sharpened to one ray ;
 Through their transparent air the milky-way
 Seemed one broad flame of pure resplendent white,
 As if some globe on fire, turned far astray,
 Had crossed the wide arch with so swift a flight,
 That for a moment shone its whole long track of light.

LXXVII.

At length in northern skies, at first but small,
 A sheet of light meteorous begun
 To spread on either hand, and rise and fall
 In waves, that slowly first, then quickly run
 Along its edge, set thick but one by one
 With spiry beams, that all at once shot high,
 Like those through vapours from the setting sun ;
 Then sidelong as before the wind they fly,
 Like streaking rain from clouds that flit along the sky.

LXXVIII.

Now all the mountain-tops and gulfs between
 Seemed one dark plain ; from forests, caves profound
 And rushing waters far below unseen,
 Rose a deep roar in one united sound,
 Alike pervading all the air around,
 And seeming e'en the azure dome to fill,
 And from it through soft ether to resound
 In low vibrations, sending a sweet thrill
 To every finger's end from rapture deep and still.

LXXIX.

Spent with emotion, and to rest resigned,
 A sudden sleep fell on me, and subdued
 With visions bright and dread my restless mind ;—
 Methought that in a realm of solitude,
 All indistinctly like the one just viewed,
 With guilt oppressed and with foreboding gloom,
 My lonely way bewildered I pursued,
 Mid signs of terror that the day of doom,
 And lovely nature's last dissolving hour had come.

LXXX.

The sun and moon in depths of ether sunk
 Till half extinct, shed their opposing light
 In dismal union, at which all things shrunk ;—
 Anon they both, like meteors streaming bright,
 Ran down the sky and vanished—all was night ;
 With that a groan as from earth's centre rose,
 While o'er its surface ran, o'er vale and height,
 A waving as of woods when wild wind blows,
 A heaving as of life in its expiring throes.

LXXXI.

Far in the broad horizon dimly shone
 A flood of fire, advancing with a roar,
 Like that of ocean when the waves are thrown
 In nightly storms high on a rocky shore ;—
 Spreading each way it came, and sweeping o'er
 Woodlands like stubble, forests wide and tall
 In thick ranks falling, blooming groves before
 Its fury vanishing too soon to fall,
 And mountains melting down—one deluge covering all.

LXXXII.

Before it, striking quick from cloud to cloud,
 Streamed its unearthly light along the sky,
 Flashing from all the swift wings of a crowd
 Of frightened birds at random soaring high,
 And from the faces of lost men that fly
 In throngs beneath, as back they snatched a look
 Of horror at the billows rolling nigh
 With thundering sound at which all nature shook,
 And e'en the strength of hope their sinking hearts forsook.

LXXXIII.

No more I saw, for while I thought to flee
 What seemed the swoon of terror held me fast,
 My senses drowned, and set my fancy free,
 Waked not, but back to sleep unconscious cast
 My troubled spirit ; one dark moment passed,
 And, all revived again, my dream went on ;
 But in that interval what changes vast !
 The earth and its lost multitudes were gone ;
 A new creation blessed eternity's bright dawn.

LXXXIV.

Myself I found borne to a heavenly clime
 I knew not how, but felt a stranger there ;
 Still the same being that I was in time,
 E'en to my raiment ; on the borders fair
 Of that blest land I stood in lone despair ;
 Not its pure beauty and immortal bloom,
 Its firmament serene and balmy air,
 Nor all its glorious beings, broke the gloom
 Of my foreboding thoughts, fixed on some dreadful doom.

LXXXV.

There walked the ransomed ones of earth in white
 As beautifully pure as new-fallen snow,
 On the smooth summit of some eastern height,
 In the first rays of morn that o'er it flow,
 Nor less resplendent than the richest glow
 Of snow-white clouds, with all their stores of rain
 And thunder spent, rolled up in volumes slow
 O'er the blue sky just cleared from every stain,
 Till all the blaze of noon they drink and long retain.

LXXXVI.

Safe landed on these shores, together hence
 That bright throng took their way to where insphered
 In a transparent cloud of light intense,
 With starry pinnacles above it reared,
 A city vast, the inland all appeared,
 With walls of azure, green, and purple stone,
 All to one glassy surface smoothed and cleared,
 Reflecting forms of angel guards that shone
 Above the approaching host as each were on a throne.

LXXXVII.

And while that host moved onward o'er a plain
 Of living verdure; oft they turned to greet
 Friends that on earth had taught them heaven to gain ;
 Then hand in hand they went with quickened feet ;
 And bright with immortality, and sweet
 With love ethereal, were the smiles they cast ;
 I only wandered on with none to meet
 And call me dear, while pointing to the past
 And forward to the joys that never reach their last.

LXXXVIII.

I had not bound myself by any ties
 To that blest land ; none saw me and none sought ;
 Nor any shunned, or from me turned their eyes ;
 And yet such sense of guilt had conscience wrought,
 It seemed that every bosom's inmost thought
 Was fixed on me ; when back as from their view
 I shrunk, and would have fled or shrunk to nought
 As some I loved and many that I knew
 Passed on unmindful why or whither I withdrew.

LXXXIX.

Whereat of sad remembrances a flood
 Rushed o'er my spirit, and my heart beat low
 As with the heavy gush of curdling blood :—
 Soon left behind, awhile I followed slow,
 Then stopped and round me looked my fate to know,
 But looked in vain ;—no voice my doom to tell ;—
 No arm to hurl me down to depths of wo ;—
 It seemed that I was brought to heaven to dwell
 That conscience might alone do all the work of hell.

XC.

Now came the thought, the bitter thought of years
 Wasted in musings sad and fancies wild,
 And in the visionary hopes and fears
 Of the false feeling of a heart beguiled
 By nature's strange enchantment, strong and wild ;
 Now with celestial beauty blooming round,
 I stood as on some naked waste exiled ;
 From gathering hosts came music's swelling sound
 But deeper in despair my sinking spirit drowned.

XCI.

At length methought a darkness as of death
 Came slowly o'er me, and with that I woke ;
 Yet knew not in the first suspended breath
 Where I could be, so real seemed the stroke
 That in my dream all earthly ties had broke ;
 A moment more, and melting in a tide
 Of grateful fervour, how did I invoke
 Power from the Highest to leave all beside,
 And live but to secure the bliss my dream denied.

XCII.

'The day soon dawned, and I could not but view
 Its purple tinge in heaven, and then its beams
 Revealing all around me, as they flew
 From peak to peak, and striking in soft gleams
 On the white mists that hung o'er winding streams
 Through trackless forests, and o'er clustering lakes
 In vallies wide, where many a green height seems
 An isle above the cloud that round it breaks,
 As with the breeze it moves and its deep bed forsakes.

XCIII.

Yet all was viewed with calm and thoughtful joy,
 As but reminding me that earth was still
 My bright abode of hope, to high employ
 Inviting me through all its good and ill,
 Its smiles to flatter and its frowns to chill :—
 The one dread thought of an hereafter reigned
 Within me, followed me, nor ceased to fill
 My heart and soul through days of peace unfeigned,—
 Would Heaven that till this hour its freshness had remained.

XCIV.

With thoughts sublimed and yet chastised by truth,
 'Tis sweet to see from our maturer years
 How vain the fond imaginings of youth,—
 'Tis sweet to see, while faith the bosom cheers,
 The withering of the flowers that fancy rears,
 The fading of her visions once so bright,
 And when her bubbles burst, to smile in tears
 That we could trust so much in things so light,
 So sure to lead astray and then to take their flight.

XCV.

A bright or dark eternity in view,
 With all its fixed unutterable things,
 What madness in the living to pursue,
 As their chief portion, with the speed of wings
 The joys that death-beds always turn to stings !
 Infatuated man, on earth's smooth waste
 To dance along the path that always brings
 Quick to an end, from which with tenfold haste
 Back would he gladly fly till all should be retraced !

XCVI.

Our life is like the hurrying on the eve
 Before we start on some long journey bound,
 When fit preparing to the last we leave,
 Then run to every room the dwelling round,
 And sigh that nothing needed can be found ;
 Yet go we must, and soon as day shall break ;
 We snatch an hour's repose, when loud the sound
 For our departure calls ; we rise and take
 A quick and sad farewell, and go ere well awake.

XCVII.

Reared in the sunshine, blasted by the storms,
 Of changing time, scarce asking why or whence,
 Men come and go like vegetable forms,
 Though heaven appoints for them a work immense,
 Demanding constant thought and zeal intense,
 Awaked by hopes and fears that leave no room
 For rest to mortals in the dread suspense,
 While yet they know not if beyond the tomb
 A long, long life of bliss or wo shall be their doom.

XCVIII.

What matter whether pain or pleasures fill
 The swelling heart one little moment here ?
 From both alike how vain is every thrill
 While an untried eternity is near !
 Think not of rest, fond man, in life's career ;
 The joys and grief that meet thee, dash aside
 Like bubbles, and thy bark right onward steer
 Through calm and tempest till it cross the tide,
 Shoot into port in triumph, or serenely glide.

XCIX.

And thou to whom long worshipped nature lends
 No strength to fly from grief or bear its weight,
 Stop not to rail at foes or fickle friends,
 Nor set the world at nought, nor spurn at fate ;
 None seek thy misery, none thy being hate ;
 Break from thy former self, thy life begin ;
 Do thou the good thy thoughts oft meditate,
 And thou shalt feel the good man's peace within,
 And at thy dying day his wreath of glory win.

C.

With deeds of virtue to embalm his name
 He dies in triumph or serene delight ;
 Weaker and weaker grows his mortal frame
 At every breath, but in immortal might
 His spirit grows, preparing for its flight ;
 The world recedes and fades like clouds of even,
 But heaven comes nearer fast, and grows more bright,
 All intervening mists far off are driven ;—
 The world will vanish soon, and all will soon be heaven.

CI.

Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief ?
 Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold ?
 Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief ?
 Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold ;
 'Tis when the rose is wrapt in many a fold
 Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there
 Its life and beauty ; not, when all unrolled,
 Leaf after leaf its bosom rich and fair
 Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air.

CII.

Wake thou that sleepest in enchanted bowers,
 Lest these lost years should haunt thee on the night
 When death is waiting for thy numbered hours
 To take take their swift and everlasting flight ;
 Wake ere the earth-born charm unnerve thee quite,
 And be thy thoughts to work divine addressed ;
 Do something—do it soon—with all thy might ;
 An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
 And God himself inactive were no longer blest.

CIII.

Some high or humble enterprise of good
 Contemplate till it shall possess thy mind,
 Become thy study, pastime, rest, and food,
 And kindle in thy heart a flame refined ;
 Pray Heaven for firmness thy whole soul to bind
 To this thy purpose—to begin, pursue,
 With thoughts all fixed and feelings purely kind,
 Strength to complete, and with delight review,
 And grace to give the praise where all is ever due.

CIV.

No good of worth sublime will heaven permit
 To light on man as from the passing air ;
 The lamp of genius though by nature lit,
 If not protected, pruned, and fed with care,
 Soon dies or runs to waste with fitful glare,
 And learning is a plant that spreads and towers
 Slow as Columbia's aloe, proudly rare,
 That 'mid gay thousands with the suns and showers
 Of half a century, grows alone before it flowers.

CV.

Has immortality of name been given
 To them that idly worship hills and groves,
 And burn sweet incense to the queen of heaven ?
 Did Newton learn from fancy as it roves,
 To measure worlds and follow where each moves ?
 Did Howard gain renown that shall not cease,
 By wanderings wild that nature's pilgrim loves ?
 Or did Paul gain heaven's glory and its peace
 By musing o'er the bright and tranquil isles of Greece ?

CVI.

Beware lest thou from sloth, that would appear
 But lowliness of mind, with joy proclaim
 Thy want of worth ; a charge thou couldst not hear
 From other lips, without a blush of shame,
 Or pride indignant ; then be thine the blame,
 And make thyself of worth ; and thus enlist
 The smiles of all the good, the dear to fame ;
 'Tis infamy to die and not be missed,
 Or let all soon forget that thou didst e'er exist.

CVII.

Rouse to some work of high and holy love,
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know,—
Shalt bless the earth while in the world above,
The good begun by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow ;
The seed that in these few and fleeting hours,
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave, with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

I. PETER, iv. 11.

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

THE repetition of the name of the Divine Being in this passage naturally renders the idea of him the prominent one. It calls the mind to him again and again, and fixes it on him more closely at every step in the course of thought. The apostle looks in one direction, and here his view terminates in God; he looks in another direction, and there his view terminates in God; he looks in another direction still, and there, too, his view terminates in God. On every side he beholds the incomprehensible and glorious Being, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things, and who is God over all, blessed forever.

It must be apparent to the attentive reader, that the thought of God as the moral Governor of men, as their Redeemer, and their Judge, had been taking a stronger and stronger hold of the apostle's mind, and exciting in it an increasing interest, for some time before he uttered the words of the text. He begins the chapter in which the text is found, by exhorting his brethren to depart from all iniquity after the example of Christ, and live the rest of their days not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. He proceeds to observe, that they had already spent enough of life without God in the

NOTE.—This Sermon was preached the first Sabbath after his ordination.

world,—in the condition of heathen, who for their abominable idolatries and excess of riot were to give an account to Him who was ready to judge the quick and the dead. He exhorts them to live thenceforth according to God in the spirit. In view of the solemn truth that the end of all things was at hand, when they too must stand before the Judge of the whole earth, he exhorts them to the performance of the various duties of devotion and benevolence. After enumerating some of these duties, he observes in a summary way, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Having given this general direction, he next confines his attention to that particular class of men called to be preachers and pastors, and adds, while the thought of the Supreme Being has full possession of his soul, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

In making the passage before us the theme of the present discourse, permit me to call your attention to the three general divisions of thought, as containing the substance of what appears to my mind the most proper to be said on this interesting occasion.

I. Let the minister of God preach the truth of God—“as the oracles of God.”

The oracles of God are the writings given by inspiration of God,—making known to us the perfections of his whole character, and the principles of his universal government,—and also the particular requirements of his law, the original holiness and subsequent apostacy of mankind, the wonders of Christ’s redemption, and the rewards and punishments of an eternal world. When we would learn what the truth is on these subjects, or on any connected with them, we have only to consult the oracles of God, and we shall hear the response of Him, who cannot err from ignorance or inclination. If we would know what the character of the Supreme Being is,

in relation to the universe for which he acts, the answer of his oracles to our inquiry is, "God is love." If we inquire what he is to the earth under its particular dispensation, the answer is, "He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." If it be asked further, what he is to the penitent and believing of the human family, it is answered, "He is a strong tower into which they may run and be safe." And if it be asked further still, what he is to the impenitent and unbelieving, it is answered, "He is a consuming fire." Answers as direct are given to inquiries after the truth, on the other doctrines just enumerated, as lying at the foundation of the religion of the bible. There is also another class of doctrines, less general, but equally fundamental in the Gospel as a system for the illustration of God's glory by the recovery of fallen man; and on these the language of the divine oracles is no less full and definite. Among these are to be reckoned the supreme divinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the entire depravity of all men by nature, the atonement of Christ, regeneration by the Spirit, and justification by faith. If these are not fundamental doctrines of Christianity, it would be difficult to show that there are any sufficiently peculiar and important to deserve the name. But if they are such, no man can be a faithful minister of Christ, without making them the great subjects of his preaching. Can a man be said to preach the Gospel, when he opposes or overlooks the essential principles of the Gospel? Could a prophet of Mohammed be said to teach the religion of his master, if he should be silent on its primary doctrines, and speak only of those that hold a secondary rank? Some of you may feel ready to reply, that every man will at once acknowledge the truth of the proposition, that the preacher of the Gospel is bound to dwell chiefly on its most essential doctrines, but every man will claim the right of judging for himself what these doctrines are. And it may be thought that this proposition thus qualified is too plain to need any illustration. It cannot however be so plain, or so generally believed, as to be an

unprofitable subject of discourse on an occasion like the present. But there are not wanting men, who regard as fundamental the doctrines just enumerated, and still deny the expediency of preaching them, on the ground that they are too speculative, or too mysterious, or too much suited to excite opposition, to produce any practical benefit. The word of God, however, and the history of the church, unite in testifying, that no preaching is so useful as that, in which these doctrines hold the place, that they hold in the Christian system. Let the minister of God, then, in declaring divine truth, begin where Christ and his apostles begin. Let him lay the foundation, that they have laid; and his superstructure will be like theirs; and like theirs will be the success of his labour, and its everlasting reward.

Let him exhibit the whole character of God. All the divine attributes are summed up in benevolence; but the benevolence of the infinite Jehovah is often so represented, as to resemble the blind and partial affection of love in a too indulgent father. It is made to consist almost entirely in a weak and indiscriminate mercy, with which the holy and exalted attribute of justice cannot unite. From such a view of the benevolence of God, springs the doctrine of the unconditional salvation of all mankind. And it would be easy to show, that every great error in religion, may be traced back to some incorrect view of the divine character as its source. So true is this, that the ideas which any particular sect entertain, respecting the attributes of God, may be known from those which they entertain respecting other parts of the system of revealed truth; and the opinions, which they hold in regard to these subordinate parts, may be learnt from those which they hold in regard to the primary subject, the divine character. Show me what a man believes respecting the Supreme Being, and I will show you the leading articles in the rest of his creed. All the false systems of religion in the world proceed from false conceptions of the character of God;—conceptions generated in a vain imagination, under the government of a depraved heart. Christianity is the only true reli-

gion, because it is the only one, which exhibits God in his true character, as that character appears by the light of nature, and on the principles of right reason. If then it be important that men should glorify the Author of Christianity by performing its duties and enjoying its blessings, just so important is it, that all his perfections should be held up to view, as objects of faith, and motives of conduct. When men would lead others into error and sin, they commence and finish the work, by robbing God of some dreaded attribute, as Satan did in tempting Eve. And when prophets and apostles wished to lead men into the way of truth and holiness, they were careful above all things to bring to view the true character of God. Thus Moses, when he would leave to the children of Israel a legacy of instructions, to keep them from being defiled with the abominations of the Canaanites, dwelt much on the perfections of Jehovah, and set him before their eyes; and this he was well prepared to do, after having himself lived so long as seeing him who is invisible, and conversed with him so often amid the manifestations of his glory, and witnessed so many of the wonders of his mercy and his righteousness. His constant language to them is—"The Lord our God is long-suffering, and of great mercy, but will by no means clear the guilty; he is a holy and a jealous God,—a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." To exhibit the real character of God in this manner, is not only the surest way to guard his people from transgression; it is also the most effectual means of bringing them to repentance after they have transgressed. It was at the sight of the High and Holy One, that Job uttered the confession, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes,"—and David made the acknowledgment, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned,"—and Isaiah exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips." If sinners are to be convinced of their iniquities, or saints to be comforted in their afflictions, or both are to be excited to the immediate performance of the various duties of religion, what can be done by the preacher of the Gospel with so much hope of success, as to place

distinctly before them the whole character of the infinite God?

But let not the preacher stop here; let him exhibit the whole law of God. Indeed he must do this, in order to bring to view the whole of the divine character; for if God be not represented as our moral Governor, the most important part of his character is left out of sight; and he cannot be faithfully represented as our moral Governor, unless his laws are fully exhibited. God is himself brought to view when his laws are. That men are set free from their obligation to love God with all the heart and their neighbours as themselves, by the coming of Christ, is the most preposterous of religious opinions. God cannot thus renounce his claims to our best affections, without ceasing to be worthy of them; and Christ cannot annul or lessen these claims, without becoming the minister of sin; and raising the standard of rebellion against the government of Jehovah. The redemption of Christ was as much the ground of justification before his death as it is since; and the law of God is as much the rule of duty since that event as it was before. There is as much of law in the New Testament as in the Old. God sits on the same high and holy throne, and guards the honour of his name, and the interests of his kingdom by the same moral requirements, enforced by the same eternal sanctions. It is the practice of some men, to call the faithful exhibition of the divine law *legal* preaching, in order to bring it into contempt; and it is done with the groundless insinuation, that the peculiarities of the Gospel as a dispensation of mercy, are thus overlooked. Such preaching they regard as dangerous; or at least they think that there is some danger of there being too much of it. None at all, my hearers. By the law is the knowledge of sin. And can there be too much of that preaching, by which men are brought to the knowledge of their sins? If by legal preaching were meant that, in which heaven is promised to men, on condition of their performing any kind or any number of heartless ceremonies, it would be necessary to do more than acknowledge, that a great degree

of it must be dangerous ; it would be necessary to show, that the least would be highly criminal and ruinous. This, however, would not be preaching the law of God, but the device of a vain imagination. Christ exhibited the various requirements of that law, at the same time that he uttered so many woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, for their hypocritical self-righteousness. And his apostles repeated these requirements, while they ceased not to declare to Jew and Gentile, that works without faith and love would profit them nothing. Let the preacher, therefore, who would be found following their example, shun not to exhibit the whole law of God. Let him exhibit those requirements, which relate to the state of the heart towards God and towards man, and those which relate to the conduct. Let him exhibit those which relate to time, and those which relate to eternity. Let him thus bring to view the whole law in its length and breadth ; and proclaim it holy, just, and good, in its immutable strictness, and with its dreadful penalty. Let him treat his hearers as moral agents, and accountable subjects of the divine government, by presenting to them their obligations to obey the divine commands, and calling upon them to do it without the delay of a single moment.

In connexion with the law of God, let him faithfully exhibit the whole gospel. Let him point out the boundaries of each, and show where they are the same, and where they are not. Let him not proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, to such as refuse to love God according to his command ; nor let him apply the promise of salvation to any on the ground of their renouncing this enmity. Christ must be brought to view as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And who is so well qualified to do this, as the man that is accustomed to represent the law in such a manner, as to make the transgressor despair of receiving from it any other sentence, but that of utter condemnation ? Who can publish the proffers of mercy from Mount Sion, with such a feeling of their worth, as he who has been wont to tremble himself, and to make his hearers tremble, at the thun-

ders of Sinai? Will not he, who has the highest conceptions of the excellence of God's law, dwell with most delight on the wonders of redeeming love? Will he not be the most in earnest in the work of winning souls to Christ? And will he not be the most successful? The terms of pardon, proposed in the gospel, will surely come from his lips with a striking propriety, and with a fulness of meaning. So will all the doctrines and precepts, the promises and threatenings, peculiar to the plan of salvation, revealed in the gospel. And, when the whole gospel is thus preached, the Spirit of God that giveth success will attend it.

The preacher, that in the manner now described, exhibits the whole of God's character, of his law, and of his gospel, is one that preaches as the oracles of God. The great system of divine truth is his theme; and the divine blessing will be his reward.

II. Let the minister of God labour in the strength of God—"as of the ability which God giveth."

It is evident that the ability here spoken of as coming from God, is something more than the ordinary exercise of those natural powers, which are created and preserved by him, and which are essentially the same in all men. If it were not, there would be no more propriety in applying to ministers the direction here given, than there would be in applying it to men engaged in any other lawful employment; or, rather, there would be no propriety in applying it to any, as men do not need to be told, that the labour of their various occupations must be performed, in the use of those faculties, which they have received from their Creator. How else could they be performed? This direction might, perhaps, be addressed to mankind indiscriminately, if the object were to call their attention to the fact that their powers of body and mind are the gift of God, and should therefore be employed with a proper reference to this fact. But this cannot be the particular object in the text; or, at least, such a meaning cannot be all that is here intended in the direction, since it is addressed to ministers, as a class of men, set apart to a work

of divine appointment. Their ability to perform the duties of their sacred calling, would not be so particularly spoken of as the gift of God, if it were nothing more than what is received from him by all men, in their various employments, both lawful and unlawful. But it will be said, that if the ability here mentioned be any thing more than this, it must be a miraculous gift peculiar to the age. That it does not, however, relate exclusively to any miraculous power, is evident from the mode of expression, considered in connexion with the fact, that such a power was not given to all the ministers of that age. It is said, "If *any* man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."

From these remarks it seems now to follow, that the ability in question must be something between natural powers and those that are miraculous;—some divine gift, neither so common as the former, nor so extraordinary as the latter. And what can this be, but those enlightening, and sanctifying, and comforting influences of the Spirit, for which we are so abundantly taught to pray. Here let it be observed, that the fact that we are taught to pray for these influences, proves that they have an actual existence. It proves, likewise, that they are not the miraculous powers, peculiar to any past age; else the men of the present generation would not be taught to pray for them. And it proves further, that they are not the natural powers of a living and intelligent being; else men would be taught only to give thanks for them, as blessings already possessed.

The existence of such divine influence, as that now referred to, cannot be denied by any but those who govern their theology by their philosophy; and these, to be consistent, must take the ground of infidels, and go to the length of denying the inspiration of the scriptures. For if God could take such possession of the minds of men, and so move them as to make their thoughts and words properly his own, he can certainly exercise over them the less extraordinary influence in question. And if he could exercise the former, without interrupting the use of their natural faculties, he can the latter.

And what is there opposed to the principles of a sound philosophy, in the opinion that the Creator of the human soul can gain access to its secret chambers, and govern its thoughts and affections? What if philosophy cannot discover the manner, in which the infinite Spirit holds communion with created minds; can she discover enough to disprove the fact? Or can it be disproved by the consideration, that enthusiasts of different religious creeds, profess to be taught by the Holy Spirit, to believe things and to do things, directly opposed to each other? If it be asked, how we may know in such a case, what comes from God and what does not, it may safely be answered, that nothing can come from God by his Spirit, at variance with his written word. And it may be added, that the design of the Spirit's influence is not to communicate new truth, but to move the mind in conformity to the truth already revealed. It may also be added, that when men profess to be led by this influence, to adopt a different interpretation of any passage of scripture, the question between them must be settled, by referring it to the rules in universal use for ascertaining the meaning of language. To all this it may be subjoined, that not every thing which may be supposed to be the effect of the special operation of God's Spirit, ought to be regarded as such, though it may be in accordance with his word. The instruction which the ignorant and imaginative may sometimes derive from strange dreams and impulses, and from what they think to be unearthly voices and visions of supernatural brightness, may agree with that derived from the bible, and yet not be the result of a direct divine communication. For instance, a man may conceive himself to be warned immediately by God in some such manner, to forsake some particular sin, or perform some particular duty, and yet be mistaken, though the sacred oracles be full of such warnings, addressed to persons in circumstances like his, and therefore addressed to him. On the other hand, men may be blessed with the silent and invisible influence of the Divine Spirit, though they are not at the time conscious of the fact, in any other way than by the effects produced.

These remarks respecting the kind of divine influence, intended in the text, have been thus prolonged, from the persuasion, that its reality being once acknowledged, but little need be said to produce the acknowledgment of its vast importance to one, who is called to perform the work of God's ambassador to men. If no room be left to doubt, that such a divine influence as that now described, may be enjoyed, it cannot be denied that the minister of God most needs it, and in the largest measure, and that with the least interruption. Who so much needs to be taught of God, as the man who is himself set apart according to divine appointment, to teach others the eternal truth of God? Who so much needs to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as the man who is ordained to minister in holy things? Who stands in such need of the guidance of the Spirit, as he who undertakes to direct others into the way of life? Who stands in such need of being warned away from sin and comforted in duty, as the man who is to be a son of thunder to the proud transgressor, and a son of consolation to the humble penitent? Can any thing short of the fullest measure of divine influence, fit a man to perform the various labours of the ministry, and endure its many trials? What but the constant presence of the Spirit, to keep the eye of faith fixed on the realities of an approaching eternity, can so raise him above the world, that he shall not be tempted to unfaithfulness, by the love of its flatteries, or the dread of its censures? What but this can furnish him with all that wisdom requisite to fit him rightly to divide the word of God, and give to each a portion in season—a particular truth for personal application, and an appropriate warning or exhortation? If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God and it shall be given him.

Let the minister of Christ then look to Heaven for light in the hour of darkness, for direction in the midst of difficulty and danger, and for strength in the time of weakness. Let him seek divine assistance in his efforts to obtain a correct understanding of the sacred oracles. What if prayer alone will not give him a knowledge of the general principles of inter-

pretation, and of the peculiar idioms of different languages? Will it not in connexion with other means afford him the most important aid in the investigation of truth? Will it not produce a disposition to use these means faithfully, and apply the principles of interpretation with candour? Will it not remove pride of opinion, and prejudice against the truth; and produce a humble, teachable temper of mind, most favourable to its reception? Above all, will it not secure that special assistance of the Spirit, which is promised in answer to prayer? Let the preacher of the gospel depend on God, to make him feel the weight of truth. After the knowledge of it is obtained to his satisfaction, nothing will be done to any good purpose, unless he likewise obtains some just apprehensions of its bearing on the government of God, and on the character and everlasting welfare of men. And where but from the great Author of truth shall he obtain such apprehensions? Let him trust in God to enable him to declare the truth to others in the best manner,—that is, the one most agreeable to the divine will, and consequently best adapted to secure the great end of preaching. In searching the oracles of God, he is to inquire not only what they teach, but also how they teach it. And in preaching as the oracles of God, he is to preach not only what they do, but also in the manner that they do,—that is, faithfully and affectionately, in simplicity and godly sincerity, with great plainness and seriousness. That he may always exhibit divine truth in this manner, his reliance must be on the ability which cometh from God.

III. Let the minister of God preach for the glory of God—
“that God in all things may be glorified.”

The glory of God is the ultimate end for which he himself acts in all that he does. For this he created the heavens with all their shining hosts, and the earth with all its inhabitants. For this he preserves and governs the creatures of his power; and for this he gave up his Son to death, to save a world of immortals ruined by transgression. For this too he has established the institutions of the gospel, and now sends down his Spirit to bless them with a life-giving power. That God

thus seeks his own glory, in all that he does, is not because he desires the praises of his creatures, to make him happy. He seeks it not from any thing like the selfishness of sinful men. All selfishness implies opposition to the general good; whereas God's glory is not only consistent with the general good, but likewise results from it. All holy beings pursue the same ultimate object that God pursues. The angels of heaven have no private ends to answer in the praises that they sing, and in the ministrations of merey which they perform. God is all in all to them. They act but for him in whom they live and move and have their being. Every harp is strung for him, and not a discordant note breaks in upon the harmony of their songs. Every wing moves for him, and not a visit is made beyond the boundaries of their happy world, but to bring back some new honour to his name.

If we who dwell upon the earth would possess something of the spirit of heaven,—if while here we would bear some moral resemblance to the angels of God and to God himself, and enjoy a good hope of being wholly like them hereafter, then must we make it the great object of life to promote the divine glory. Men in every employment must do this, and do it in earnest. But the minister of Christ is bound to do it by obligations of peculiar weight, arising from the sacred nature and immeasurable importance of his work. It is by the preaching of the gospel, that God is pleased to deliver men from the bondage of iniquity, and the chains of everlasting darkness. God is glorified when he is obeyed and enjoyed. His truth is honored when men are sanctified through its influence. His grace is magnified when men are made willing to accept the blessings of forgiveness. Every new note of angelic rejoicing over repenting sinners is a new note of praise to God. Every soul added to the family of the faithful adds lustre to the rainbow of glory round about the throne of the Son of God. The infinite God is glorified in every triumph of his truth over error, and of his grace over sin, and of his kingdom over that of the great enemy of all good. God is glorified when the gazing multitude see that his truth exerts

on the heart and the life of believers the heavenly influence ascribed to it in his word; when they see that his grace removes the heaviest burden of guilt and his kingdom grows in extent, and beauty, and happiness, in the midst of a world in arms against it. If then glory redounds to God by such means, how much can the minister of the gospel do to promote that glory. And is not his obligation to be measured by his ability? Let him then acknowledge this obligation in all its greatness, and never wish to throw it off or to lessen it. Let him do more than acknowledge it, and act under its influence. Let him delight in it. Let it be the joy of his heart, to labour for the glory of God, as well as in the cause of God, and by the strength of God. Never let it cease to be the great object of his labours, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. It is only through Jesus Christ that ministers can glorify God. It is only on account of what he has done, that they have the privilege of doing it, and only in his kingdom of grace that they have the power of doing it. God in Christ must be the great theme, the means, and the end of their preaching. He must be first, and midst, and last. He must be all in all.

From the view that has now been taken of the subject before us, we are led to the following inferences.

1. Ministers of God are not at liberty to preach the opinions of men in the place of divine truth.

They are simply interpreters of the oracles of God. They are ambassadors from the court of heaven. They come not upon their own errand. They are not sent without a message; nor are they sent with one from the schools of ancient or modern philosophy. The book containing their instructions is put into their hands; and every page is filled with characters of divine light and love. The prophet then that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and he that hath the word of God, let him speak that word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Many and dreadful are the woes denounced against the prophets, that dare to go beyond the word of the Lord, or to stop short of it, or to turn aside from

it, or to publish their own imaginations in its stead. It is the great business of the preacher to hold up to view the divine requirements, and guard them on one side with all the threatenings of infinite justice, and on the other with all the promises of everlasting mercy. With these he is to hedge up the way of transgressors, and thus show them that if they turn to the right hand or to the left from the path of life open before them, they must break over these barriers of divine benevolence, and must do it with their eyes open on their guilt and their danger, and on the only means of escape from both. In the midst of so serious a work as this, can he find time to entertain his hearers with the speculations of a false philosophy? Or can he have a heart to amuse them with an idle dream or a lovely song, while they are listening for the word of life? Can he thus trifle with their eternal interests? Or will they permit him to do it, and applaud him for it, at the risk of losing their souls at last? Will the day ever come, my dear brethren and friends, when you will peaceably suffer your minister so to forget the solemn charge which he has received, and so to break his obligations to you and to your God, as to come into this pulpit Sabbath after Sabbath, and here publish his own vain fancies or those of other men, instead of the statutes of the divine government and the wonders of redemption? Will you ever cease to require that he preach nothing but those momentous truths, by which you and your children may be fitted for a happy eternity?

II. None are qualified to preach the truth of God, without the influence of his Spirit.

It is not by the might of genius, the riches of learning, or the charm of eloquence, nor by all united, that men are qualified to be the messengers of Heaven to their fellow-sinners. What can all accomplish without the Spirit of God? Can they enable a minister to obtain that spiritual discernment of divine truth which he so much needs? Can they render him happy in declaring this truth to others? Can they render him successful in the work? If they can avail nothing in the few cases where they exist together, and in their eminence,

they surely can avail nothing in the multitude of cases, where they are found but in part, or in but a humble degree. You, brethren and friends, cannot expect that without much of the special assistance of God, any important good will result from the labours of him, who can be at best but a feeble instrument of the divine will. If you look to your minister, to build up this church, you will crush him with your expectations, and prepare for yourselves a sad disappointment. The ways of our Zion will mourn from one month to another, and year after year, because no new friends come to her solemn feasts. Let your eyes then be lifted to God. On him let all your hopes be fixed. Expect nothing from me, without constant prayer to God in my behalf. Let me derive encouragement in every labour, and support under every trial, from the assurance that you daily intercede with God, that I may ever enjoy the teachings and consolations of his Spirit. When in the retirement of the study, I sit down to the investigation of truth, to be proclaimed in your hearing, let me feel that you are praying for me. Let me feel it in the shining of heavenly light into my mind, and the kindling of heavenly love in my heart. O let me feel that an unction from the Holy One is poured out upon me, in answer to your united and fervent supplications. When I come to this house of God to declare his word, let me feel that the way is prepared before me by the prayers of my people. Then may we both look for the blessing of God upon our services.

III. None are at liberty to preach from any selfish motive.

He that has the true spirit of a minister of Christ, will never dare to preach from any such motive. He will never desire to do it. It would be no privilege to him. In being bound by the ties of immeasurable obligation, to preach for nothing but the glory of God, he has all the liberty that his heart can wish. No man is at liberty to enter the ministry for the sake of obtaining the means of subsistence; and consequently no one is at liberty to pervert the truth, or to keep back a part of it, from the fear of any on whom he is dependant. No one can be at liberty to take upon him the high re-

sponsibilities of the sacred office, in order to gain the applause of the world, by the display of a powerful intellect, and a brilliant imagination ; and consequently no one can be at liberty to preach in such a manner, as to please men, rather than instruct and save them. If the truth be preached in such a manner, that the hearers uniformly retire from the sanctuary, not meditating in solemn silence on what they have heard, but conversing with an air of lightness on the fine modulations of the preacher's voice, the gracefulness of his motions, the beauty of his language, and the eloquence of his whole delivery, all cannot be right in him ; there must be wrong some where ; and it will be well if it be not in the secret motive that governs him. If the truth be so preached, as to be always thus easily overlooked, to what good purpose is it preached at all ? Surely it can hardly be worth the necessary time and labour and expense, to furnish a vain mortal with an opportunity to exhibit himself for the entertainment of his admirers. The truth may be so preached as to lose its saving influence, if not to produce the deadly effect of error. The preacher may reason of righteousness, and temperance, and a judgment to come, in such a manner, that the wicked instead of trembling shall listen with delight. The hand of taste may so scatter flowers along the brink of the bottomless pit, that men can walk there without thinking that their feet shall slide in due time. He is the best preacher, who sends home the most hearers, in heart-felt silence, to their bibles, to their secret chambers, and to the mercy-seat of God. That preacher has found out the best mode of delivering his message, who succeeds best in keeping himself out of view, and fixing the eyes of his hearers on God. The evangelists have written the life of Christ so well, because they have left themselves out of sight, and exhibited him as speaking or acting in every line. And he that would be as successful in preaching Christ, must imitate this example of theirs. That course of preaching is the most useful, in which God is most clearly and constantly presented to the mind. In concluding this sermon, I could wish that this single truth

might be lodged in the memory of every hearer, and impressed on every heart. Were this to be done, my labour would not be in vain.

Such, my brethren and friends, is the course of preaching that I shall endeavour to pursue, while I am permitted to be a minister of God. To such a course you have been so well accustomed, that it would seem as if it ought to be enough, to exhort you to hold fast that which ye have received, and follow on to know the Lord. Your beginning as a church and society, is as unlike that of most others, as the beginning of the colony first planted in New-England, is unlike that of other colonies. You start from elevated ground. I say this, not to cherish a spirit of pride, but to forewarn you of what will be expected as to your future progress. When I think of the great and good men, by whom as spiritual guides, you have been conducted to the present point in your journey to another world, I tremble at the thought of undertaking to continue the work which they have begun. A connexion has now been formed between you and your minister, the effects of which, can be measured only by the destinies of a blessed and a miserable eternity. Here we now commence a series of sermons and prayers and praises, which will be found written for or against us, in the day when the books shall be opened, and heaven and hell shall receive the divided multitude of immortals. O what greetings of unutterable joy, when ministers and people meet at the right hand of their Judge. May the God of infinite mercy grant that, when the Chief Shepherd shall inquire of me, "Where is the flock that was committed to thee, thy beautiful flock," I may find you and your children there to answer for me. And to this end, may wisdom and grace from on high, enable me to preach to you as the oracles of God, and to minister as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever. Amen.

SERMON II.

JOHN, v. 22.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.”

MANY and various are the arguments in proof of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is proper to consider these arguments in their connexion with each other; for in this way they receive mutual support, and leave the mind, the *candid* and *devout* mind, under the full conviction that the amount of proof is irresistible. But it may also be proper to confine our meditations occasionally to a single argument, if at the same time we guard the mind against all suspicion that we therefore give up the rest as unsound.

From numerous passages of the word of God, we learn the solemn truth, that at the end of all things, when all the purposes of Jehovah respecting his church on the earth shall have been accomplished, when the last of this world's generations shall have lived through their allotted period of trial, there will be a day of general judgment, a day in which every member of the human family will be tried in righteousness, and will receive a happy or miserable portion for eternity, according to his works.

From other passages we learn, that the Son of God, who came from heaven to be the Saviour of lost men, who humbled himself to the shame of the cross and the darkness of the tomb, and thence rose triumphant to the throne of intercession, will on that great day take the seat of judgment, ere he ascend his throne of full and final glory.

Among these passages, is the one that has just been read as the theme of the present discourse. In this passage, it is affirmed in the most direct and unequivocal language, that

the Father will not judge a single individual of the human race, that he hath committed the work of judgment to the Son, and that his object in doing it is to exhibit his divine glory, and claim divine worship for him from all mankind.

It is my present design to show that,—The office of Christ as Judge of the world proves his divinity. In establishing this position, permit me to call your attention to the following arguments.

I. The Scriptures ascribe the work of judgment both to Christ and to God.

God is Judge. “Know thou, that for all these things, *God* will bring thee into judgment.” “*God* shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” “Every one of us shall give an account of himself unto *God*.” “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before *God*; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

Christ is Judge. “We must all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*.” “I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.”

The conclusion drawn from these two classes of quotations, is obvious. If God is Judge, and Christ is Judge—God and Christ are one.

It is objected, that the Scriptures speak of the saints as judges of the world; and as the meaning must be, that they are to be assessors with God in judgment, concurring in his righteous decisions, this may be the meaning, when Christ is spoken of as Judge.

I answer, that the language in the two cases is essentially different—as different as that used by Christ and his Apostles in working miracles. Christ says, “I say unto thee, rise up and walk.” *I* command thee to come out of him—a manner of speaking which proves the power by whom the miracles were wrought, to be divine. The Apostles say, “In

the *name of Jesus* I say unto thee rise up and walk.”—“ In the name of *Jesus* come out of him”—a manner of speaking which proves the power by which the miracles were wrought, to be divine, but not the person. The language used in speaking of Christ as Judge of the world, is such as implies absolute personal authority. It represents him on the throne dispensing the destinies of the universe. “The Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory—he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, with all nations gathered before him—he shall separate them one from another, and shall say unto those on his right, come ye blessed, and to those on his left, depart ye cursed.”

Now read this description on to the end of the chapter, with the name “Son of Man” exchanged for that of the highest saint that ever lived—read Paul in its stead—and while you are shocked at the exchange, you will be convinced that Christ is to be Judge in a very different sense from the saints.

It is objected farther, that the Son executes the office of Judge by delegation from the Father ; and such texts as the following—“ God hath appointed a day, in which he will Judge the world in righteousness *by* that man whom he hath ordained”—“ In that day shall God Judge the secrets of men *by* Jesus Christ”—are brought to establish the objection.

It is granted that the office itself is delegated ; but the qualifications necessary for discharging the duties of the office are not and cannot be delegated. These qualifications are essential attributes of the Godhead. No one will pretend that these attributes, if they could be transferred at all, can be transferred to a created being without destroying all distinction between the eternal Creator and the short-lived creature—without raising the dust and ashes of yesterday’s formation to a level with the self-existent and infinite glories of divinity—without God’s renouncing his right of supremacy, and coming down from his throne, or condescending to share its honors with equals of his own making. The attributes of the Judge, then, must be inherent, as they are incapable of

being transferred. Though the office of Judge, which seems to be a consequence of the office of mediator, be committed to the Son, this commission does not disprove the equality of the Son with the Father. Indeed, it appears from my text, that the Father, in constituting the Son Judge of the world, designed to make known his equality, and to claim for him the homage paid to himself—"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *that men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.*"

II. If Christ is to be the Judge of the world, his knowledge must be infinite.

In order to ascertain what kind or degree of knowledge in a judge, is requisite, to enable him to form correct decisions, we must first ascertain the nature of the actions to be judged, and the nature of the laws by which they are to be judged. Human laws take cognizance only of the external actions.—The knowledge of the human judge, therefore, must relate to such actions. The divine law reaches the heart, as well as the external conduct. The knowledge of the divine judge, therefore, must relate to both.

But were only the outward actions of men to be brought into the account at the bar of God, still the knowledge of the judge, as it will not be gathered from the testimony of others, must be more than human. At this moment, an innumerable multitude of outward actions are performing on the earth, which must be brought into judgment. Consider that this has been the fact in every moment that is past, and will be the fact in every moment that is to come. He who is to be judge, therefore, must at the same moment be present in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He must witness every circumstance, however minute, that attends each action—all the consequences, however remote. He must be one that can see through the thick cloud; one to whom the night shineth as the day. What human being, then, nay what angel, could pass a just decision on all the outward actions of men?

But when we read, that "the Lord searcheth the heart"—

that "he will make manifest the counsels of the heart"—and that "the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed," we readily perceive that no degree of knowledge less than infinite, could qualify a being for the office of judge. He must be perfectly acquainted with the inmost recesses of the soul, and discern the secret spring of every thought and action; that he may be able to detect the hollowness of the hypocrite, and bring to light the sincerity of the trembling, doubting Christian.

As the design of the day of judgment is to display to the universe the glory of God; particularly his attributes of justice and mercy—mercy to believers in Jesus, and justice to unbelievers, the Judge must possess a perfect knowledge of the counsels of eternal wisdom. He must see, in their full extent, all the consequences involved in the fall of man; that he may be able to estimate the expense of his restoration. And he must have a complete knowledge of the price and the means of salvation, to enable him to estimate the guilt of those who reject it. In short he must possess a perfect knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that goodness and mercy, which God has manifested towards the children of men, in creation, providence, and redemption, in order to estimate the measure of man's ingratitude, and of that love which could pardon it.

To be present in every place beholding the evil and the good—to know the secrets of all hearts—and to know all the plans and counsels of the Most High, is far, far above the capacity of any finite mind.

If Christ, then, is to be the Judge of the world, his knowledge is infinite. This conclusion accords with many texts of scripture; such as the following—"He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man"—and the answer of Peter, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee"—and the address in the prayer of the disciples at the election of one to take the place of Judas—"Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men."

But if Christ possesses infinite knowledge, he is divine ; for infinite knowledge is an attribute of divinity alone.

III. If Christ is to be the Judge of the world, his power must be infinite.

The judgment day will be, not only the most important and interesting of all days ; but it will also be the most sublime and awful. Who can read the representations of this day given in the word of God, and not be convinced at once, that every transaction must be an exertion of infinite power ? The Judge will first raise the dead. "The Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The trumpet will sound, and all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth—all, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Here is infinite power. The Judge will then summon before his tribunal, from all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, under the whole heavens, all that have ever lived on the earth—from the beginning to the end of time. "The sea shall give up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell deliver up the dead which were in them."

Not only must the knowledge of the Judge be infinite, that that no son or daughter of Adam be forgotten ; but his power must be infinite, that no one escape.

When the judgment is set, and the Judge hath ascended the great white throne ; the books shall be opened, and the dead be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. But who is worthy to open the book ? The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. After the different sentences are pronounced, the Judge must possess infinite power in order to execute them—to conduct the blessed into that "kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world ;" and to drive away the wicked into that "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

This is not the end. The fallen angels, that "are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of

the great day" will also be judged, and receive their final doom.—And who but the being, who holds in his right hand the keys of death and hell,—who openeth and no man shutteth and shutteth and no man openeth, is able to execute this part of the work of judgment.—But even this is not the end. We read that the heavens and the earth which now are kept in "store, are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"—that the "heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat"—"the stars shall fall unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The most vivid descriptions of an inspired and sanctified imagination, and the most striking visions that mortals could behold and live, but faintly shadow forth the real terrors of that day. It will be indeed "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Who then but the same Almighty Word, by whom the worlds were made, and who upholds them by his power, is able to direct the events of this great day?—this day of revolutions in the system of the universe?—this day of overturning, and throwing down, and building up anew—not in one little empire of men, but throughout the material and moral kingdom of Jehovah—not by the intervention of slow and imperceptible means, like those producing the revolutions in human governments and in the seasons of the year, but by the immediate and rapid, the audible and visible movements of an omnipotent hand, breaking up at once the whole system of nature's long established laws—turning order into confusion, and again out of confusion bringing order in its perfection of beauty and glory?—Did Jehovah himself spread out these heavens as a curtain over our heads, and establish this earth under our feet, and will he commission a man, or an angelic intelligence, to destroy these works of his hand, and create the new heavens and earth of surpassing splendour and loveliness? Does the Father of lights control and direct in this fair frame of nature at present, while all things are moving on in peaceful uniformity, through successive days and nights, seasons and years; and will he resign his govern-

ment to a being of human or angelic rank, on the day appointed for the termination of this peaceful uniformity, for the end of time, the end of the world, the end of all things, and for the creation of a new fabric to be imperishable, and the introduction of a new order of things to continue forever immutable? Is it to be believed, that a being, possessed of less than infinite power, will hold the reins of government, amid the dreadful, and the glorious revolutions of the last day? If not, Christ possesses infinite power.

This conclusion is in accordance with his own express declarations, such as the following—"All power is given to me in heaven and on earth"—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." If then Christ possesses infinite power, he is divine; for infinite power is an attribute peculiar to Divinity.

IV. If Christ is to be the Judge of the world, his justice must be infinite.

In order to obtain a full conviction of the truth of this sentiment, let a man consider, that every work, with every secret thing, is to be brought into judgment, and that all mankind are to be judged according to their works; then let him send his thoughts abroad over the millions of the human family, and contemplate their innumerable varieties and shades of moral character—let him think too of the endless diversity of circumstances in which their several characters are formed; let him think of the incalculable difference in their means of moral improvement in different ages and nations, in the quantity of light received from heaven, in natural understanding, in their employment and relative situation in society, in the length of life, and in other like particulars, all to be brought into the final account. Amid this inconceivable diversity of characters and circumstances—amid the whole collected multitude of sins and virtues in the human race, of fair appearances and foul realities in human nature through all the generations of time, who is qualified to hold the balance of distributive justice, but a being possessed of that infinite rec-

titude flowing from the union of omniscience and infinite goodness? An angel, or a man perfectly holy, would decide justly, to the extent of his faculties; but, his faculties being limited, he must necessarily fall short of completing the work of righteous judgment. He would be disposed to render to every one, with impartial exactness, the fruit of his doings; yet he would nevertheless be utterly unfit for the task, not only from the want of sufficient knowledge of facts, but also from the want of capacity to estimate, with unerring precision, the various degrees of guilt and innocence, upon the immutable principles of equity established in the government of Jehovah. Are then the destinies of the universe for eternity to be committed to a being possessed of the finite capacities of a man or an angel? If so, may it not with propriety be asked, who but the saint of visible and eminent piety, one shining bright with the external beauty of holiness, can have any thing to hope?—and who but the sinner of open immorality, one with the mark of reprobation written in his forehead, can have aught to fear? Or if we suppose a created being to be made capable of drawing correctly the general line of separation through the whole multitude of the righteous and the wicked, and passing upon the former the general sentence of acquittal, and on the latter that of condemnation, still it must remain forever impossible for him, to proportion the rewards or punishments, of every individual of both classes, to the relative degree of good or evil in his character. It must be no less impossible for such a being, to exhibit to assembled worlds, the full glory of God's eternal law, in every case of condemnation, and, in every case of justification, the equal glory of his grace through the blood of atonement. No degree of justice less than infinite can render it certain that no soul shall ever suffer the least wrong, nor the government of God receive the least dishonour.

Christ Jesus, the Judge, therefore, possesses infinite justice.

(This conclusion is agreeable to various scriptural representations of his character and offices, and to those passages, in

which he is called, by way of eminence, the Just One, as Jehovah is called the Holy One.

From the possession of the divine attribute of infinite justice, the divinity of Christ is correctly and clearly inferred.

V. If Christ is to be the Judge of the world, his mercy must be infinite.

The necessity of infinite mercy, in the judge of the world, rests not on the same ground with the necessity of infinite justice. The latter is essential to his character, in an absolute sense, under all possible circumstances. It is as necessary with the atonement, as it would have been without it. Indeed, the express object of Christ's death was, that God might be just, and yet the justifier of the believing penitent. The necessity of infinite justice is not superseded nor diminished by the blood that was shed on Calvary. Its dignity and excellence are preserved in all their inherent perfection. It is the same high and glorious attribute that it ever was. It has the same respect that it ever had, to the divine law, in its immutable purity and goodness. The extent of its dominion is not lessened. Heaven is not wrested from its empire by the arm of mercy, nor won from it by her sufferings and weeping entreaties. No ! justice reigns as absolutely in the destiny of those who walk at liberty in the paradise of God, as in that of those who are shut up in the prison of despair. The Judge is equally just in condemning the unbeliever for his own wickedness, and in justifying the believer on account of the perfect righteousness of his great substitute. The eternal Father is under obligation to the Son, to admit into heaven, as an act of justice, all that are included in the covenant of redemption. But the divine Being is under no such obligation to the redeemed themselves. The nature of their sins is not changed, nor their guilt destroyed, by the atonement. They still deserve to endure the proper punishment of transgression. Their justification must, therefore, be wholly an act of sovereign grace. Notwithstanding their penitence and faith, nothing but infinite mercy can save them. Hence comes the need of this attribute in the character of their final Judge.

It is not necessary in an absolute sense, because in this sense it is not necessary to the honour of God's law, that the transgressor be pardoned on any account. But it is necessary under existing circumstances, in connexion with the purpose of God to save all penitent believers in Christ, notwithstanding their desert of destruction. And are not the offences of Christians so many and great, as to require the exercise of infinite mercy in their Judge? Where is the saint that thinks so lightly of his sins, as to feel willing to trust his soul to the limited compassion of a creature like himself? Who is there among you, my brethren, that feels conscious of having fallen so little short of loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and fearing before him always, and trusting in him only, and obeying him perfectly, as to need but little mercy at the judgment of the great day? Who is there, that regards his violations of the divine law as so few and slight, that he can look forward, without trembling, to a trial before a judge, whose clemency is limited by the faculties of a created nature? If such a being is to sit on the throne of final judgment, what is your hope? On what is it built? If it be built on justice, it will avail you nothing; and it cannot be built on mercy, for there is not mercy enough for its foundation. Such a being, then, will not take the throne, in the great day of account. For it is already decided by the voice of inspiration, that, of our apostate race, a multitude that no man can number, shall be pardoned in that day. The son of God, therefore, being the appointed Judge, is possessed of the divine attribute of infinite mercy.

This conclusion accords entirely with the whole tenour and spirit of his gospel, and receives confirmation from every part of his great work of redemption.

And with this conclusion, we are brought again to the truth of his essential divinity; at which we have before arrived, in so many similar ways.

To accomplish my present purpose, the establishment of this grand truth, it is not necessary to pursue any further, the course of argument, that has now been adopted; for the pos-

session of even one divine attribute involves the possession of all.

From the view taken of this subject, we are led to the following reflections.

I. The divinity of Christ will not be denied at the day of judgment.

Though many may deny it in this life, while he is pouring down blessings upon the earth, in the character of a Redeemer and Intercessor, will they be able to do it when he shall appear as the Judge of the quick and the dead? Though the pride of false philosophy and a hatred of the light may, at present, lead men to reject all the evidence derived from the divine titles, the divine attributes, and divine works of Christ, as the Creator of all things and the Saviour of a lost world, will it always be thus? Will it be thus when he comes to bring all things to their destined consummation, and to judge the world which he died to save? If to have made the principalities and powers of heaven, to have spread out the sky as a molten looking-glass, and to have laid the foundations of the earth amid the songs and shouts of all the morning stars, will not convince men of the divinity of Christ, will they not be convinced when he shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and all his holy angels with him, to reward his saints and render vengeance to his enemies, and doom the earth and the works that are therein to be burnt up? If they see no evidence of this truth, while all things are subsisting by him in grand and peaceful order, while he preserves suns and planets in their courses, bears the earth forward through its daily and yearly changes, and holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand, will they see none when he shall rend the heavens and come down, and the stars shall be quenched in the flood of glory around him, the earth shall be stopt in its course, the elements shall melt around him, the mountains flow down at his presence, the sea shrink away, and every island flee out of his place? If they can discover nothing divine in the Son of God, as he expires on the cross amid *the sympathetic changes of nature*, the fading sun, the

rending rocks, and the opening graves, will they discover none, when, awful in majesty, he takes the throne of judgment amid the convulsions of a dissolving universe? Will they then see any occasion for looking up to him, and saying with contemptuous mockery, "Save thyself, and come down, and we will believe?" When they hear the voice of the Son of God, calling upon the great congregation of the dead, to rise and come to judgment, will they be able to persuade themselves that they hear only the voice of a man like one of themselves? And when they behold the work of judgment proceed till the last sentence is pronounced on the divided multitude, can they believe it to be any being but God, who is thus measuring out the rewards and punishments of eternity, and fixing the destiny of a world of immortals? When they behold the King of Zion riding on his chariot of clouds to the New Jerusalem, with all his redeemed children shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest! Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in," will it be necessary to bring any more arguments to keep men from stripping him of his divine honours? No, brethren, we shall have to plead for the Son of God no more; he will arise, and plead for himself with the terrors and glories of the last day, till every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

II. The friends of Christ have reason to rejoice in him as their Judge.

They have cause for joy in the infinite knowledge of their Judge. They cannot but be sensible of the consolation to be derived from the fact, that while man judgeth according to the outward appearance;—the Being to whom they are accountable, judgeth righteous judgment. Though they dare not challenge the scrutiny of the Searcher of hearts, they rejoice that he sees the bitter tears of penitence shed in secret, and knows the pains of the broken heart—that he sees the inward conflicts with sin, and acknowledges the willing spirit when the flesh is weak—that he sees the alms given, when

the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth—that he sees them when they have entered their closet and shut the door, and are praying to their Father, who seeth in secret, and will reward them openly.

They rejoice that he knoweth their down-sitting and their up-rising, and understandeth their thoughts afar off—that he compasseth their path, and is acquainted with all their ways. His promises that, ‘where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he will be in the midst of them and bless them’—and that ‘he will be with them always, even to the end of the world,’ afford his disciples unspeakable joy.

It is to them a matter of much consolation, that their Saviour and Judge knows all their wants, and will supply them out of his abundant fulness—that he knows the best means to train them up for his coming and kingdom, and enable them to give up their account with joy and not with anguish.

When, therefore, affliction is sent, they consider it as sent in love. And when the messenger of death comes, they receive him in peace, and often, in the fulness of faith, welcome him as an angel of mercy, “bringing the glad tidings of deliverance to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” They can then commit their bodies to the dust, in the joyful belief that their Redeemer and Judge will ever guard them with the sleepless eye of love, and remember them at the rising of the just.

It may be asked, if the infinite knowledge of their Judge can afford Christians any comfort in the expectation, that their sins, even the most secret, will be disclosed. The concern manifested by some Christians, at the thought of such a disclosure, and that trembling interest with which they endeavour to limit the meaning of the divine declarations, “that *every* work shall be brought into judgment with every *secret* thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil”—and—“the secrets of *all* hearts shall be revealed,” can be accounted for on no other ground, but that of an erroneous opinion respecting the design and effect of this universal disclosure, so far as it relates to them. Deeply impressed by a sense of their vileness in the sight of God, they may not be able to rid

themselves of the idea, that such a disclosure must bring upon them the scorn and derision of the ungodly, particularly of those who in this life were accustomed to regard them as eminent saints. This, they suppose, would fill them with such shame and confusion, as would be inconsistent with a state of perfect happiness. But when Christians consider, that their Judge will not publish their sins, to give them pain, or to condemn them ; but to magnify the wonders of his own redeeming mercy in the eyes of the whole universe of intelligent beings, why should not their distress be turned into joy ? Should they not rejoice to see their Saviour honoured to their own confusion.

What if the impenitent of their acquaintance, *do* behold their secret sins ! They will also behold their secret repentance. What if they *do* behold them stript of their own righteousness ! they will also behold them clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ. What if they behold them *speechless* ! they will see their Saviour and Judge open his lips and plead for them.—“ I was an hungered and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in.”

Well then may Christians rejoice, though with trembling humility, in view of the infinite knowledge of Christ.

His infinite power, also, is to them a source of constant joy. It is the infinite power of Christ that ensures to his followers a complete triumph over all their spiritual foes—over the world and the flesh—over sin and Satan—and at length over Death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed.

It is because the Head of the Church is Almighty, that the gates of hell can never prevail against it. In all her trials, the Church may look forward with confidence, exulting in the strength of her Deliverer. The spiritual temple is not built upon the sand. The storm of persecution may beat, and the floods of infidelity and iniquity rage against it ; but it will never fall, while its foundation is the Rock of Ages.

The power of Christ is pledged for the future triumph and glory of the Church upon earth. Zion shall arise and shine. But why ? Her Light shall come, and the glory of the Lord

shall rise upon her. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord. But how? The King of kings, himself shall go forth conquering and to conquer.

My Christian friends, could you triumphantly exclaim—“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ,” if he were not more able than a fellow mortal to keep you from falling,—if he were not able to save to the uttermost all that come to him? Could you confidently say, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;” if you could not as confidently say “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us?” And you could not say this, if it were not for the infinite power of Christ.

Could Paul have so often looked into the grave without fear, if he had not expected there to sleep secure, as in the arms of him who is the Resurrection and the Life,—a Being able to collect his scattered dust and re-animate it at the last day?” “I know” says he with assurance, “I *know* in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” Supported by the same assurance, the martyrs of Jesus, in every age, have triumphed in the flames, and given their ashes to the winds. Supported by this same assurance, my Christian friends, why should you shudder at the darkness and corruption of the tomb?

The infinite justice of their Judge is a subject of consolation to the righteous. They feel that the interests of the universe are safe in his hands, and that no individual can be wronged in the retributions of eternity. Though they are far from expecting to be justified on their own account, yet they cannot but rejoice that in their justification respect is had to the perfect righteousness of their divine substitute, so that the immutable principles of justice are not sacrificed to deliver them from condemnation.

Yet they are deeply conscious, that they all the while deserve to be condemned; and that, therefore, their only refuge from impending wrath, is in the infinite mercy of their Judge. In this, then, they have an overflowing source of joy. From it they receive their present blessings, and on it they build their hopes of everlasting happiness; they look to it for the smile of forgiveness here, and the sentence of welcome into the abodes of glory hereafter; and in the God of their salvation is their chief delight, till they see him as he is in the world above, where is fulness of joy, and sit down at his right hand, where are pleasures forever more.

III. The enemies of Christ have reason to tremble at the thought that he is their Judge.

They have reason to tremble at the infinite knowledge of their Judge. They cannot sin without his notice. They cannot hide one sinful action, nor one sinful thought; not even the most secret desires of their hearts. What says the Judge of the world? "I am he that searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins." He sees the deeds of darkness; writes them down, and seals them up to be reviewed at the judgment. Wherever sinners go, his eye follows them. Should not this make them tremble? When tempted to sin, let them stop and reflect. Let them not listen to the suggestion, that they are alone—no eye seeth them. Let them remember, that the transgression is no sooner committed, than it is marked in the court of Heaven.

When arraigned at the bar of Christ, the hearts of his enemies will shrink and die within them before that eye as a flame of fire penetrating all disguises, shining into their inmost recesses, and discovering the pollution hid in every corner. O what disclosures will then be made! We shall be let into a new world, my hearers; into the mysteries of the human breast.

It is to be feared that many, considering the day of judgment as a day of great tumult and confusion, indulge an indefinite but deceitful hope, that in some way or other, at least one solitary person may escape unnoticed, and voluntarily

sink into oblivion. They do not venture to give this hope a distinct form. But the human heart itself is so subtle, that a hope which cannot be defined is of all the most dangerous. Would that rational creatures could be convinced of the truth, before it be too late to profit by conviction.

As all hope of escaping the knowledge of the Judge will be vain, so will be all hope of resisting his power. Sinners are now able to keep at a distance from Christ, and shut their ears against his calls; but the call to rise from their graves and come to judgment they *must* hear and obey. And, my impenitent hearers, your Judge will not meet you as a man. You have seen that he is not merely the babe of Bethlehem—not merely the man who died on Calvary; but “he, which was, which is, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

In vain will you cry to the rocks and mountains, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Shall they who have not believed in him as their Saviour?—they, whose hearts have not been won by all the shame and toil and suffering of his humiliation, all the blessings and promises of his gospel, all the instructions and entreaties of his ministry, and all the agonies of the garden and the cross?

Shall they be able to stand before him, when he appears in the majesty of infinite justice? And will not even his infinite mercy then be turned against them? Will it not enhance the misery of their condemnation, to receive it from Him who came into our guilty world not to condemn it, but that the world through him might be saved? O the friendless and hopeless destiny of those, that meet in their final Judge a rejected Redeemer! O to be reminded, in that day, of all the dying love of Calvary, of all the days of grace on earth, and all the calls of redeeming mercy—to hear the compassionate Jesus say “I have called, but ye refused”—how will it wring the heart of the lost sinner, as he stands in expectation of hearing, in a moment more, the sentence of banishment down to the world of final despair!

My dear impenitent hearers, Christ has not yet ascended the throne of judgment. He still keeps the mercy-seat waiting to be gracious. Shall he wait in vain for your acceptance of him, and the blessings of his eternal salvation? Will you not let him see of the travail of his soul, by renouncing your sins, and giving him your hearts? Can you be so hardened in ingratitude, as to turn a deaf ear to his entreaties, and reject his offers of mercy? If you can, remember, though he bear long with you, the day of vengeance is in his heart. He will not keep his anger forever. And what think you, must be the guilt, and what the punishment of those who sin so long as to wear out the forbearance of the compassionate Jesus?

Sport not thus with his dying love. Provoke him not to swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest.

But "to-day, after so long a time, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Come humbly to the foot of his cross. He will lift you up and speak peace to your troubled spirits, and fix upon you a smile of everlasting love. He will pardon all your sins. He will call you friends. He will wash you clean, and array you in the white robe of his righteousness. He will cause all things to work together for your good. He will give unto you eternal life, and none shall be able to pluck you out of his hand. He will prepare you by his grace to abide the day of his coming, and to stand when he appeareth.

Let us all watch against that day: for in such an hour as we think not the Son of Man cometh. "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

"Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen."

SERMON III.

PSALM lvii, 7.

“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed : I will sing and give praise.”

THE sweet Psalmist of Israel, though surrounded by the pageantry of a throne, and accustomed to the external pomp of the Jewish worship, falls below few if any of the sacred writers, in his views of the religion of the heart. He seems always to regard the pure eye of God as looking through this splendour of circumstances, and searching the inmost recesses of his soul, and judging of the character of his actions by that of his motives and affections. Accordingly in all the exercises of devotion, he aims to keep the heart alive.

When he comes to the mercy seat, and makes confession of sin, he feels in the anguish of his spirit, the absolute necessity of doing more than to bring before God a ceremonial offering. He says to the Searcher of hearts, “Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it : thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite *heart*, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

In speaking of the means by which the righteous man is enabled to hold on his way, he observes—“The law of his God is in his *heart* ; none of his steps shall slide.” In addressing the divine Being on the same subject, in relation to himself, he says, “Thy word have I hid in mine *heart*, that I might not sin against thee.”

When he would celebrate the glory of Zion, and of her divine King, he commences as it were from the bottom of his *heart*—“My *heart* is inditing a good matter,” that is, according to the meaning of the original Hebrew, my heart is gush-

ing forth of its fulness, like a fountain from its secret depths. He pours it out in a stream of holy love.

In every strain of meditations on God, his works, and his laws, and on the duties of love, faith, obedience, supplication and thanksgiving, he brings in the heart as the moving spring of all.

With respect to prayer, his language at one time, is, "When thou saidst seek ye my face, my *heart* said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek;" and at another, "With my *whole heart* have I sought thee."

But it is in the angelic work of praise, his favourite employment, that he mentions the heart most frequently, and with the strongest emotion. The sum and spirit of his language, on this subject, may be represented in the exclamation, "I will praise thee, O God, with my *whole heart*," and in that of the text, "My *heart* is fixed, O God, my *heart* is fixed: I will sing and give praise." Though the hundreds of voices, the multitude of musical instruments, and other circumstances, in the acts of public praise performed under his direction, may seem to us, who are accustomed to the greater simplicity of Christian worship, to be calculated to bury every devout feeling beneath an overflowing tide of admiration or animal fervour, yet upon a mind like his, in which spiritual religion habitually maintained her rightful ascendancy over every thing else, they produced the far different effect of heightening devotion, and lifting the soul to a more heavenly elevation above the world.

We can be at no loss how to account for the deep spirituality, manifested in all the psalms of David, notwithstanding the adventitious splendour around him, when we recollect that his heart was right with God from his youth. When the prophet Samuel, at the command of the Lord, went to the house of Jesse, to anoint one of his sons for the throne of Israel, the reason that the seven eldest, after passing in succession before him, were rejected, and David the youngest was chosen, is said to have been, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but

the Lord looketh on the *heart*." The vital principle of piety, thus early implanted in his breast by the divine Spirit, and afterwards cherished continually by a large measure of his influences, soon exhibited the vigour of its growth in its all-pervading power. By this sleepless activity of life in the heart, he speedily attained the stature and strength of maturity. He soon became an established and exalted saint; he rose to an eminence reaching far upward towards heaven, on which he stood firmly, when, with an eye lifted above the storms of earth that assailed him, he uttered the strong and fervent exclamation, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing, and give praise."

In pursuing the theme thus introduced, I design to give a brief and general description of the man whose heart is fixed on God, and then show that such a man will praise God in every situation.

I. It is proposed, as the first thing, to describe the man whose heart is fixed on God.

The heart is the seat of the affections, the source of good and evil in moral character, the fountain of love to God, and of enmity against him. The heart is likewise the seat of confidence and distrust, and of happiness and misery. He whose heart is set upon the world, loves it supremely, places his trust upon it, and looks to it for his enjoyment; and he, whose heart is fixed on God, loves him above every other object, confides in him entirely, and goes to him for happiness. But supreme love to God, and entire confidence in him, possess various degrees of strength in different persons, and in the same person at different periods of life. The peculiar language of the text, taken in connexion with the character and circumstances of the man who uttered it, leads me to confine my present remarks to a description of the established saint—one who possesses a high degree of love to God, great delight in him, and great firmness of faith. In the passage before us, the idea of *fixedness* is repeated with much emphasis and feeling, and in this beautiful and striking manner is rendered prominent. It is only this *fixedness* of love to God

and reliance upon him, that will enable a man, under all circumstances, to rejoice and sing praise. He who possesses it, regards the divine Being, at all times, with unmingled complacency. Thus he regards all the attributes of the Godhead, holiness and justice, as well as goodness and mercy. He takes constant pleasure in contemplating the perfections of God, in holding communion with him, in following after him, and in rising toward him in moral excellence. Gratitude lends him her wings, to help him onward in a steady, uninterrupted course. He feels continually her quickening influence. He is all the while drawn nearer and nearer to God by the cords of love. Nay—he is bound to his throne with its golden chain. God is all in all to his soul. In him he has a satisfying portion; and his affections wander after no other. So firmly is he united to God in love, that he feels as if he had no existence but in him. “His life is hid with Christ in God.” “In him he lives, and moves, and has his being,” as the child of his grace, as well as the creature of his power. “He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Throughout this language, the idea of enduring steadfastness is kept conspicuous. It is language that can be applied, in its highest sense, to none but the established saint.

In further describing the man whose heart is thus firmly fixed on God, I shall consider him as exhibiting, in several ways, the proofs of his peculiar excellence. The existence of direct love to God, is often made evident by that which is indirect; and the existence of a high degree of the former, shows itself by a high degree of the latter.

The man whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it, by *an unwavering adherence to his truth.*

Strong affection for an absent friend leads us to take a deep interest in whatever we hear from him, particularly in the written expressions of his friendship. The bible is the record of God’s love to men, sent to them for their instruction and their salvation. It brings from heaven the glad tidings of peace and good will to the world. It is filled with truths of infinite importance to human welfare. God exhibits himself,

in every sacred page, as a being worthy of all that devotedness of heart which he requires. The man then whose heart is fixed on God will be firm in his adherence to divine truth. His spiritual edifice will be erected on the fundamental doctrines of religion. He will be rooted, and grounded, and built up, in the truth. He will not be continually fluctuating from one opinion to another. His mind will be settled down into a calm of belief, that nothing can disturb. He will be fortified by the truth against every attack of sin and error. In the spirit of meekness he will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. He will feed continually on the truth, as the bread of life divine; and drink deeply from its living springs. It will be sweeter to his taste than honey, and more precious in his sight than gold. He will receive from it a daily addition to the strength of his faith, and hope, and joy in God. With David he can exclaim, in addressing his Maker, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." No one can say this but the man of firm, enduring piety. Neither can any but such a man, say to God, at all times, "Thy word is very pure, *therefore* thy servant loveth it." We need a high degree of established holiness, always to love the word of God, not because we regard it as supporting the peculiar tenets of our sect, nor chiefly on account of its promises of happiness, but for the strictness of its requirements, the perfect purity of its doctrines and precepts. It is this exalted kind of unwavering adherence to divine truth, that shows clearly a steadfastness of love to the high and holy One.

Another way in which the man whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it, is by *an unwearied constancy in his worship*. He suffers no light thing to break in upon the devotions of the closet, the family, or the sanctuary. From one month to another, and from year to year, every morning and evening finds him on his knees before the throne of mercy, and every Sabbath finds him in his seat in the temple of Jehovah. During the season of worship, he permits no trivial circumstance to interrupt his heavenly serenity, to render him

languid and formal, or to scatter his thoughts and turn them into vanity. But though he is thus constant in observing the set periods of devotion, and in observing them with a calm fervour of soul, he is not satisfied with this. He prays without ceasing. In his daily employments, and in his necessary intercourse with the world, he carries about with him a devotional spirit, that falls but little below an unbroken communion with God. Such habitual devotion affords unquestionable evidence of springing from a heart firmly united to the great object of its worship.

Again : the man whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it by *a steady attachment to his people.*

His attachment to them is of an exalted kind. It is raised, and refined, above that of natural affection, and common humanity, and is purified from the earthly mixtures of selfishness and sectarian partiality. He loves them, not merely because they happen to belong to the same family, or neighbourhood, or church, that he does ; not merely because they coincide with him in belief, and feel and act in concert with him ; but chiefly because they are the spiritual children of God, bear something of his moral image, are redeemed with the blood of his divine Son, and are loved by him with an everlasting love. This pure and exalted attachment to his brethren, the established saint feels in a high degree, and with unchanging constancy. He suffers it not to be interrupted by a word or a look, nor by great and repeated personal offences. In him it becomes that charity, which suffereth long, and is not easily provoked, which beareth all things, and never faileth. "If we love one another," says the apostle John to his christian brethren, "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

Another way, in which the man, whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it, is by *uninterrupted faithfulness in his service.* He is not contented with engaging in this heavenly employment only at intervals, in seasons when he is under the excitement of peculiar circumstances. He does not grow weary of it, on account of the exertion and self-denial

which it requires. He is not driven from it by the frowns of the world, nor seduced from it by her flatteries. He is not disheartened in it, by the want of immediate or continual success, or that degree of it answering to his expectations. He does not pursue it for a time, in order to purchase the indulgence of spending the remainder of life in serving himself. He looks forward to no day of rest on earth. He feels that there will be rest enough in the eternity of heaven. While here he labours, satisfied with the certainty of reaping a full reward hereafter. Difficulties he expects to encounter, and to suffer trials; but none of these things move him, neither counts he his life dear to himself, so that he may finish his course with joy. The cost of his undertaking has been counted, his decision for eternity formed; and, with entire willingness to meet the consequences, he "continues steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Again: the man whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it by *an invariable interest in the prosperity of his kingdom*. The absolute nature, and universal extent, of the divine government, are subjects of continual joy to his soul. But he takes a peculiar delight in the enlargement, and glory of that reign of righteousness and peace, through Christ Jesus, established in this fallen world. This delight, pure in kind, and great in measure, is also uniform in duration. It does not burst into a flame at one time, and die away into nothingness at another. The interest that he takes in the success of divine truth, the spread of the gospel, and the conversion of sinners, is not a transient passion, but an abiding principle. It does not rise to enthusiasm to-day, and sink into indifference to-morrow. It is not a paroxysm of feeling, that works up his mind to the sudden resolution of making sacrifices of which he soon repents, and entering upon undertakings in which he soon comes to a stand. It is not the occasional fervour of a heated imagination, under the influence of which he for a while sees visions of glory in the prospects of Zion, and seems to be looking for the new heavens and earth to burst upon his view, and afterwards shuts his eyes in sleep, or turns

them away from these coming realities, to cast them on the fleeting shadows around him. It is a light of the mind and a warmth of the heart blended in one steady flame, which leads his eye onward continually to the future enlargement and beauty of the church, and keeps it fixed on these objects, with the calm expectation of faith in the promises of an immutable God. This enduring interest in the prosperity of Zion, enters so deeply into all his habits of thinking and feeling and acting, and is so much a constituent part of his character, as to become his own interest. In the daily supplications of his closet and his family, and in his constant breathings of silent devotion, he remembers, in intimate connexion with his desires for blessings on himself, he always remembers, to pray that the kingdom of his divine Saviour may come, in the fulness of its extent and glory. To hasten its coming, he is steadfast in the systematic employment of the means, that Heaven has put into his hands. His labours and charities have the regular flow of smooth and peaceful streams sent forth from a perennial fountain. Thus in all that he does for the good of the church, there is a consistent uniformity, which could proceed from no other source but the deep interest of unfailling love.

Once more: the man whose heart is fixed on God, manifests it *by a perpetual regard to his glory*. In all that he does, the honour of his Maker and Redeemer must be promoted, or he is not satisfied. He has acquired the habit of always regarding this as paramount to every other consideration. He rejoices in the conversion of sinners, chiefly because God is glorified by the power of his Spirit, and the richness of his grace, in their deliverance from the slavery of sin and the condemnation of hell, and in their admittance into the mansions of everlasting purity and bliss. He delights in the spread of divine truth, because it carries with it, in every direction, the honour of its Author. He rejoices in the diffusion of this light that shines down from heaven, because it reflects up to heaven the glory of its eternal Source. He desires to have the boundaries of Zion widened, on the right

hand and on the left, till they reach round the globe, and take in the whole of its population, that the name of her king may be regarded with universal homage, and that he may reign in the midst of her, crowned with all honour and glory, and surrounded with the multiplied trophies of his all-conquering grace. He longs to have heaven opened to receive him at last, that he may behold the blaze of glory that encircles the throne of God and the Lamb, and fills the celestial regions with a light, above that of the sun and the moon forever. There he expects to see the glory of God collected into an ocean, in which every thing else will be swallowed up and lost. This prevailing regard to the honour of the divine Being, is a striking trait of character in the saint of established eminence—a trait, that appears conspicuous in his daily prayers, and conversation, and conduct; pervades all his opinions, and practices; and seems wrought into the very essence of all his religion—a trait, that distinguishes him not only from the men of the world, but from those who occupy the common level within the precincts of holy ground. It makes him like David, who, in the short psalm from which the text is taken, exclaims twice, “Be thou exalted, O God above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.”

Having now given a summary sketch of the character of the man whose heart is fixed on God, I proceed to show as was proposed,

II. That such a man will praise God in every situation.

The fixedness of heart, the stability of godliness, which has been spread out before us, forms the basis, on which the remarks under this head are to be built. To some it may, at the first thought, seem altogether unnecessary to stop here, to say that such a man, as we have been contemplating, will rejoice in God, and praise him, in the midst of prosperity, in the calmness and sunshine of life, in the vigour of health, and with exhilarating spirits, when every thing around him wears a smiling aspect, and the bounties of providence are poured into his lap, and friends are numerous and faithful, when he is crowned with present blessings, and the wearisome days

and nights of sickness, the pangs of death, and the darkness of the tomb, appear to be distant. Some may be ready to exclaim, Why should he not sing praises to God in such circumstances? and who else, with the least sense of obligation to divine goodness, would not do the same? Notwithstanding the theoretical wisdom of these inquiries, a slight view of Christian experience will justify the remark, that it is no weak and wavering piety which can always pass safely through the trial of worldly prosperity, incessantly prompting the songs of gratitude. A fulness of earthly good, instead of naturally producing, in every Christian, a corresponding measure of love to the Giver, has in many a tendency to draw their affections down from him, and fix them on the dust at their feet, or send them wandering after the phantoms of honour and pleasure. Amidst a profusion of temporal blessings, a settled principle of love to God, and an established habit of reliance upon him, are needed, to keep the heart free from all idolatry and vanity, and swelling with emotions of joyful thanksgiving.

Every situation in life, every variety of circumstances, has its peculiar temptations, calling for great fixedness of heart on God, that the soul may always rejoice in him, and the lips be constant in his praise. While the dead calm of worldly prosperity is unfavourable to the cheerful progress of the soul toward its destined haven, the storm of adversity is calculated to drive it aside from its direct course, to fill it with distress, or sink it in despondency. This is often, for a time, its lamentable effect on the weak and wavering in heart.

It is more particularly my object, at present, to show that the man, whom we have been contemplating, will continue to praise God in all the adverse circumstances of life, in the midst of afflictions and hardships. I am led to take this particular view of the subject, by the situation of David when he uttered the exclamation of the text. He was beset by determined enemies, who were plotting to destroy him. Some were urged on by the restless corrodings of envy, some by the settled malignity of hatred, and others by the blind impulse of

facious passion ; but all were united in hunting his life, as they would that of a hart upon the mountains ; so that he cries out, in a verse or two before the text, “ My soul is among lions,—whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” He was driven from his house, from the holy and beloved city of his habitation, and from the quiet possession of the throne given to him directly by God, and forced to seek a refuge in the thickets of the wilderness and caves of the rocks, to become a homeless wanderer beyond the dwellings of men. But under the pressure of all these hardships, instead of sinking into despair and closing his lips in joyless silence, or uttering complaints against the allotments of Providence, or spending his breath in fruitless sighs over the miseries of his life, he breaks out into songs of triumphant gladness and praise. While around him all is dark and tumultuous, all is bright and peaceful within. His soul is at rest with the fulness of its hidden enjoyments, while his tongue moves with the notes of adoration and thanksgiving. What now is the great source of his joy and his praise, that continues thus active in circumstances of such disheartening power ? A devout acknowledgement of his own furnishes the true answer. He says to the God of heaven, “ All my springs are in thee.” He begins the psalm, in which the text occurs, with the language of supplication, followed by strong expressions of confidence and love : “ Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me : for my soul trusteth in thee : yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.” He next proceeds to mention the severity and multitude of his calamities, bringing in occasional protestations of faith and holy devotedness, till he comes to the triumphant exclamation, “ My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed : I will sing and give praise.” Thus suddenly he turns away from his sufferings, from himself, and from the world, rises above them all, and with all put out of sight, with nothing but God in view, he mounts with the impulse of new liberty, to the empyreal region of devotion. He *does* sing, and give praise : “ Awake up my glory ; awake

psaltery and harp : I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people : I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens : let thy glory be above all the earth."

How clearly does this lofty strain of praises, sung in the midst of deadly enemies, rise directly from a holy fixedness of heart. And if such be the truth in this instance, it is rational to infer, that whenever the same cause exists in similar circumstances, an effect essentially the same will follow.

Similar circumstances are often found. Every child of God is encompassed with spiritual foes combined to harrass, and if possible, to destroy him. His own natural appetites and passions, the world with its various temptations, Satan with his snares and fiery darts, pursue him with unyielding hostility. With this formidable band he has to maintain a perpetual warfare. At one time he is called upon to make open resistance, at another, to retire out of the way in cautious silence. Now he must meet the enemy face to face, and now escape for his life. This incessant conflict with sin is the great trial of earth, entering deeply into all the rest, extending through all the degrees of Christian improvement, and over all the varieties of human condition. To this universal trial add others that are more particular, many of the smaller ones and some of the greater, both of which fall to the lot of every saint ; add the loss of worldly good, that of property, of health, or of friends ; add the pressure of poverty amid the wants of a helpless family, or the destruction of domestic order by the conduct of rebellious children, or the return of evil for good, from an ungrateful world, or the labours and hardships of apostolic self-denial ; add the failure of many a benevolent enterprise, the departure of God's most eminent servants in the height of their usefulness, and that of personal relatives and friends in the prime of affection, the uninterrupted pains of long lingering sickness, the sufferings of violent disease, or the multiplied infirmities of old age, then add to the end, the descent into the dark valley of the shadow

of death, and still it is not too much to say, that, under any, or any number of these trials, the man whose heart is fixed on God can and will rejoice and give praise. Did not Paul endure the loss of all things, and still count it all joy? Through the midst of perils by land and by sea, in the wilderness and among the heathen, through hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, watchings and fastings, shipwrecks, and stripes, and dungeons, and deaths, he goes on with undeviating steadfastness, and triumphant joy; as it were, exclaiming with every breath, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise." In his contest with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places, with the law in his members, and with the whole body of death, he sings, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And when he draws nigh to death, he looks back on the world, and sings with holy exultation, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," then adds, as he turns and looks into eternity, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory." Such was Paul's fixedness of heart; and so unceasing were his joy and praise. In these sublime attainments most of the apostles and martyrs bore to him a near resemblance. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in the tortures of persecution thanked God that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and in the flames of the stake breathed out their spirits in notes of praise. Surely then if Christians of the present day have any fixedness of heart on God, they can triumph in him, with anthems of gratitude and adoration, in all their light afflictions. The missionary of the present day can do it. And he does. Who that contemplates the devoted Martyn, travelling over the burning plains of Persia to open the word of life to its inhabitants, and listens to his fearless defence of the truth before the chief priest of Mahommed, and his exclamations of confidence and delight in God, as he wastes away and sinks into his grave far off from every earthly friend, does not seem to hear him repeating continually

“ My heart is fixed, O God, My heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise ?” But he stands not alone on this eminence of devotion ; nor is he surrounded by those only, whose public labours make them extensively known and long remembered. The private Christian in the humblest condition, if he possess the same stability of heart-felt godliness, will rise to the same constancy of joy and praise, under the more common trials of life, and even in that which closes the scene of mortality, dissolving the ties of body and spirit, and those of social affection, blotting out from the view every thing beneath the sun, and opening the eyes on the realities of the eternal world. All of us have seen the Christian possessing such unshaken confidence in God, as to be able to rejoice with thanksgiving, under the accumulated ills of poverty or protracted sickness, in the midst of repeated family bereavements, or in the struggles of nature with his last enemy. We may have known of instances, in which the spirit has grown more vigorous with the failing and sinking of the flesh ; and its conflict with sin, with the world, and the powers of darkness has seemed to be over ; and its triumph celebrated alone with its great Deliverer, upon ground entirely won on this side of the grave ; ground possessing so much of the hallowed security of heaven, that earthly enemies can approach, only just near enough, to witness, in impotent dismay, their own defeat, and hear, to their confusion, the songs of heaven’s exultation anticipated below.* Such emotions of joy have often been felt, and such strains of celestial music sung, in the dying

* The devoted missionary to Palestine, who lately died in Egypt, leaving behind him a mourner in every acquaintance, and every friend to piety in her loveliest form, gives utterance to his feelings, but a day or two before his death, in the following language : ‘ My mortal frame is growing weaker and weaker, and is just ready to dissolve into dust ; but my immortal spirit grows more and more vigorous, and is about to take wing from its prison of flesh : the world is fading away, and receding from my view ; while heaven is coming nearer, and growing brighter : the world will soon vanish forever, and all will soon be heaven.’

Many a time, has the death-bed been a scene of triumph like this.

hour. Such things have often been ; and they will continue, and be multiplied, till the end of time.

From the view, now taken of this subject, we are led to several interesting reflections.

I. It is of great importance, to human happiness, to have the heart fixed on God.

In such a world as this, so filled with changes and afflictions, and perils, how much do we need a deep source of joy that will not fail in every trying hour ; one that will last through all the days of darkness, for they are many ; one that we can carry with us into the hut of poverty, the house of mourning, the chamber of sickness,—into the field of holy warfare, into all the labours and sacrifices of the divine life, into all of the distressing and dispiriting scenes, through which we may have to pass in our pilgrimage below, and finally into the dark valley at the end, there to give light, to sustain, and to cheer. We need more than a weak and wavering faith, more than a cold and inconstant love. We need that warmth and vigour of piety, that fixedness of heart, which has been described. And, blessed be God, it is within our reach. This settled principle of happiness, that will not vary with every change of external circumstances, may be possessed by all, that pant after it as their only sure dependence.

As then, my hearers, you value a source of joy, that will not fail, and leave you desolate, aim at a high degree of consistent stedfastness in piety. Be solicitous, not merely to have your feet taken out of the miry clay and horrible pit, and set upon a rock, but also to have your *goings established* thereon, that the new song of praise to God may not only be put into your lips, but be continued there, through life, and through death, till it end in the song of Moses and the Lamb in heaven.

II. To praise God with a heart fixed on him, is the most exalted employment.

All praise must be the sincere expression of the heart's warm feelings, in order to reach the ear of him who reigns in

the heavens. When we *speak* the praises of God, when we utter them in our solemn addresses to his throne, and no less when we *sing* them, the fire of devotion must burn within, or our words and sweet tones will vanish into air, and leave us far as ever from God, and under the guilt of mocking him. An apostle exhorts his christian brethren "to be filled with the spirit, speaking to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody in their hearts to the Lord." This melody of the heart, inspired by a fulness of divine influence, is the essence of all acceptable praise. Without it there may be, in the music of the sanctuary, much to delight the ear, to send along the nerves a thrilling sensation of pleasure, to kindle the animal feelings to a living glow, and elevate the imagination above the grossness and bitterness of earth, but there will be nothing to please the Searcher of hearts, nothing to gain his everlasting smile. It is from a bosom ever swelling with the fulness of love, that the seraph's lips pour forth a continual stream of melody. To sing praise with a heart fixed on God, is, of all employments on earth, the most heavenly. Such praise is the odour of burnt incense, that rises nearest to the throne above. It is an act of devotion, in which the soul makes its nearest approach to the great object of worship. It is a sacrifice, in which, as in that of Manoah, the man turns into an angel, takes wing, and ascends in the flame. While in prayer the divine Being is brought down to us in the manifestations of his mercy, in praise we are borne up to him in our thoughts and affections. In every age of the world, to give praise to God has been the delight of his most eminent servants. In all those parts of the sacred volume, that are strictly devotional, the leading and prominent thing is praise. In this angelic work, the royal psalmist pours forth his whole soul, in the overflowings of a full inspiration. Again and again does he exclaim, "I will praise thee, O God, with my whole heart; while I live, will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being"—and, "O that all men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the

children of men !” He calls upon his soul, and all that is within him, to wake up, and engage with intense activity in this exalted employment. He calls upon every thing animate and inanimate to bear a part in it. He calls upon the angels of heaven and the inhabitants of earth, the sun, moon, and stars, the elements in all their variety, the mountains and forests, vallies and floods, beasts and flying fowls, and every thing that hath breath, to praise the Lord. He gives life to every object around him, and to every one a voice to join in the general song. The heavens and earth form one grand temple, and all the creatures and works of Jehovah contained within, are his willing or involuntary worshippers.

III. The final praises of heaven will be infinitely great.

In the history of revelation there are four grand periods, in which heaven has been opened to the eye of inspiration ; and, at each period, the sound of celestial praise has come down to our world. When the foundations of the earth were laid, “ the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” When the babe of Bethlehem was born, a multitude of the heavenly host appeared in the sky, singing “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men.” In a vision of Saint John, in which he beheld the downfall of Antichrist, he heard the voice of a great multitude in heaven, singing, “ Alleluiah ; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” And in another vision of the upper world, in its full glory, after the consummation of all things, he hears the myriads of the redeemed singing, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Thus has the praise of God been the employment of heaven in past ages, and will continue to be in the ages to come.

And, brethren, if a heart fixed on God will enable us to rejoice and give praise under all the trials of this vale of tears, this world of sin, and darkness, and sorrow, and death, how will it fit us to rejoice and give praise in that world where all tears shall be wiped away, and all shall be bright, and holy, and happy, and everlasting.

If a fixedness of heart on God could make Paul, and Silas, amid the horrors of a dungeon, and at the gloomy hour of midnight, forget the pain of their stripes, and sing praises so as to turn their darkness into day, and bring an angel from heaven to unloose their chains, and throw open their prison doors—and if the same fixedness of heart often enables the servants of Christ, with like joy and triumph, to cast off the fetters of mortality, and break away from this dungeon of earth, and change its gloom into the eternal light of heaven, how will it prepare them to exult and sing, when they shall walk at liberty in the paradise of God.

If the children of Israel, after being delivered from the host of Pharaoh by a passage through the Red Sea, could unite in a song of triumphant thanksgiving, though a wilderness lay before them, how will all the chosen people of God lift up their voices in shouts of victory and praise, when they shall be delivered from their pursuing enemies by a passage through the river of death, opened by the hand of their divine Leader, and their feet are planted firm on the shores of immortality, and a paradise unfading and interminable spreads out before them.

When the children of Israel from all parts of Judea, ascended their sacred mount to worship in their holy and beautiful temple, they went up singing as they went; and when they all stood together before the Lord, the praise was great. If, like them, the people of God, of all generations, and from all quarters of the globe, can go singing through all their pilgrimage, up to the temple above, how great beyond conception will be the praise, when all the ransomed of the Lord shall return from their earthly wanderings, and come home to the heavenly Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, and shall there obtain joy and gladness, where sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away.

When the end of all things has come,—when these visible skies have passed away, and this world and the works that are therein have been burnt up, and the new heavens and the new earth have been commanded into being amid the singing

and shouting of all the sons of light,—and when, in that bright creation, the general assembly and church of the first born, who shall be saved from the ruins of our world, shall be united to the innumerable company of angels, and all shall be prepared to begin together the work of eternity,—every heart shall be wholly fixed on God, and every eye directed to him, every soul shall be filled with his fulness, and every harp and every voice tuned anew, how will the pillars of heaven tremble as they bow and sing !

God is enthroned in the centre of these adoring myriads ; the single object of their vision, their thoughts, their affections, and their hosannas. Behold him reigning thus in the midst of his holy and happy family. Behold him pouring forth from his throne to heaven's utmost boundaries, a flood of light and joy, and receiving in return, from all quarters, a gathering and rising tide of praise, in the songs of " Blessing and honour and glory and power," like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of mighty thunderings.

There, my hearers, may you all be found at last, united to that multitude which no man can number, partaking in their purity and bliss, in their absorbing and unchanging love to God, and mingling your notes with theirs, in the everlasting hallelujahs of Heaven.

SERMON IV.

JOB, xlii, 5, 6.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : but now my eye seeth thee.
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

THERE is often, in the course of divine providence, a combination of circumstances, calculated, in a peculiar manner, or in an eminent degree, to call forth the confession of the text.

On that dreadful morning, when Abraham, at an early hour, in expectation of beholding the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, according to the revelation of the preceding day, ascended the eminence on which that revelation was made, and, as the sun rose upon the earth, saw the smoke of those devoted cities, and of the whole burning plain around them, rolling upward as the smoke of a great furnace, with how much propriety might he have said to the most high God, in view of this exhibition of his holiness, and in view of his own sinfulness, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear"—I have heard of thy purity and justice in driving fallen man out of paradise, and bringing a deluge of waters on the world of the ungodly, "but now mine eye seeth thee"—I behold these perfections of thine in illustrious exercise, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes—by the sight before me I discover my pollution and exposure to thy wrath, and fall down in the dust at thy feet with the deepest self-loathing and penitence.

When Moses stood in safety, with the nation of Israel, on the shore of the Red Sea, and beheld the divided waters returning over the host of Pharaoh—when he saw the manna

raining down from heaven, and the water gushing from the rock of the desert—and especially, when, after the wanderings of forty years, he ascended a mountain on the bank of Jordan, and looked over the verdant hills and valleys of the good land beyond, how justly might he have said to the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in view of the goodness and faithfulness manifest in the fulfilment of his promises, and in view of his own unbelief and reluctance toward the appointed service of Heaven, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Had Peter stood before the dying Son of God on the hill of Calvary, and amid the sympathetic changes of nature—the fading sun, the quaking earth, the rending rocks, the opening graves, and the rising dead—had heard the exclamation, *It is finished*, and had understood its mighty import, in its bearing on the divine government, and on the endless state of myriads of its subjects, with what an emphasis of meaning might he have cried out to the God of heaven, in view of the infinite wisdom, justice, mercy, and faithfulness, all displayed in living characters before him, and in view of his own aggravated vileness, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

It was under circumstances, exhibiting, in some degree like those now enumerated, the attributes of the divine Being, that Job uttered the words of the text.

By a rapid series of judgments he had been stript of his children and his possessions, afflicted with a painful and loathsome disease, and deprived of the light of God’s countenance. In his loneliness and misery three of his former friends came to commune with him. But instead of comforting him, as might have been expected from their professed friendship, they added a bitterness to his grief, by regarding the peculiar judgments with which he had been visited, according to the common opinion of the times, as designed, not for the trial of

his great virtue, but for the punishment of some peculiar crime, such as fraud, oppression, idolatry, or murder.

From the secret iniquity and hypocrisy, thus laid to his charge, he declared himself free ; and maintained the doctrine, that the allotments of providence in this life furnish no test of moral character. And the truth was on his side ; since, in the conclusion of the controversy, God says to Eliphaz, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends ; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath done. His cause was righteous ; yet, besides repining under the chastisement of Heaven, and cursing the day of his birth, he sinned in maintaining that cause with too much vehemence and impatience, too much self-complacency, too great a regard to his reputation and too little for the honour of his Maker.

The contest was carried on in this manner with increasing warmth on both sides, till the Almighty, coming in a whirlwind, breaks in upon it, in a voice of thunder, stopping every mouth at once, and exclaims, with reference to Job, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge ? Gird up now thy loins like a man ; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. He then proceeds, through a long series of sublime interrogatories, to bring into distinct view the greatness of his power, and the universality of his kind providence. He begins with the laying of earth's foundations, and the rejoicing of angels over the event ; then leads the mind onward, over the immensity of his works—through the earth, the ocean, and the air, all peopled with his own dependant creatures—through the elements in all their variety of combination and effect, up to the high ordinances of heaven, and the sweet influences of its bright constellations. From every quarter of the creation he collects the scattered rays of divine light of his own transcendent glory, and, in one overwhelming flood, pours them on the trembling mortal before him. At the close of this grand display of his perfections, we find the convicted and penitent man sunk down

into his own littleness and worthlessness. We find him prostrate at the feet of his Maker, with this confession on his lips— Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer ; yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further. I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” As if he had said, men of former generations have borne testimony to thy purity, thy rectitude, and thy benevolence, and the report has reached my ears : these friends of mine have talked of the same perfections in thy character, and I have listened to them ; but now thou hast spoken to my heart, and the eyes of my understanding hast thou enlightened to discern thy glory, which thou hast gathered from all the universe, and caused to pass before me ; wherefore I abhor my ingratitude and unbelief, my proud and repining spirit ; and here at thy feet I repent of all, in the deepest self-abasement.

Such is the language of penitence, as it appears in one, who had for years been a servant of God ; and such is uniformly its language at its commencement in the heart of a sinner. Repentance itself is the same thing, at its commencement, and at every subsequent period of this imperfect life. It is exercised in view of the same objects, and produces essentially the same effects. It is every where the same thing, both as it is felt in the heart, and as it is manifested in the conduct.

From these remarks, considered in connexion with the preceding illustrations of the text, may be derived the following sentiment.

All genuine repentance springs from a clear view of God.

It is my present design to take this truth, and carry it along as a test through every part of the work of repentance—through each particular act commonly included in the idea of repentance.

As preparatory to this examination, it is proper to remark—

that, as it respects the knowledge of God, the most which can be said of men, under the blinding influence of sin, is, that they hear of him by the hearing of the ear. They see him not. Their acquaintance with him has none of the properties, and produces none of the effects, of near and distinct vision. And even their hearing of him has all the faintness and indistinctness of great distance. The report of his mighty acts of justice and goodness, coming down to them through the lapse of time, does not grow clearer and louder from age to age, till it strike in thunder on the ear, and wake up the soul to the recognition of a present God. When the Almighty marches through the land in judgment or in mercy, they hear the sound of his goings as from afar. The proclamation of his glory, made in his written oracles, and by the living minister of truth, is heard as an idle tale. It dies away on the ear, like an unheeded whisper. Or if it rouse the attention, it is but for a moment. The sinner soon relapses into his former listless state, and again hears as though he heard not. But when the deafening and blinding power of sin is removed, men hear and see the infinite God as a being ever nigh them. Yes, my brethren, they *see* him. To you, the meaning of this language is not obscure; nor is the truth of the idea doubtful. They behold with admiring eyes the exhibition of his glory—the glory of his character, of his law, of his gospel, and of his universal government. They behold in him all that is vast in power, all that is comprehensive in knowledge, all that is awful in majesty, all that is glorious in holiness, all that is lovely in benevolence, all that is perfect in every excellence; and the sight cannot but show them their own weakness, their ignorance, and their vileness. Here, under the all-seeing eye of God, repentance begins—here, at the discovery of the divine character and glory.

This brings me to observe,

I. All genuine conviction of sin springs from a clear view of God.

Genuine conviction of sin is never manifested by an indefinite acknowledgment that we are sinners—that we, like the

rest of mankind, are inclined to the love and practice of iniquity. Such an acknowledgment is often made without the least distress—nay, with the greatest indifference, or with the intention of escaping in the crowd, under the general implication of the human family. Such an acknowledgment never costs any sacrifice of inward corruption, or of outward transgression. The lips may utter it, and the heart remain as unhumbled as ever. Pride may rankle as deep, and rise as high. The vilest of men may join the multitude in making it ; and, the next moment, turn about and resent, with a revengeful spirit, the least word of friendly reproof from another.

Real conviction of sin, on the contrary, is personal and particular. Its language is, not *I am one of a sinful race*, but *I am the chief of sinners*. It is an absorbing consciousness of guilt, which takes full possession of its subject, showing him turpitude in himself, that he can see in no other, because he can see the heart of no other, and making him feel singled out from the mass of mankind as peculiarly obnoxious to punishment. It seals his lips in self-condemning silence, covers his face with confusion, and bows down his spirit with overpowering heaviness.

The inquiry now is, by what means this subduing sense of guilt is produced—in view of what principles of rectitude. Those of the world are not pure enough, to make the amiable moralist feel himself thus vile ; they are not high enough to sink him so low in his own estimation. He may be just what the opinions of the world, the demands of human society, require him to be. What occasion then for distress and self-accusation ? The world acquits him ; why should he pronounce sentence against himself ? The honest and humane hail him as their brother ; they smile upon him with favour ; they follow him with applause ; they point him out as a perfect example for imitation. Why then should he hide his head, and cover himself with reproaches ? Why should he not walk abroad in the dignity of conscious innocence, and say to every one below him on the world's scale of rectitude, Stand by thyself, come not near to me ; for I am holier than

thou? Plainly because he judges himself at a higher bar than that of human opinion, and by a purer law. He regards himself, not merely as a member of human society, and under obligation to perform its requirements, but as a subject of the divine government, a member of the great community of intelligent beings, scattered over the universe, under the dominion of one Almighty Head, to whom they are all accountable on the same perfect and eternal principles of justice. He looks up to heaven, and sees on the throne a God of infinite excellence, and at the sight sinks down into his own worthlessness. He reads in the statute-book of heaven, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself;"—and when this commandment comes home to his bosom, enforced by its righteous sanctions, sin revives, manifests itself in its living malignity, and he dies. And well may he despair of receiving the sentence of life from that law, which requires the supreme homage of his heart, and the entire devotedness of all his faculties—which requires, that every thought, and feeling, and word, and action, of every day of his existence, be conformed to its perfect holiness, under penalty of death. — In such a trial, well may he feel, that every sun, which has rolled over his head, can testify many things against him—nay, that he has fallen far short of sinless obedience in every thing, that his whole life calls for the sentence of condemnation. To such a trial he must sooner or later be brought—either in this season of time, while the angel of mercy stands with open arms to receive him, a condemned criminal as he is, from the hands of the Judge, and pronounce his forgiveness; or in that eternity to come, when Justice will rise, and assert her rights; claim her victim, and hurry him away to execution.

If, then, my hearers, we would become convinced of our true character, while such a conviction may prove the harbinger of salvation, we must endeavour to obtain a clear discovery of the true character of God. If we would know ourselves, we must first know him. If we would ascertain

what we *are*, we must ascertain what his law *requires* us to be. We are not to stand here upon his footstool, and judge ourselves by comparing ourselves among ourselves, or by the standard of this world's morality. While we are doing this, the judgment of heaven is proceeding against us. Be the opinion of the world concerning us what it may, how will it effect the unchanging character and destiny of eternity for which we are preparing? We are to stand or fall before another Master. In judging ourselves, therefore, we are to take more elevated ground than that of the world; we are to go, as it were, to heaven. There is the place of judgment; there the tribunal is erected; and there, in the immediate presence of the God of purity and glory, the perfect and holy One, we are to try ourselves by the high standard of heaven, and then, if ever, we shall exclaim in the fulness of conviction, Father, we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. We are to take our original rank, but a little lower than the angels, if we would see to what a depth we have fallen. Thus may we discover what we are, and what we ought to be, by what we should have been, had we never transgressed. Above all, we are to stand trembling before the heart-searching Jehovah, till we see that every corner of pollution within our breasts is naked and open to his eye of infinite purity, if we would feel how unfit we are for an eternal seat at his right hand. We are to contemplate the divine Being on his throne, in the character of a righteous Law-giver and omniscient Judge, if we would see our guilt, and wretchedness, and ruin—if we would be thoroughly convinced that nothing but the grace of the gospel can save us. It was when Isaiah beheld the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, surrounded by the spotless seraphim, crying one unto another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory, that he exclaimed, Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

But it is time to observe,

II. All genuine sorrow for sin springs from a clear view of God.

There is a sorrow, which is no part of true repentance ; which is no where commanded ; and which needs to be repented of. It is that which is felt solely in view of the various undesirable consequences of sin—such as the loss of reputation, health, property, friends, or any other temporal good ; the reproaches of conscience, and the woes of hell. No elaborate arguments are necessary to show that this sorrow is wholly selfish, and therefore wholly displeasing to God. A familiar example will suffice for this purpose. If a criminal, in a court of justice, perceive that the crime, for which he is arraigned, and of which he knows himself guilty, cannot be proved, in consequence of some mismanagement or want of evidence, he may lose at once all regret on account of its commission, in the joy of his anticipated acquittal ; where, on the contrary, if he perceive that, as the examination of testimony proceeds, light is coming in from every quarter to make his guilt clearer and clearer, till all the darkness in which he had hoped to escape be scattered and gone, he may feel very poignant sorrow for the fatal deed, while he stands in full exposure in the midst of a thousand penetrating eyes, and hears himself doomed to the suffering and ignominy of the dungeon or the scaffold. But is there any virtue in such sorrow ? Does it afford any assurance that the man, if he were again at liberty, would not embrace the first opportunity for repeating the crime with impunity, or at a risk which in his estimation amounted to impunity ? Can you, my hearers, discover in this sorrow, any thing that is amiable, any thing that is worthy your commendation, of your confidence and love ? Do not apostate angels possess it in a high degree ? What wretched inhabitant of the world of despair, is not stung with anguish at the remembrance of the sins, that brought him down to that dreadful abode ? Hell is full of such sorrow for sin. But destroy its gnawing worm, and put out its flames, and sorrow for sin will be felt there no longer.

Like the case of the criminal at a human bar, is often that of a sinner upon a sick bed. If, from the anxious looks and

cautious whispers of his physician, and the half-stifled emotions and starting tears of his friends, he perceives that he is about to be given up to death, he not unfrequently, just at that turning point, that first moment of despair, begins, in view of his anticipated summons before the tribunal of heaven, and condemnation to eternal ignominy and woe, to break out in lamentations over his iniquities, in self-reproaches, and cries for mercy, or promises of amendment if again restored to health ; but should the wished-for restoration be granted, becomes ashamed of his misgivings, laughs at his fears, and gives his sorrows to the winds. It is not sin itself, but the wages of sin, the wrath to come, that is the cause of this distress, which vanishes so quickly, as the day of doom again recedes before his eye, and appears to leave him a long interval for sinful indulgence. This transitory distress springs wholly from the dread of approaching punishment. And is there any virtue in fearing to be punished ?—in hating misery ?—in dreading to fall into the hands of an angry God ?—in shrinking back from the brink of the opening pit ? If so, what shall we say of the horrors of the dying Voltaire, and Paine ?

Who of you, my hearers, could regard with approbation the man, that should uniformly manifest towards you an unrelenting enmity, till he found that by such conduct he was procuring his own ruin, and should then come to you, not with a melting heart, but with concessions, and exclamations of pretended grief ? Could you feel any complacency in such a mixture of selfishness and hypocrisy ? And can any one of you expect that God will look with favour on the man who mourns for sin with a supreme regard to his own private interests ? Can such selfish sorrow work any thing but death ? It is not, then, that sorrow required in the gospel. It is the sorrow of the world. It is exercised upon the great governing principles of the world, and therefore will not bear the test of heaven.

In opposition to this worldly sorrow, that which is genuine is denominated *godly* sorrow, because it springs from a

clear discovery of the character and requirements of God. The true penitent mourns for sin itself—as an abomination to God, an offence to his infinite excellence, and a transgression of his law, which is acknowledged and loved as holy, just, and good, in all its high claims and dreadful sanctions. Yes, the true penitent acknowledges, and loves, the justice of that law which condemns him. He accepts the judgment of Heaven against himself, with the subdued spirit of an affectionate child. How have I sinned against the high and holy One! This is the burden of his complaint. The various views which he takes of the divine Being, all conspire to humble and break his heart. Now he contemplates him in the character of the righteous Lawgiver and moral Governour of the universe, and now in that of the benevolent Father of one great family of creatures—at one time, he views him in the exercise of unyielding justice; and, at another, in that of condescending mercy—now he looks on the son of God expiring on the cursed tree to save the lost, and now he beholds him coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead, and at every view he smites upon his breast, and cries out with deep contrition, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The true penitent regards all his sins as offences against God, and is grieved for them on that account. Thus he regards even those committed more directly against his neighbour, because God commands him to love his neighbour as himself. The crimes lamented so bitterly by David, in the fifty first psalm, were committed more immediately against the laws of human society; yet he seems to overlook this; and the conviction of his criminality before God takes such full possession of his thoughts and feelings, and his whole soul, that he exclaims, against *thee*, *thee only*, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. The wrongs of the confiding, and faithful, but betrayed, and robbed, and murdered Uriah, seem forgotten in the all-absorbing remembrance of the violated laws of Heaven.

Such is the sorrow of genuine penitence. It is not the selfish grief of the slave. It is not the chagrin of wounded pride or disappointed ambition. It springs not from a sense of self-degradation; nor principally from any of the unhappy consequences of sin, but from a discovery of the perfections and claims of the infinite Jehovah.

With this remark, I pass, to observe,

III. All genuine reformation of life springs from a clear view of God.

The work of repentance is not complete till it be manifested in its purifying effects on the conduct—till sin be forsaken and holiness embraced. And how is this to be accomplished? Though the hypocrite, when the dread of punishment disturbs him, may break off from the commission of open immoralities, and go through the performance of certain external duties, yet he seeks only to cover his sins, in order to allay his fears; he does not heartily and unreservedly forsake them. He falls short of thorough reformation, because he begins the work where he should finish it. He attempts to cleanse the streams, while the fountain is left in its original impurity; and no wonder if it continue to send forth polluting waters, to thwart his utmost exertions. The real penitent knowing that what he cordially hates he can easily renounce, begins the work of renouncing sin, by striving to overcome all internal relish for it. And this he does, because he feels that while men look on the outward appearance, the God, to whom he is accountable, looks on the heart, and judges of the external act by the inward disposition, and therefore regards that as no abandonment of sin, which proceeds not from cordial abhorrence of it. The real penitent forsakes all his iniquities, his vain pleasures, his projects of ambition, his habits of sloth, or intemperance, or avarice, together with his wicked companions and the scenes of his former transgressions—in short he forsakes the broad way to death with all its allurements, and chooses the narrow way to life with all its trials; and this he does in obedience to the high authority of Heaven.

The real penitent does not suffer himself to be frequently overcome by some besetting sin, and rest satisfied with pleading in his excuse the strength of temptation, or constitutional temperament. He shudders at the thought of retaining a single enemy to prove a deceiver, and in the end a dreadful destroyer. He has no desire to make any compromise with sin, any covenant with death, or any agreement with hell—and because he sees in the Most High every excellence, to support his claim to perfect obedience.

The true penitent shuns temptation. He never yields to it, with the intention of repenting afterwards, nor does he venture toward compliance with it as far as he thinks he can and preserve the name and appearance of rejecting it. He stops not to catch a taste of the forbidden fruit before he flies—and because he sees, that the Being, with whom he has to do, cannot but regard such conduct as daring mockery. His language at the first approach of temptation is, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!

The real penitent forsakes his secret sins; for never so clearly, as when alone, does he behold the pure and penetrating eye of God fixed upon him.

He *perseveres* in his renunciation of sin. He does not leave it one day and return to it the next. Nor does he suffer himself to commit the same transgression again and again, and immediately after each commission fall down on his knees, and confess and bewail it with strong cries and many tears, and then rise with a conscience wholly unburdened, and with the calm self-complacent feeling that his Maker is thus appeased, and that his obligations to him are thus discharged—and he dares not do this, because he knows that such an allowed course of alternate transgression and repentance must be an abomination in the sight of heaven.

In the conclusion of this discourse, permit me, my Christian friends, affectionately, but with becoming solemnity, to apply to you, and to request you to apply to yourselves, the test of repentance which has now been presented to your view. Do you feel altogether conscious, that the trial, were it ever so faithfully made, would issue in your favour?

Does your repentance spring from a clear view of God?—In the first place, does it spring from a clear view of his character? Do you discover the deep deformity of sin by a contrast with the infinite beauty of his holiness?—by the light of his glorious perfections? And is it this contrast, that convinces you of the necessity of repentance? Is it this that alarms you; that fills you with grief, and causes you to depart from iniquity? Is it the desire to be reconciled to God, and assimilated to his moral excellence, that prompts you to the renunciation of sin? Is it the high and holy hope of growing in friendship with him, and likeness to him, through interminable ages? And do you dread a state of impenitence because it would deprive you of this happiness?—because it would remove you farther and farther, through time, and through eternity, from the centre and sum of all perfection?

Again; Does your repentance spring from a clear view of the law of God? Do you acknowledge its justice, and take it as the rule of your life, in all its extent and strictness, and mourn over sin as the violation of its sacred requirements?—and do you dread a state of impenitence because it is in defiance of its righteous authority? The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Have you been turned from iniquity under its mighty influence? Have you forsaken the way of transgressors, by following the light of this lamp of heaven?

Again; does your repentance spring from a clear view of the mercy of God in the gospel? Are you brought to abhor yourselves, and to abstain from evil, by contemplating the price of your redemption, and the magnitude of the work—by gazing upon the height and depth, the length and breadth, of this grand system of divine benevolence? Does the love of Christ constrain you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly and righteously in the world? Is it when you look on him whom you have pierced, that you mourn? Does the munificence of his everlasting grace make you feel poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and in want of all things?

Once more ; Does your repentance spring from a clear view of the righteousness of God as your final Judge ?

God commandeth all men, every where, to repent ; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness. Have you repented because there is a day of judgment coming ?—a day in which the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and the hidden works of darkness be brought to light, and the eternal portion of each shall be allotted to him according to the deeds done in the body ? Have you repented because a single sin unforsaken will then and there, in the presence of your heart-searching Judge, weigh like a mountain upon the soul ? Have you repented because it will be a day for the fuller and brighter manifestation of God's glory, and for the grand consummation of his purposes ?—a day for the exhibition of his perfections, and the triumph of the principles of his government ? If you have, it will also be a day of triumph to you ; you will hail its dawning with unspeakable joy. Then will all your past knowledge of God appear like that of an infant. It will seem to you, that, through all the years of your existence on earth, you had only heard of him by the hearing of the ear, as the glorious Sovereign of a distant and invisible world : for then you shall be in that world, and shall there see him as he is ; and from that near view of his glory shall take into your bosoms the fulness of joy. Thenceforth you shall live in the light of his unveiled countenance, partake of his sinless purity, admire the perfections of his nature, and the principles of his government, and chant hallelujahs for the wonders of his redemption. Then shall God himself wipe away all tears from your eyes.

To such of you, my hearers, as may be conscious that you are impenitent, or may give lamentable proof to others that you are so, I have only to say, that you are at war with a Power, who, in every thing, is infinitely above you. And have you no fears for the termination of such a contest ? Are you prepared to stand it out to the last ? Do you fondly imagine that the Most High will never execute his threatenings against final ungodliness ? Is he a man, that he should lie ?

or the son of man, that he should repent? Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Has he no regard for the honour of his law, the majesty of his throne, and the good of his universal kingdom?

But your very character of impenitence, no less than the constitution of the divine government, will demand your eternal banishment from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. This sentence of banishment will not be executed as a mere arbitrary act of sovereignty; for without holiness no man *can* see the Lord. Into the holy city above, nothing that defileth can ever enter. None but the pure in heart can see God.

Were an unsanctified being to steal unseen into the midst of heaven's holy worshippers, his own sense of unfitness for their employment would betray him there; he would throw off the mask and stand exposed to every eye; and though his presence should suspend the songs of the happy myriads around him, there would be no need that all heaven should rise to cast him out; no need that every eye should look to the insulted throne for sudden wrath to blaze forth against him; no need that every voice should call for his banishment; his own conscience would pass the sentence on himself, and he would feel in his inmost soul the necessity of its immediate execution. He would himself hurry away from a world where "Holiness to the Lord" is written on every object, and where "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts" is sung and echoed and re-echoed by all the companies of pure and blessed spirits.

SERMON V.

ECCLESIASTES, xii. 1.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”

It is often the practice of the sacred writers, to express the whole of religion by some essential and prominent part of it. They call it “the *knowledge* of God,” “the *fear* of the Lord,” and “the *wisdom* that is from above.” In exhorting men to become religious, they often think it enough to exhort them to the performance of some one of the essential and prominent duties of religion. For each of these particular exhortations there exists an appropriate season.

It is because forgetfulness of God is an all-pervading ingredient in human depravity, that the writer of the text stops short with exhorting mankind to *remember* their Creator—as if this were the whole of their duty—as if it would certainly bring along with it the gratitude, the love, the faith, and the devotedness of the whole moral man—as if these and all other virtues were included in the single idea of remembrance; and thus have they come to be included in it, in consequence of uniformly existing in connexion with it.

The text is therefore an exhortation calling mankind to the performance of all the duties of religion. Its specific object is, to excite to the practice of early piety; and the specific object of the present discourse is to exhibit, to the younger part of my audience, motives to induce them to become pious now in the days of their youth.

Before entering upon the consideration of these motives, however, I would observe, that I am aware of the manner, in

which sermons addressed to the young, exhibiting their peculiar facilities for obtaining an interest in the salvation of Christ, are received by the impenitent among the aged. They say to the preacher, "You give to our condition a sad, disheartening aspect. By exhibiting the advantages for becoming children of God in youth, you leave us to infer the disadvantages for becoming such in old age. In showing to the young the brightness of their prospect, you show to us the gloominess of our own. You put us into the back ground, and bring forward the multitudes of the young to profit by our lamentable situation, and almost to triumph in our shame and misery. You leave us to stumble on in the darkness of approaching despair, and encourage them to walk over us and our fallen hopes, to take possession of the rewards of immortality. Surely, say they, we, of all men, most need to hear the language of encouragement, to save us from utter despondency, and cause us to make the best of our state and our little remnant of life. Instead of being told of the obstacles in our way, we should be told of every possible facility of which our condition admits."

To such persons, if there be any such present, it may be sufficient to observe, that, if preaching to the young, on their peculiar advantages for repenting of sin and believing in Christ, make you feel the impediments under which you labour, what is so likely, as this feeling, to rouse you to immediate and successful efforts, in the work of your salvation? At all events, if you are convinced of the truth and importance of religion, and are possessed of common humanity, you can patiently, and even gladly, hear the young exhorted to make sure of the blessing which you have as yet neglected. If you are at all sensible of the multiplied hindrances in your way, you cannot have the cruelty to wish others to be left undisturbed, till they come to be surrounded by the same. No—instead of this, you will look back, over the waste of years, to the morning of life, and from the borders of the eternal world echo the command of God to the young, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil

days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Among the motives to induce the young to become pious, the first that I shall mention, is, Their susceptibility of religious impressions.

Youth is particularly the season of feeling. The heart is then comparatively tender ; and the conscience is seldom seared, as it often is in riper years. This tenderness of heart and conscience is not, as the infidel would have us believe, necessarily nor generally allied to mental weakness. It often exists in connexion with the most vigorous intellect ; while it always goes far towards preserving the understanding entirely from the darkening and perverting influence of prejudice. It does not necessarily nor generally receive the impress of opinions directly from without, instead of receiving it through the medium of an enlightened mind. On the contrary it serves to keep the mind ever open to conviction. The young are not, like many in advanced life, shielded, and fortified, and armed at all points, against the arrows of truth. The truths of revelation are directed ultimately to the conscience and heart. The understanding must indeed be won ; but only as ground, on which to stand, and push the conquest forward to the moral faculties of the soul. Hence that tenderness of conscience and heart, so general in youth, renders it a season peculiarly favourable for the reception of divine truth in its all-subduing power. When will the love of Christ, the sufferings of Calvary, the wonders of redemption, the holiness of God and his law, and the glories and terrors of the coming judgment, call forth the tears of deep and cordial penitence, if not in the susceptibility of youth ? Will they do it when the man has perhaps reached that hardihood in sin, which renders the heart almost proof against any abiding impressions ? They may ; but it is a bare possibility. And will any of you, my young friends, quiet yourselves in present impenitence, with the confident expectation, that at some distant period, an increase of the power of divine truth and grace will be put forth, to overcome the increased hardness

of your hearts? Will you not rather with a trembling interest, seize the advantage of present tenderness of feeling, lest your future insensibility prove the sleep of death?

A second motive to induce the young to enter upon the service of God without delay, is,

Their freedom from long-confirmed habits of transgression.

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may he, who has long been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.” From this moral impossibility of renouncing established habits of iniquity the young are for the most part exempted. Except in some instances of premature depravity, sinful practices have not become so uniform and inveterate, as to constitute a character openly and grossly vicious. It is seldom, for instance, that we see a youth of confirmed intemperance. But leaving out of the present account those practices, that are denominated vicious, and confining our attention to those included in the idea of neglect of Christian duty, and considering the difficulty of overcoming even these, after they have for a long time been persisted in, we shall be furnished with a powerful motive to excite the young to immediate compliance with the requisitions of the gospel. When a man has lived fifty or sixty years in the neglect of prayer, for instance, with how many difficulties will he meet in the commencement of this duty at this late period, especially in its commencement as an act of family worship, in the midst of children whom he never taught to pray by precept or example, never instructed in the doctrines and duties of christianity, and never restrained from the company and practices of the irreligious. The mental agony of the parent in such circumstances, while he hears, or, with conscience all awake in view of his past life, imagines that he hears, among his thoughtless children, the half-stifled laugh of contempt, and the noise of wearisome constraint, has sometimes overcome, for a while at least, his best resolutions, and driven him well nigh to the renunciation of all his hopes of the favour of God and the rewards of his kingdom. This is

but an example of many like difficulties and trials, from which the young may escape by timely precaution—by beginning at once the practice of universal obedience—before habits of sin become inveterate by long continuance.

A third motive to early piety is The happiness attending its exercise.

The happiness afforded in the performance of Christian duties, and the enjoyment of Christian hopes, is a motive addressed to all of every age. But it deserves to be introduced in this connexion, in consequence of the common idea of thoughtless youth, that there is in the very spirit of religion a gloomy austerity, at war with the cheerful nature of felicity.

The pleasures of vital religion consist in deliverance from the reigning and destroying power of unhallowed passions ; in a growing conformity to the holy character and perfect law of God ; in the exercise of devout, benevolent, heavenly affections ; in the favour of God, and the approving whispers of a good conscience ; in the humble hope of present and everlasting forgiveness of sin ; in that settled calm of the soul, which cannot be entirely broken up by any or all of the agitations of the world ; and in the sustaining, animating prospect of the full enjoyment of God in the midst of his holy and happy family in heaven forever. Who sees any thing in all this calculated to take away from the young, the cheerful, contented spirit of true felicity, and make them a morose, unsocial class of beings—unpleasant in society, and miserable in solitude ? What has the world to present you, my young friends, that can for a moment bear the most distant comparison with these pure, substantial, divine pleasures of the child of God ? The mirth of the world is madness while in possession ; and the end of it is heaviness and despair. Is there any thoughtless, riotous mirth in heaven ? Say not that every thing on earth can be turned into vanity and nothingness at once by such a test. No—there are things here that will bear to be thus transferred to that world of purity and glory. These are the graces and enjoyments of vital godliness. Most of them are common in kind, in saints on earth and in saints

and seraphs around the throne above. And in this religion of heaven is there not enough to cheer the spirit—to make the bosom swell with the fulness of delight? If the worship and service of Jehovah bow down the spirit and spread over it a settled gloom, heaven must be a world of universal and uninterrupted melancholy; for its inhabitants rest not day nor night from this worship and service. We know, however, that the inspired writer, who was favoured with visions of the celestial world, gives us the clearest and the highest idea of its raptures when he describes it as filled with humble and holy worshippers. And doubtless the purest and most exalted enjoyment on earth is found in the nearest approach to the adoration and praises of heaven.

A fourth motive to early piety is, Its power to preserve from the snares of the world.

When the young come forward upon the stage of active life, they are beset with temptations that try the strength of their moral principles, and in the trial often gain the victory, and procure their ruin. Youth is to an important extent a season of preparation for subsequent life. Who can safely venture forth into the busy world without the guiding and protecting influence of the religion of Christ? What but this will certainly preserve the inexperienced youth from being led far astray by vicious companions, to the destruction of his character, his peace and that of his friends, and to the annoyance of society, till he terminate his career in the infamy of the dungeon or of the scaffold? What but this will certainly preserve him from the gulf of intemperance, which every year swallows up the reputation, domestic comfort, health, fortunes, lives, and souls of thousands? If the restraints of divine grace be withheld, who can set bounds to human depravity? Who can say what crime he himself may not be tempted to commit? These restraints God has not uniformly granted to every individual of any class of persons, but his own sincere and devoted servants. To become one of this class, therefore, is the only sure way of always enjoying these restraints, and escaping the fatal consequences of their loss.

A fifth motive to early piety is—The exposure to early death. There is no order in death. The eldest of a family, for instance, does not uniformly die first, and then the next in age, and so on to the youngest. The whole multitude of the living, from the man tottering beneath the weight of fourscore years down to the infant of yesterday, are all confounded together, and the arrows of death are flying among them promiscuously in every direction. So great a proportion of mankind never pass beyond the season of youth, that the young, if they would overcome their natural aversion to the nakedness of calculation on this subject, would tremble at their prospect for a long life, and feel the importance of doing quickly whatever is to be done as a preparation for death. Were all men to live here to the age of fifty, it might perhaps be safe for youth to put off awhile the work of repentance ; but, as it now is, they can do it only at a hazard which the passing hour may prove fatal.

If a title to a blissful immortality, and the necessary preparation for it, can be obtained only in such a dying world as this, how ought every faculty of the soul to be waked up to immediate exertion, lest the invaluable prize be lost forever.

A sixth motive to early piety is—The fact that almost all the pious become such in early life.

It is beyond all dispute that by far the greater part of the followers of Christ become such in youth. Abundant proof of this assertion may be found, by a reference to revivals of religion. Among those introduced, at such seasons, into the kingdom of God, we see here and there a solitary individual of threescore years and ten, and a small number in middle life ; while the rest, forming a very large majority, are in the days of their youth. The young come not one by one into the courts of the Lord, to profess their allegiance to him, but flock together, and crowd the sacred gates. It is from among them that converts to righteousness are multiplied as the drops of the morning dew. The infidel and the man of the world, who in the pride of their heart will not seek after God, may look at this fact with a triumphant sneer, and regard it

as fixing upon the christian faith the charge of foolishness, and upon its disciples that of enthusiasm ; but what of all this, my young friends, if while they are beholding, and wondering, and despising, they are also perishing, and you are securing your eternal salvation ? Their laughter will soon be turned into mourning, and their triumph into everlasting shame ; when the day of your vindication shall come, and with it the fulfilment of your hopes.

Though the fact, that most of the children of God become such in early life, be treated with derision by an unbelieving world, it is confidently hoped, that it will be regarded, by the impenitent youth in this assembly, with the utmost seriousness, as having an important bearing on their eternal interests. To youth of this character it is my duty to say, if you delay compliance with the merciful offers of the gospel to some future stage of your mortal existence, the general course of divine providence in filling up the church will then be against you, in addition to the numerous other circumstances, that are constantly diminishing the probability that you will ever comply with these offers. By present neglect, you are passing out of the sphere of this course of providence, into the desolate region of exceptions, and risking your salvation on the mere possibility of your becoming one of them, by an extraordinary act of divine interposition.

Another motive to early piety is—The particular promise of God in its favour.

The language of God on this subject is, “they that seek me early shall find me.” In no part of the sacred volume is it expressly said, they that seek in old age, or in the midst of their days, shall find me. We are indeed taught, from the general promises and invitations of scripture, that God may be found at these seasons ; but here the subject is left, without the addition of peculiar encouragement in the form of a prominent distinguishing promise. God smiles upon the season of youth with a peculiar token for good. He takes it out, as it were, from the whole term of human life, gives it a kind of separate existence, places it on higher grounds, spreads

over it a brighter aspect of hope, and sheds down upon it extraordinary manifestations of his favour. This, then, is the time, above all others, for securing an interest in the love of God, and in the salvation of his Son.

One more motive to early piety is—The obligation of mankind to give to God the best of their days.

Under the reign of the Mosaic law, the best of the flocks, and the first ripe fruits of the field, were required by God as a sacrifice to himself. And are not we, with at least equal strictness and propriety, required to consecrate to him the first and best of our affections and services? Shall we receive all our blessings from God, and in the contented enjoyment of them forget the Giver during the prime of life, when the ardour of our affections and the vigour of our faculties best fit us for his service? Shall we spend our strength, and health, and activity, in the service of the world, and then offer to God our weakness and infirmity? Will it not overwhelm us with shame and confusion of face to make such an offering? Will it not be sacrificing to God the halt and the lame? O the forbearance of Jehovah, that he ever pardons and receives into his favour, a single soul in the evening of life, after a long day wasted, and worse than wasted, in the service of the world! Our Creator requires, not only the homage of our hearts, but also the active energy of our minds, and the labour of our hands, in doing good to his creatures and promoting the interests of his kingdom. But how little can a man do for God, who never begins to serve him till the last year of a feeble old age! Piety implanted in youth is like seed sown in the spring time of the year. It takes deep root, and grows to maturity, and bears fruit in this season of life. Piety implanted in extreme old age is like seed sown in autumn. It springs up, indeed, but bears no fruit, before the winter of death.

To put off the work of repentance to the last years of the time allotted to man on earth, looks like an artifice to avoid the trial and self-denial of the Christian course, and yet make sure of its happy end, and its everlasting rewards—to obtain

the crown of triumph without enduring the conflict—to secure heaven without giving up the world. Have any of you, my young friends, the hardihood to treat the God of all your mercies with such indignity, as to serve yourselves during the prime of your days, with the deliberate intention of devoting the poor remainder to him? If you have one spark of gratitude, you cannot thus insult the Lord of Glory. No, you cannot.

But you are bound by every tie of sacred obligation, to consecrate to God, not only the commencement, but also the whole of your existence. You have entered on an endless state of being. Will you not now begin to live for the whole of it? to live as you would wish to live forever? that is, in the service and enjoyment of God? Will you not devote the whole of your immortal existence to the God of your salvation? All is too little, to make any adequate return for the unspeakable gift of a Saviour. Should you now begin to serve him, and continue this service for threescore years and ten in this world, and then rise to the exaltation of the seraphim around his throne, and serve him in the praises and thanksgivings of Heaven for unnumbered ages, you would find a debt of gratitude remaining, whose long arrears you could never pay, till you had exhausted the treasures of eternity.

There is still another motive to piety in youth. It is the one brought to view in the text, viz.

A consideration of the “evil days” of after life.

The necessary employments and perplexing cares of manhood render even that a state far less favourable to the attainment of piety than that of youth. The young may, indeed, be sometimes heard to plead want of time, as an excuse for deferring the great concern of the soul’s eternal welfare. They are so constantly occupied with the vanities of the world, with its dissipating amusements, that they have no time left to be serious and devout, no time to think of God and to serve him. Then what is the prospect, that they will find time for these duties, amid the multiplied employments and anxieties of middle life?

I appeal with confidence to the middle-aged in this assembly, to decide this point between them and the young—to say on which side the advantage lies. Ye that have families whose education and government, and whose numerous wants, demand your hourly attention, from morning to night, and whose temporal support, sometimes, in the fluctuations of business, requires you to rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, say, had you not more leisure to think of eternity and prepare for it, when you were in the unincumbered season of youth?

But the “evil days,” and “the years which bring no pleasure with them,” spoken of in the text, refer more particularly to old age—when the body is bowed down with the weight of years and infirmities—and when the faculties of the soul are impaired by disease, or benumbed by the frost of time. Weak, worn out, tottering frames, trembling limbs, dimness of eyes, incurable maladies,—and with these afflictions of body, sympathetic afflictions of mind, shortness of memory, distraction of thought, peevishness of temper, and the imbecility of childhood, are the general consequences of extreme old age. Add to all these things, hardness of heart, blindness of understanding, apathy of conscience, and the irresistible strength of long-continued habits of sin, and impenitent old age will appear shrouded in almost utter hopelessness. O! it is enough to break the benevolent heart to see an impenitent mortal, at the age of four score years, tottering on the brink of the grave, on the verge of the eternal world, and consider how hard it is for one who has so long been accustomed to do evil, now to learn to do well!

It must be dreadful, my young friends, to drag out the evil days of old age without the supports and consolations of religion—dreadful to go stumbling down the hill of life into the valley of the shadow of death, without a lamp to guide the dim eye along the dreary way, or an arm to bear up the sinking frame—to behold the world receding till almost out of sight, and still no heaven of glory opening to view—to see the shades of night fast gathering round, without any good

hope of the morning of an eternal day. Now, my young friends, all this misery may be avoided.

And, now, by all the motives that have been presented before you, be persuaded to take that course which will save you from it. By your susceptibility of religious impressions—by your freedom from long-confirmed habits of transgression—by the happiness of a holy life—by the preserving influence of piety amid the snares of the world—by your exposure to early death—by the alarming fact that almost all the pious become such in early life—by the peculiar promise of God in your favour—by your obligation to give God the best, nay, the whole of your existence—by all the infirmities and disadvantages of old age—by all these considerations be persuaded to remember your Creator *now*.

By deferring this concern to the close of life, you would resemble the man, who had a journey to perform sufficiently long to employ the whole day, but should sit down to eat and drink, or linger to sport or sleep, and when at last the darkness of night was coming on, start up in distraction to set forth on his journey. By such conduct you would resemble the seaman who should never begin to learn the art of guiding his ship, till just as it is rising on the last wave to dash upon the fatal rock, or taking the last turn in a devouring whirlpool, and should then fly to his chart and compass.

Not long since, a young man in the vigour of health, with the fairest prospect of a long and prosperous life, was thrown from a vehicle, and conveyed to the nearest house, in a state that excited instant and universal alarm for his safety. A physician was called. The first question of the wounded youth was, "Sir, must I die? must I die? deceive me not in this thing." His firm tone and penetrating look demanded an honest reply. He was told that he could not live more than an hour. He waked up, as it were, at once, to a full sense of the dreadful reality. "Must I then go into eternity in an hour? Must I appear before my God and Judge in an hour? God knows that I have made no preparation for this event. I knew that impenitent youth were sometimes cut

off thus suddenly, but it never entered my mind that I was to be one of the number. And now what shall I do to be saved ?” He was told that he must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “ But how shall I repent and believe ? Here is no time to explain the manner—Death will not wait for explanation—The work must be *done*. The whole business of an immortal being in this probationary life is now crowded into one short hour—and that is an hour of mental agony and distraction.” Friends were weeping around, and running to and fro in the frenzy of grief. The poor sufferer, with a bosom heaving with emotion, and an eye gleaming with desperation, continued his cry of “ What shall I do to be saved ?” till, in less than an hour, his voice was hushed in the stillness of death.

Who among you, my young friends, can be willing, thus to leave to the mercies of an hour, the vast concerns of an eternal scene ?

In view of all the motives now set before you, will you not be persuaded to make religion your first and chief concern, that you may be prepared for death whenever it comes—that you may be prepared, should God spare you till old age, to change its evil days into days of happiness, then to “ renew your strength and mount up as on an eagle’s wings,” even then “ to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.” So shall your age be clearer than the noon-day—without a cloud, and bright with the visions of an approaching heaven. Then will the hour of death find the work of life accomplished—and you will have nothing to do, but to bid farewell to friends and to the world with the high triumph of faith or the composure of holy and happy resignation, and fall asleep in the arms of your Redeemer, in the full assurance of waking in his likeness on the morning of the resurrection, and ascending with him to the heaven of heavens.

But, if you will not listen to the voice of heavenly wisdom—if you will break through all this array of motives, and, in spite of them all, live as you list—why go on a little longer. It can be but a little.—“ Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,

and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes,"—give yourself up to the pursuit of vanity ; hurry away from one scene to another of dissipating and riotous mirth ; raise the song of midnight revelry ; make as much of the world as you can ; resist the striving Spirit of mercy ; stifle the rising conviction of conscience ; disregard the entreaties and admonitions of pious friendship ; make a mock at sin, and the everlasting burnings of hell ; live a few more precious days of grace in forgetfulness of your Creator, "but know thou,"—yes, "*know* thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

SERMON VI.

LUKE, i. 66.

“What manner of child shall this be?”

THIS question of wondering interest was asked respecting John the Baptist not many days after his birth. It was occasioned by miraculous circumstances, that clearly showed him to be the object of peculiar attention from Heaven. The holy character that he was to possess, and the work that he was to perform as a preacher of repentance, had been foretold by an angel to his father Zacharias, as he executed the priest's office before the Lord at the altar of incense. The language of the angel on this subject is “Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” At the time this prophecy was uttered, Zacharias was struck dumb, as an attestation of its truth, and a chastisement for his unbelief. He had been speechless ever since; and now at the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophecy, immediately after the child was dedicated to God according to the covenant of grace, and was named as the angel had directed, his tongue was loosed, and he spake and praised God. Being filled with the Holy Ghost, he poured forth the overflowings of a happy inspiration in praises to God for his great mercy, and in predictions respecting the future usefulness of this child of promise, in proclaim-

ing the nearness of Messiah's kingdom, and announcing the glad tidings of salvation through him by repentance and faith, and thus preparing his way before him. In view of these events, fear came on all that dwelt round about ; and all these sayings were noised abroad ; and all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be ?

This exclamation was uttered, or this question asked, respecting a child in circumstances remarkably peculiar ; and it was done with some foreknowledge of his future character and condition. But it was not done, without any reference to the means, by which he was to be made so holy and useful. His parents were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. They possessed the views and feelings, and performed the actions, required of God's children. They loved and obeyed him ; they trusted in his promises ; they kept his covenant ; they offered many a prayer of faith for their child ; they dedicated him to God, and brought him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, under the influence of religious instruction and religious example. It was by the blessing of God upon these means thus faithfully used, that he became what he did—a burning and a shining light in the church. It was not in consequence of the miraculous circumstances attending his birth. It was through the means of grace faithfully used, and rendered effectual by the Spirit of God, that he was fitted for the course of sublime self-denial and active benevolence which he pursued. As the same means may now be enjoyed by multitudes, and the same Spirit is ready to bless them, we may draw from this example some important instruction in relation to our duty and our happiness.

While we look upon an interesting child, the object of many cares, and many fears and hopes, and the loved one of many hearts ; and while we think of the part that he is to act on the theatre of life, and of the lot that he is to enjoy or suffer, and while we think of the rational and accountable soul in his little frail form of dust, and of the unending existence

which he has commenced, under the government of the great God and Saviour, how can the question fail to rise in our minds, What manner of child shall this be ? When we think of the strong principle of depravity within him, and of the many strong temptations that he must meet, and the many stronger ones that he may,—when we think of the ten thousand circumstances, under the influence of which his character is to be formed, for the trial of the last day, and for the retributions of eternity,—and when we think too of the cloud of uncertainty, that to our mortal eyes hangs over his future course, and over his everlasting destiny, how can we help exclaiming with a fearful interest, What manner of child shall this be ? How often, and with what heart-thrilling solicitude, must the parent ask this question, respecting the helpless and thoughtless little being, in whose life and happiness his own are bound up ? Will he be that wise son, who maketh a glad father ? or that foolish one, who is the heaviness of his mother ? What return will he make for all the labours and sacrifices of parental love ? When in the critical season of youth he leaves his father's house, what report will be from time to time brought back respecting him ? Will it be such as to give higher and higher joy ? or deeper and deeper sorrow ? Will it call for the smiles of delightful approbation ? or the tears of heart-rending shame ?

When the patriot contemplates the child, that is to be a blessing or a curse to society, by spreading around him the influence of a virtuous or vicious life, and thus strengthening or weakening the foundations of government, and helping to build up or pull down its good institutions, it is no unbecoming anxiety that prompts him to ask, What manner of child shall this be ? When the minister of the gospel contemplates one of the young immortals of his flock, and calls to mind the two paths through the world, in one of which he is to walk,—and the two characters, with one of which he is to die,—and the two multitudes before the judgment-seat, in one of which he is to stand,—and the two abodes of eternity, in one of which he is to dwell,—with what trembling concern

must he exclaim, What manner of child shall this be ? When he baptizes that child into covenant with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, how can he but ask with deep solicitude, Will the Father adopt him into his holy family, and make him an heir of heaven ? Will the Son redeem him from death, and present him faultless before the throne of his Father ? Will the Holy Ghost pour divine light into his mind, and shed abroad divine love through his heart, and implant in his soul the principle of a new life, and cherish it till it rise to angelic vigour ? Will his name be written in the book of life ? Will his voice be heard among the millions, who shall walk in white upon the plains of immortality, and sing together the song of Moses and the Lamb ? Who can contemplate without emotion the childhood of a being, that may one day be exalted to such a height of glory ? Should we view with breathless admiration the starting of a new planet in the heavens, ordained to move on through years and centuries, till the end of the world ? And can we behold with indifference, the setting forth of a living and rational being, on a career, which will be but just begun, when suns and planets shall stop, and will be continued beyond them and without them through eternal ages ? Can we behold, without intense interest, the commencement of an existence, which is to be perpetuated in another world, and there made happy or miserable forever, according to the character formed in this state of probation ?

To the child himself it must be a thing of infinite importance, that his life should be spent in such a manner, as to be followed by a blessed eternity. Every affectionate parent must feel an earnest desire, that the life of his child may be so spent ; and every benevolent acquaintance must feel something of the same desire. It becomes then a question of deep interest, whether any thing in the circumstances of the child, within the reach of human agency, can render it highly probable, that such will be his future course, and what can render it most probable. It cannot be rendered very probable, merely by such circumstances as wealth or poverty, exalted

rank or humble, secular learning or the want of it. Concerning the degree of probability that may be inferred from an education strictly religious, there is a difference of opinion among men of different moral principles and feelings. By such an education I mean not one conducted with unkind and unreasonable rigidity, but one conducted faithfully and affectionately upon principles purely christian, in distinction from that education, which is sometimes called religious because it is received in a religious community, and under the general influence of the institutions of the Gospel. The infidels who have attempted to sunder all the ties of moral obligation that bind man to his fellow and to Heaven, and thus restore the human family to what they call the innocent simplicity and happy freedom of a state of nature, are quite consistent in calling it blind and hard-hearted bigotry to instruct a child in any religion as true, before he is capable of weighing for himself the arguments for and against it. They are altogether consistent in representing it as unjust to the child himself, and to the community of which he is to be a member, not to permit him to grow up with his mind free from all bias in favour of any religion, that when he comes to maturity, he may choose his own, or reject all, according to the decisions of his unfettered reason. They would fain represent it as impossible, for a man to believe sincerely, or to know that he believes upon evidence, what he has been taught from childhood to regard, as unquestionable truth. And they venture to affirm, that to be instructed in the doctrines and duties of christianity in childhood, furnishes no more ground to hope that the future life will be virtuous and happy, than not to be thus instructed. In proof of this assertion they adduce instances, in which the children of Christian parents have broken through all the restraints of a religious education, and rushed onward to the rank of leaders in the way of iniquity and death. It cannot be denied that such instances may be found. It must even be granted that when men become openly vicious in such circumstances, they may sometimes go faster and farther in their career, in consequence of the re-

straints through which they have broken. But are not such instances comparatively few? Are they not mere exceptions to the general course of things?—exceptions that only exhibit the natural strength of human depravity? Besides they are far from being in any degree the proper effects of a religious education itself, though they may now and then be rendered worse by circumstances sometimes attending it, such as severity or irritability in the temper of parents, or want of consistency and uniformity in their government. It remains after all a general truth, that children educated on Christian principles are more likely than others, to be truly virtuous and happy in after life. This cannot be denied without denying the connexion between cause and effect, and leaving us entirely in doubt respecting the path of duty. It cannot be denied, without turning back the natural course of things in the moral world, almost as much as to turn backward the descending streams. It can be denied only by taking the ground, that the great doctrines, and moral precepts, and pervading spirit of Christianity, are not eminently fitted in their nature, to purify and elevate the character. But this ground is never taken by an enlightened infidel. The ground commonly taken is, that a course of particular instruction in these doctrines and precepts in childhood, while the tastes and passions are not under the direction of reason, is calculated to produce opposition or disgust towards them. And this opinion is embraced by some professed believers in revelation, whose views of natural depravity afford them no adequate cause for such opposition or disgust, whenever it is manifested. In every other subject but religion, and in every kind of religion but the true one, the influence of early education and habit is acknowledged to be great and lasting.

“’Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree’s inclin’d.”

This sentiment is universally adopted and acted upon, in the various departments of secular learning and employment. And it must be universally acknowledged that the children

of Hindoo parents and those of Mohammedan parents, uniformly become in the natural course of things, by the influence of early instruction and habit, the confirmed disciples of their respective religions. And must early instruction and habit go for nothing in christianity? It is true that they are less likely to be successful, upon natural principles alone, because the doctrines of the Christian system do not, like those of other religious systems, leave the motives and affections of the heart untouched, or only fall in with the natural course of our evil propensities. But is there not some other ground, on which a Christian education might become equally successful? Though men are never made Christians in heart, merely by a course of early instruction and discipline, independently of the special influences of the Holy Spirit, are they not frequently made so by such a course in connexion with these influences? And would they not uniformly be, if the instruction and discipline in question were not more or less neglected? Is there not fulness and firmness enough in the promise of God, to furnish ground for such an opinion? Can any thing be plainer than the language, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it?" Has not God promised to bless the means of grace, when they are faithfully used? Has he not by a particular covenant given such a promise to faithful parents in relation to their children? May they not plead that covenant with success before the mercy-seat, whenever they perform all their parental duties? And when they are unsuccessful in their plea, is it not because they have broken their part of this covenant, by not performing their whole duty? True it is, that no parent does in fact perform without the least failure his whole duty to his children, and therefore God never bestows the blessings of this covenant on account of any claim founded on such performance. Here is always room, and room enough, for the mercy of God; but this mercy is exercised with so much regard to the terms of his covenant, as to be generally granted in proportion to the various degrees of parental faithfulness. The question respecting the general

result of early instruction in religion, will bear to be examined by a reference to facts. In one of the towns of a neighbouring State, there were admitted into the church, in the course of forty years, five hundred persons, on their giving evidence of being Christians. Of this whole number, more than four hundred and fifty were the children of pious parents; they were dedicated to God in infancy, and were brought up under the influence of Christian instruction. A multitude of similar facts might be collected from those towns, in which parents and ministers and churches are most faithful, in discharging their duty to the rising generation. But enough has already been said, to furnish an answer to the question respecting the probability, that by any thing within the reach of human agency, the future course of a child may be rendered one of true virtue and happiness. After making all proper allowance for peculiar circumstances, we may rest in the conclusion that a good degree of faithfulness in the Christian instruction of a child will render it highly probable that such will be his future course. In other words, an education strictly Christian in childhood, affords the best ground to hope for the fruits of piety in after life.

We come now to several inferences.

I. We may infer that there is great guilt in neglecting the religious instruction of children. If such instruction, when faithfully given, affords so much ground for the expectation, that it will be followed by a holy life and a happy eternity, then it cannot be neglected without incurring great guilt.—The child is naturally ignorant of divine truth, and needs to be taught. He will probably grow up in ignorance, unless he is taught. And from such ignorance, what but evil can be expected? What but an irreligious life and miserable death? The child is prone to go astray, and needs to be led into the path of heavenly wisdom and peace. He will be in imminent danger of wandering from it forever, unless he is led into it in early life. And yet they who should thus teach him and thus lead him,—they who are required to do it, by all that is tender in natural affection, by all that is strong in the claims

of society, by all that is high in the authority of God, and by all that is glorious and all that is dreadful in the decisions of the last day,—they neglect to do it. Is there but little guilt in this? Is there but little to weigh upon the soul in the dying hour? Who can look forward without trembling, to the prospect of being summoned to the bar of God with such guilt?

II. We may infer that it is highly important to give religious instruction to children in the best manner. Much of the efficacy of it depends upon the manner in which it is given. It should be so given as to excite a lively interest in the child, and make on his mind and conscience a deep impression. It should be given affectionately. This is of the utmost importance. The child must see and feel that it is given from the most tender regard to his welfare. It should be given with a plainness and simplicity adapted to the capacities of the child. It should be given with a happy mixture of interesting variety and systematic constancy. It must be accomplished with a mild but decided and uniform government. And it must be enforced by consistency of temper and conduct, in those by whom it is given. Children are eagle-eyed in discovering the want of such consistency. It should be commenced very early, before the memory is pre-occupied, and evil passions are strengthened by exercise. And it should ever be accompanied with humble and fervent prayer, and conducted from the beginning to the end with entire reliance on the grace of God for success.

III. We may infer that it is necessary to raise the standard of religious education above what it has been. If an education in childhood strictly Christian, conducted with all faithfulness, afford good ground for expecting the fruits of piety in after life, what must we conclude from the fact, that there have always been in Christian lands vast multitudes giving no evidence of piety? Can we hesitate to say, that such education has not received the attention demanded by its absolute importance? And ought we not to go further, and say that there has been, in the Christian world, a wrong estimate of its relative importance, among the means of grace?

Has not too little been expected from it? Have not some good men felt too much afraid, that, by being carried to a great extent, it would prepare children to be afterwards deceived, as to their real character in the sight of God, and thus to fill the church with unsanctified members? Have they not been too much afraid, that it would give encouragement to the opinion, that men may be made Christians by education, without the special grace of God? Have not many acted under the impression, that youth is the earliest season, in which religion can be expected to appear, and that religious instruction in childhood must therefore be in a great measure lost? Have they not been contented with providing for the instruction of children, in the various departments of secular learning, and for the various employments of life, and left them to be taught the truth of Heaven, from the pulpit, and by the Spirit of God, in after years? Have not Christian communities left far too much to be done by the public preaching of the Gospel? Have they not in their schools taught their children to burn with the unhallowed fire of lust and pride and revenge, caught from the pages of heathen poets and orators, and then brought them to the house of God, to have the evil, that has been done, counteracted and undone by the purifying and humbling and conciliating principles of Christianity, as they are published from the pulpit? In short, has there not been a great error committed by the Christian world, in regard to the religious education of children? And must not that error be corrected, before the earth can be filled with the knowledge of God? Must not more importance be attached to such education—more relative importance among the various means of grace? Must not the standard of thinking, and feeling, and acting, on this subject, be raised far above what it has been, in the generations that are gone? There must be the breathing of a more benevolent spirit, and the circulating of a warmer interest, through the Christian world, before that day will come when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. A work of immense

magnitude is to be accomplished. And, thanks to the God of truth and grace, it is begun.

IV. We may infer that the Sabbath Schools for children are eminently worthy of support. The whole object of these schools is to give that instruction, which, when faithfully pursued, affords the best ground for the hope, that it will issue in piety here and immortal life hereafter. This system of instruction is becoming one of the great public systems of benevolence peculiar to the age. Its beneficial effects on the parents, and teachers, of the children instructed by it, are often great and lasting, as facts abundantly prove. But I am led by my text, to confine my remarks under this head, to its beneficial effects on the children themselves. In the Sabbath School they are taught their duty to their parents and to society, and to their Maker and Redeemer. And they are taught from the pure word of God. Their memories are stored with its most important truths. Many of its select passages are thus fixed in their minds while they are tender, and will remain there through life, to check them in the hour of temptation, and to cheer them in darkness and sorrow. If so many in past ages have testified, that texts of scripture, impressed on their memories in childhood, kept them afterwards from sleeping the sleep of death, may we not confidently believe that multitudes, in the Sabbath Schools now existing, will testify the same thing, even in eternity to their unspeakable joy? Or is this too much to hope from the two millions now instructed in the schools? Do not the several thousands, that have already become hopefully pious even in childhood, furnish good ground for the belief that a multitude more of them will yet become so? Respecting the effects of the Sabbath School system on the pupils, as members of civil society, we have the testimony of the venerable founder of the system, that out of the three thousand whom he had known, he never met with but one in prison for a crime, though he was for a long time a frequent visiter of prisons and houses of correction. According to the opinion of an eminent writer in England, this system is doing much to-

wards changing the intellectual and moral state of society, in various parts of the British empire. And another writer of respectability in Ireland, affirms, that out of the one hundred and fifty thousand children and seventy thousand adults, that have entered the schools of the Hibernian Society since its formation, he had never heard of one, that, after his education there, had been arraigned for any crime. What, then, my brethren, would soon be the moral condition of any province or nation, if every child were now to become a pupil in the Sabbath School, and were there to be instructed in the principles of the bible, with persevering faithfulness? If this were now to be done throughout the continent of Europe, how long would it be, ere the profane fooleries and insufferable oppressions of popery would pass away, and the reign of darkness and despotism come to an end? If this were now to be done over the whole earth, how many years would elapse, before infidelity, and every false religion, and slavery, and tyranny and war, would cease from under heaven? But, to come nearer home; if every child in this city—or to come nearer still; if every child in this congregation were to be faithfully instructed, from one year to another, in the Sabbath School, in addition to the instructions of parents in the family, and of ministers in the house of God, how soon should we see a generation rising up in the midst of us, to do honour to the religion of the bible by their daily conduct. And how soon too should we find, that the Sabbath School is the nursery of the church. From this beginning, and from what we trust will follow for years to come, we may derive much on which to build the hope that these young immortals will be sanctified through the truth, and thus made useful in Christ's kingdom on earth, and happy at his right hand in heaven. O the bright boundless prospect, that opens before them!—to the eye of faith no visionary scene. Ye, that are parents, see you not in this prospect your children walking in the ways of wisdom and peace through the world, and entering the valley of the shadow of death without fear by the light of Heaven's

lamp, and flying into your arms on the shores of immortality ? Or see you not their little forms, bending over your early grave, with mute and wondering sorrow, till in the desolation of their hearts they remember their bible, and say, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up ?"

Ye, that are teachers, behold in this prospect the reward of your labours. Behold it in the glory with which your pupils shine in the realms of light, and in the grateful smile with which they greet you in happy companies.

Ye, that are members of the church, behold in this prospect, a generation rising up, to keep the fire of devotion burning on this altar, when you are sleeping in Jesus.

Parents, teachers, and members of the church, is there not enough in the prospect before you, to bear you forward with increasing zeal in the work that you have undertaken ? The time given you to perform this work for the young immortals, now on the stage, will be short. Soon will the period for their receiving instruction be gone forever. And soon will it be decided what manner of children they shall be—what shall be their character here, and what their condition hereafter.

V. We may infer that there is much ground to hope for the speedy coming of better days to the church and the world. If the good, flowing from the faithful instruction of children, in the truths of the bible, be as great as represented in this discourse, how wide and lasting must it be, when the full effects of the present extensive and extending system of religious education shall be seen and felt ? These effects are already beginning to appear in the conversion of many parents and teachers and pupils, and in their addition to the multitudes that are giving themselves to the high and holy work of spreading the dominion of righteousness and peace over the world. For several years it has been a common remark, that of the number who have been made followers of Christ, a greater proportion than formerly have been youth, and particularly young men. And from this fact it has commonly

been argued, that God designs to increase the number of active and long-devoted servants, especially heralds of the cross, for the great work of evangelizing the human family, in fulfilment of the predictions of his word. But has not the time come, when we may reason thus from the fact that a far greater number than formerly are brought into the kingdom of Christ in childhood ? Through the blessing of God on the present extending system of religious education, are not armies to be trained up for the conquest of the world ? And is it not by the blessing of God on this system in pagan lands, that a great part of the work of bringing them under the dominion of Christianity is to be accomplished ? Are not children already coming to Christ in the ends of the earth ? From the schools in the West and in the East there comes a cheering answer on the wings of every wind. Are not the rising generation to lead the way into the glories of the millennium ? In that promised flowing of the nations to the mountain of the Lord's house, will not children be foremost, and press forward with the warmest zeal ? Will they not crowd around the chariot of Zion's King, and attend him in his triumphal march, into the New Jerusalem of the latter days, shouting " Hosanna to the Son of David ; hosanna in the highest ?"

SERMON VII.

MARK, xii. 30.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”

THIS commandment the Lawgiver himself denominates the first of all. It is the first in importance. There is no greater commandment than this, Christ himself being judge. In its whole extent it is exceeding broad. It is the fulfilling of the law. It is the spirit of every other commandment—the substance of all the laws of heaven; so much so, that obedience to any of these laws without love, is no obedience. Are we required to live in the fear of God? What fear but that of love? Are we required to offer prayers and praises to God? What prayers and praises but those of love? Are we required to devote ourselves to the service of God? What can this devotedness be but that of love? The command, to love God with all the heart, is a command that covers the whole length and breadth of the divine requirements.

This command is first in the order of nature as well as in importance. If we look at the statutes of Heaven as connected with each other, and arranged according to the particular subject of each, we shall see this at the head as the life-giving root of the whole. Even the command requiring men to acquaint themselves with God, though it may seem to lay the foundation for this, can hardly deserve the precedence; since God has made himself known to men so clearly, that they are not obliged to find him out by their own searching, ere they can be properly required to exercise love to him. If there is a time when by a natural necessity, without any fault

of theirs, they are ignorant of the being and perfections of God, there is a time when no command can reach them and bring them under the obligation of subjects to a moral Governor. But the command to love him comes in force soon as their moral agency and accountability commence.

It is first in the order of time as well as in the order of nature. It is not a dead letter till some other command has been obeyed. It is the opening communication from the throne of the Most High, to the intelligent creatures of Heaven and earth. What communication could he give or they receive previous to this? This is and must be virtually the first declaration, made by the sovereign of the universe, to the subjects of his moral government. He can utter no command before uttering this; they can obey none before this is obeyed.

With these remarks respecting the rank, which this commandment holds in the statute book of Heaven, we are prepared to consider its nature, and some of the supposed difficulties of obeying it.

I. We are to consider the nature of love to God.

It may be observed in this place as a general truth, that the religious affections and exercises of the soul differ from those which are natural, only in their moral character; and this difference lies in the difference of their objects. Fear for instance, is not changed into some other emotion by a change of its object. It does not become no fear, by becoming the fear of God instead of man. Its character becomes holy by its being felt in view of the perfections and claims of Jehovah; but the emotion felt is still that of fear with all its appropriate sensations in the heart and fruits in the life. Faith is not converted into some other exercise of the soul, by having God for its object instead of man. The thing itself is not changed, so as to be no longer faith. It is still the same principle with all its appropriate effects. There is no change but in its object, which gives to it a holy character. So is it with love. It is not converted into some other affection by being exercised towards God. It only becomes holy

by having him for its object. It is still the same principle with its appropriate feelings and actions.

Where then, let me ask, is the difficulty of understanding what is meant by love to God? Is it difficult to understand what is meant by the love of a child to a wise and benevolent parent? I am not speaking of the source of this affection in these two cases, but merely of its nature, as it is exercised, and produces certain appropriate effects on the heart and the conduct.

This leads me to observe,

I. Love to God is an affection of the heart. The heart is the seat of the affections, the spring of voluntary action, the source of good and evil in moral character. That God is able to make laws for the government of the heart as well as the external conduct, and that he has a right to do it, and that it is desirable that he should do it, cannot be denied. There are men, however, who seem to deny that he has done it. They regard the command in the text, and other like commands, as requiring no sensible emotion of the heart, but merely the obedience of a moral agent, choosing to obey because it is fit in the nature of things that he should do it. This is the sentiment of a high-toned philosophy; but it is far too cold and speculative to suit the nature and circumstances of mankind. It is wholly unsuited to become a general principle of conduct, while the constitution of the human mind continues what it now is. Besides, if such obedience, as that referred to, be all that is meant by love to God, why is it called *love*? Why is it ever called any thing but obedience?—not the obedience of a melting and glowing heart, but that of an unaffected and calculating judgment? Why are men, on almost every page of the bible, required to love God, and to love him with all the heart? Why should this language be so constantly used, if it has none of its appropriate meaning, but entirely another meaning, which might have been expressed by language equally appropriate? To say that the word *love*, in all these instances, means no affection of the

heart, is to destroy the humble believer's confidence in the word of God.

There are others that attempt to evade the force of the command in the text, by saying that we love God *in* his creatures. Why then is there added to this command, an express one requiring love to our neighbour, if such love is all that is meant in the former command? If the sentiment of these men be correct, why may it not be so extended, as to make the love of inanimate nature nothing less than love to God *in* his works. Then will many an infidel and profligate, by merely having taste enough to love the beauty of a summer landscape, the grandeur of the ocean, and the glory of the rising and setting sun, deserve to be numbered among the most devoted friends of God.

Others there are, that consider love to God no more than an intellectual discernment of the perfections of God, and a corresponding approbation of them in the conscience. But may not this be found in the vilest of men, and even in apostate spirits, while reason and conscience are permitted to act? May not the majesty and loveliness of the divine character be perceived and felt, without being an object of complacency? May not men, who are themselves destitute of moral excellence, discern and approve of equity and benevolence in a fellow-man? Why then may they not discern and approve of the same attributes, as they exist in their infinite perfection in the character of Jehovah?

If any who now hear me still doubt whether love to God be an affection of the heart, let them look at the dying saint, who remembers his God and Saviour, after every earthly friend is forgotten. Let them look at the life of apostles and martyrs, spent under the full influence of a love, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things; and then say whether that love was not a deep and absorbing affection of the heart. Let them read the glowing language of Paul and David on this subject, and then say whether any language can express strong emotion if this does not? If in a heart panting after God, and a soul thirsting for

God, there be no strong emotion, where can any be found? I would not be thought to intimate, that this fervent language must be adopted in its full extent, before a man can rightly think that he has any love to God. But if love be sincere, it will prompt to language possessing a similarity to this, proportioned in some degree to the strength of that love.

2. A knowledge of the true character of God is necessary to the existence of love to him. We may not be able to determine how extensive or how clear this knowledge must be. A child may love God, while he knows but little more of God than his existence, his goodness and holiness, and his universal providence, and while his conceptions of these things are very imperfect and indistinct. But it may be affirmed without hesitation that some apprehension of the real character of God is necessary to the exercise of that holy love spoken of in the text. How can we love an unknown God? or what will it avail us, to love an imaginary being, whom we may call God, and to whom we may give only such attributes as suit our depraved nature, and leave us at ease in sin? It is the only living and true God—the God of the bible—that we are required to love. Can we then comply with this requirement by loving some other being, or some phantom of our own imagination? Or can we comply with it, without some correct conceptions of the divine character? To know God is so necessary, in order to love him, that we are sometimes commanded to love him by being commanded to know him.

3. Complacency in the character of God is an essential thing in the nature of love to him. We may love the good received from him; we may love our own happiness supremely; but we cannot love God himself, without taking delight in contemplating the perfections of his character. From all his high and holy attributes there must come to us a direct power to excite delightful emotions, just as there comes such a power from the beauty and grandeur of some scene of nature, while we gaze upon it with the certain knowledge that all its loveliness would be the same, though we were not enjoying it. God's benevolence must be the object of com-

placency on account of its intrinsic worth in the Sovereign of the universe. His holiness must be regarded with pleasure, as constituting in himself an infinite distance from all sin, and securing to his kingdom everlasting protection from the evils of its rage uncontrolled. The spirits of heaven, whose hearts are always beating high with love to God, make his holiness the theme of their praises. They cease not to cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts." While their own character continues free from every stain, they cannot but view with delight the infinite purity of the divine character.

4. Love to God includes a benevolent regard to his happiness. God has not made his happiness dependent in any degree on the will of his creatures. He has all its resources within himself—resources that are illimitable in greatness and duration. But we are required to feel a benevolent joy at the thought of its full and everlasting tide. It belongs to the nature of benevolence, to delight in seeing happiness existing according to the capacity for enjoying it. How great then must be its delight in view of the happiness of the infinite Jehovah! It is benevolent to regard with pleasure the happiness, which we have in no way promoted. But we are permitted to be instrumental in illustrating that glory, by which God promotes his own happiness. We are required to please God as Enoch did, by exercising faith, and bringing forth its holy fruits. A child gives delight to a parent, by exercising toward him the confidence of love, and rendering him the obedience of love. And it is with such conduct in men toward their heavenly Father, that he is well pleased. We are therefore bound to regard the Divine Being with a benevolent love, by delighting in his happiness, and by rendering to him that service which is pleasing in his sight.

5. Love to God includes gratitude for personal blessings. To love God for the gifts of his goodness bestowed on us is not inconsistent with loving him for his own inherent excellence. The gratitude of a holy being is not selfish. The grateful emotions, filling the breasts of angels, that ever live

in the light of God's countenance, and drink continually of the pure river of pleasure flowing from his throne, are not waked into exercise merely by the thought of that bliss, which they as individuals receive from him. Their gratitude is a more expansive and disinterested principle. It exists in perfect consistency with the highest degree of complacency in all the divine perfections. They love God for the intrinsic excellence of his character; they love him for that benevolence, which leads him to cause all things to work together for the best good of the universe; and they also love him for the favours conferred on them as parts of the whole. True gratitude to God is no more a sordid and contracted affection in men than it is in angels. We are so constituted that the inherent glory of the Divine Being may be most clearly seen and deeply felt, when with the eye of faith we behold a stream of blessings flowing from it directly to ourselves, and calling for the love of grateful hearts; just as we have the most vivid conception of the inherent glory of the sun, when we see and feel a stream of its enlightening and warming rays poured down upon us.

6. Obedience is an essential thing in love to God. This obedience must indeed be that of the heart. No course of external actions merely, can constitute it. It must also spring from the holy principles and motives of the gospel. Such obedience enters deeply into the very nature of love to God. If such obedience be not found in the life, this love has no place in the soul. It is such obedience that Christ speaks of, when he says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Love to God is not an affection of blind instinct. It is not an involuntary affection, flowing spontaneously from the constitution of our nature, and from our natural relation to our Maker. It is the affection of rational beings—moral agents—accountable subjects of the divine government. It is an established principle—a permanent affection—and not a transient passion. Obedience therefore is the proper way, in which such voluntary love must manifest itself. The good works of a holy life are

as much the necessary fruits of love as of faith. They are as essential to the very existence of the former grace, as they are to that of the latter.

Again,—Love to God implies love to the things that he loves. It implies a complacent regard for the truths of his word, and the ordinances of his house—for the church which he hath purchased with the blood of his Son, and for the glory of his own great name. It also implies a benevolent regard for impenitent and ruined men, and excites to constant efforts for their salvation. Who can sincerely love a God of infinite benevolence—benevolence constraining him to give up to death his only begotten Son for the life of a perishing world—and yet feel no compassion for those who are lying dead in sin at the very gate of life, and lying there under condemnation, while pardon and the rewards of heaven are proffered to them by the hand of God.

Once more.—Love to God must be supreme. If it be less than this, it is not that, which God requires, and has a right to require. His command is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” and he declares that whoso loveth father or mother more than him is not worthy of him. That his claim to the first place, in the hearts of his creatures, is reasonable, can not be denied by any, who remember what he is in himself, and what he is to them. While his moral excellence surpasses in an infinite degree the united excellence of all other beings, it is of all things the most reasonable that we should regard him with supreme complacency. And while he does infinitely more good than all other beings, and bestows on us innumerable more blessings, and offers us infinitely greater, is it not reasonable that our gratitude to him should be supreme?

That love to God should be supreme, is as necessary as it is reasonable. He cannot be loved at all, unless he be loved above every other object. He cannot dwell in the human breast, unless he reigns there; and he cannot reign in the breast, where at the same time an idol is enthroned. Love to God must rise above all other affections, and hold over

them all its high and holy dominion. It must diffuse its spirit through all the moral faculties and propensities of the soul, and extend its power to all the principles and motives of action, and maintain under all circumstances its rightful ascendancy over the heart and the life.

We come now to consider,

II. Some of the difficulties supposed to be in the way of exercising love to God. These difficulties respect not every thing that is called love to God, but that view of this love which has just been given—a view in which it is represented as an affection of the heart, and the predominant one wherever it exists. These difficulties are sometimes thought to render the existence of such love impossible. That they do not, however, may be made evident by a few moments' examination.

I. Love to God is not rendered impossible by his being invisible. What is it that we love in one of the most excellent of our fellow-men? Is it any thing that we can see with our natural organs of vision? Or is it the moral loveliness of the soul—the character of the unseen spirit? Can we exercise no love for the great and good men of distant countries and of former generations? Can we retain no love for our friends, whom we have buried out of our sight? Does all affection for them cease the moment that they are laid in the grave? Or while they live are they loved only when they are in our presence? If a fellow-man can be loved while unseen, and while separate from the body, and far away from the earth, why can not the invisible God be loved, when he is ever near us, and we know that he is, and when we behold on every side such manifestations of his power and goodness, as are best suited to awaken frequent thoughts of him?

If any thing more be wanting to show that it is possible to love God notwithstanding he is invisible, it may be derived from the testimony of a vast multitude, respecting their own experience, confirmed as it is by a corresponding course of conduct. If the declaration of the tongue, confirmed by the whole tenour of the life for half a century, can in any case

prove the existence of love to a fellow-man, must it not in ten thousand cases prove the existence of love to God? Have the men, who walk by faith and not by sight, no principle of strong and undying love, to urge them onward through the midst of labours and dangers and sacrifices? Do they endure all with patience or with triumph, and live as seeing him who is invisible, and do it from respect to the recompense of reward at his right hand, and yet have they no heart to delight in him? Do they not, rather, while thus believing in him, though now they see him not, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?

2. Love to God is not rendered impossible by his infinite greatness. There are those who call it irreverent or enthusiastic, to talk of loving the eternal and incomprehensible Being, who sits on the throne of the universe, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto. They speak of the awe with which the soul should be filled by the majesty of God, and the fear which should be awakened by his justice, and perhaps the confidence that should be produced by his veracity; but they say nothing of the love, that should be excited by his goodness. It is true that we sometimes read and sometimes hear irreverent language on the subject before us—language in which the infinite greatness of the Divine Being is forgotten. But this does not render it improper to use the language of the Bible, which is both reverent and fervent. It is the language of children of God drawn near to him by the cords of love, and yet held in deep awe by the holiness of his nature and the majesty of his throne.

Why is it thought impossible for them to feel such love to God? If we love moral excellence at all, shall we not love it wherever it is seen? If we love it as it exists in a small degree in a child of God on the earth, and as it exists in a higher degree in a saint in heaven, may we not and must we not love it as it exists in an infinite degree in God himself? If it is in our hearts to love holiness and benevolence, we can not but love God.

If the infinite power and majesty of Jehovah did not exist

in connexion with infinite condescension, they might render it difficult if not impossible, for creatures of the dust to exercise love toward him. But this difficulty vanishes when we are assured that the great and terrible God is also the Father of mercies to the children of men—that the High and Lofty One, who inhabits eternity, dwells also with the humble and contrite here upon his footstool.

3. That God is a moral governor does not render it impossible to love him. It has already been observed that true love to God is not a natural affection springing from the physical constitution of a human being, like the natural affection of a child for a parent, but is the voluntary affection of a rational soul and a subject of moral government. This love then may be claimed by laws, enforced by such promises and threatenings, as are necessary to furnish the most powerful motives to obedience. It is true that love cannot be forced into the human heart against its will, by all the majesty of the divine law, and all the terrible array of its penalties. But that will may be changed by the power of motives, which are the only medium of influence in moral government. Where then is the impossibility of loving God because he commands us to do it, when by pouring out upon us and around us all the riches of his goodness he shows us that we ought to do it, and when he has made us capable of doing it, and has set before us his own immeasurable loveliness and our everlasting happiness, to induce us to do it? Will any who go from our world to the last tribunal without love to God, be acquitted there, or in their own consciences, by pleading that love is the free-will offering of the heart, and that they could not exercise it where it was claimed by the solemn prescriptions and denunciations of law?

4. That God is just, as well as merciful, does not render it impossible to love him. Is not that a lovely attribute in a Sovereign, which secures his government from the evils of incorrigible disobedience, by inflicting the proper punishment of such disobedience? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? and be loved for doing right? If he were not immutable in

justice, could we feel that the interests of the universe are safe in his hands? And without this feeling of confidence, could we exercise that of love? I know it has often been said, and correctly said, that the transgressor cannot be driven to love God, by arraying before him the terrors of a righteous judgment, and a world of burning agony and overwhelming despair. But it is equally true, that he cannot be won to the love of God, by the mere force of arguments of kindness multiplied without number. He cannot be won by an exhibition of all the wonders of infinite mercy. If the Spirit of God do not open his heart to receive the truth in love, he can read unmoved the history of redeeming grace; he can hear unmoved the words of life and immortality; he can listen without emotion to the groans and cries of the dying Son of God, and see without emotion the world of glory opened to his view.

Can you not, my hearers, bear testimony to the truth of this representation? Has not the time been, when all the height and depth, the length and breadth, of God's work of redeeming mercy produced no effect on your hearts?—awaked not one emotion of gratitude, not one feeling of penitence, not one purpose of obedience, nor even one thought of holy admiration? And are there not some among you, who to this hour are destitute of the love of God, after all that he has done, from one Sabbath to another, and from year to year, to exhibit before you his boundless love? Have you lived ten, twenty, or fifty years in God's world of heavenly light and hope, and yet never loved him?

In the conclusion of this discourse, let me press home this single inquiry upon your consciences and your hearts. Have you been surrounded by the glory of God in his works, as by the light of the sun, all your days; and yet have not loved him? Have you been borne along, in the midst of ten thousand dangers, by that right hand of his, which rolls forward the earth, and all the worlds of the firmament in their courses; and yet have not loved him? Has he nourished and brought you up as children, and felt for you all the pity, and watched over you with all the care, of a tender father, and

encircled you and crowned you with parental blessings ; and yet have you never loved him ? Has he set before you his own Son crucified for your sins, and poured out upon you his Spirit, and multiplied your means of grace, and called upon you by motives of infinite weight, and entreated, and commanded, and promised like a God ;—and yet have you never loved him ? Has he held open for you the gate of heaven all your days, and pointed you to seats among glorified immortals, whose songs are all the songs of love, and whose raptures are all the raptures of love ;—and yet have you never loved him ? For what then have you been living ? What account can you give of the past ? What hope can you have for the future ? What, O what are your prospects for eternity ? Is there no terror in the thought of spending the rest of your days without love to God, and at death falling into his hands without it ? Is there no anguish in the thought of standing at his bar without it, and lifting up your voices in weeping and wailing, among those who are to be without it for ages without end ? Is there terror—is there anguish in any thought but this ? Listen then, ye prisoners of hope, listen to the voice of infinite mercy—“ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Listen—obey—and live forever.

SERMON VIII.

ISAIAH, 50. 10.

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?—let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

IT is an excellence of the sacred volume, that it contains instructions adapted to every variety of human character and condition, and particularly to all the diversified circumstances in the experience of the child of God. While it addresses to all men a general language suited to all as the dependant creatures of Jehovah, and the erring subjects of his government, it speaks in a more definite manner to each individual, according to his peculiar wants. While it calls upon all to repent, and believe in Christ, and obey his commands, it directs the wise man not to glory in his wisdom, the mighty man not to glory in his might, the rich man not to glory in his riches, the poor to be content, the prosperous to be humble, and the afflicted to trust in God. Thus does the Holy Author of truth give to each one a portion in season, an appropriate warning or exhortation.

The passage just read as the theme of the present discourse, furnishes an example of this adaptation of divine truth to the particular wants of individuals, in the case of a child of God during a season of distressing darkness. In meditating on this passage, three things claim our attention—the character of the man spoken of, his particular situation, and the direction given to him.

Let us contemplate,

I. The character of the man here spoken of:—“Who is

among you, that *feareth* the Lord, that *obeyeth* the voice of his servant?"

There are many, who cannot, with propriety, regard themselves as addressed in this inquiry, for the plain reason, that the traits of character, here marked out and made prominent, are not to be found in them. They give lamentable proof, that they have not the fear of God before their eyes; and live in open and uniform violation of his laws. Though they are surrounded by his presence, and by countless manifestations of his goodness and glory—though they are powerless in his hand, and naked before his eye, and are passing swiftly through their few days of trial on earth to his righteous judgment seat in eternity, they can cast off the fear of him, and tell the world by their conduct that they would not have him to reign over them. To such men the word of God brings from heaven, a message far different from that contained in the encouraging exhortation, with which the text is concluded. The inspired prophet, as he contemplates the multitude around him, overlooks men of this description, and searches for those of the opposite character. He enquires for an individual. "Who is among you, that *feareth* the Lord, that *obeyeth* the voice of his servant?"

In the first place, who is the man that fears God? How is he distinguished from others? By what particular marks may he be known? What is the habitual disposition of his heart, and the tenor of his life? What are the governing principles of his conduct? I speak not now of the man, who is under the dominion of that fear, which is without love, and without enjoyment. I speak not of the man, who, with a heart supremely devoted to earthly idols, trembles at that power of a jealous God, which is arrayed against him, and can at any moment tear away from him these objects of trust, or make him at all times miserably sensible of their vanity. I speak not of him, who, in the proud spirit of rebellion, and with a supreme concern for his own personal interests, regards the Almighty as the tyrant of the universe instead of the merciful father; and quakes with dread at the majesty of his throne, only be-

cause he cannot overturn it, and has not the heart to bow in submission before it. Nor do I speak of him, who, with the burden of unrepented and unforgiven sin pressing heavily on his soul, and with "a certain, fearful looking-for of future judgment" sending to his heart a thrilling sense of present anguish, is filled with terror at the thought of that righteous Being, in whose hands are the destinies of the life to come. The fear of God that reigns in the breast, resembles that of an affectionate and dutiful child towards a wise and benevolent father. It is indeed more exalted, and has in it far more of the awful in reverence, it being raised and ennobled by the infinite superiority of its object; but still it possesses much of the same gentleness of love, and simplicity of confidence. He that lives under the controlling and directing influence of this fear, is not incapable of approaching the mercy-seat with holy boldness in the name of his divine Mediator, and enjoying intimate communion with God in the various exercises of heartfelt devotion. His fear does not drive him away from God. It does not render God an object unpleasant to his thoughts. And even when it takes possession of his whole soul, it does not banish the light and peace and joy derived from the divine presence. It does not diminish these blessings. Nay—it produces the opposite effect. And why should it not, when it becomes deeper in the good man as he grows better, and is deepest in the most eminent saint? Why should it not, when in its purity it lives and is active in the breasts of glorified spirits, in the world of perfect light, and peace, and joy, before the throne of God, and is most powerful in the highest and holiest of his angels? Heaven is filled with the fear of God. Not a single being there is delivered from it; not one wishes to be. Bright and burning seraphs veil their faces before their King, in token of the profoundest awe; and over all the multitude of saints and angels, even in the height of their raptures, amid their songs and shouts, there reigns the solemnity of deep and unmingled reverence. No one casts off the fear of God; and no one is unhappy under its mighty influence. It prompts none to keep at a distance from God,

or to seek a hiding place from his eye, or to escape from the society and the region, in which its power is so great. If then it exists in the sinless spirits above, in connexion with the highest degree of love to God, and delight in him, why should it not exist in the same connexion in the imperfect children of God on earth? In the latter, indeed, it is often alloyed by a mixture of that slavish dread "which hath torment;" but, in itself, it is essentially the same in them, that it is in the former. Though it is here called into exercise by some things that are unknown in heaven, such as temptations to sin, and the circumstances attending this state of trial, still it is the same in its nature as a principle of conduct. It springs from a view of the perfections of God, of his right to reign, and of the excellence of his government—from a supreme regard to his authority, to his glory, and to the best interests of the universe, and leads to sincere obedience, and faithfulness in his service. While delight in God has in it all that is tender and ardent in the *feeling* of love, the fear of God has in it all that is exalted and steadfast in the *principle* of love." "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil"—and "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

The man who is habitually under the influence of this fear,—who, in company and in solitude, in his hours of business and of leisure, always remembers his Maker's claims to his affections and services, and is tremblingly sensible of the greatness of that power, the purity of that holiness, and the strictness of that justice, by which he is to be judged at last, is afraid of transgressing, and thus grieving away the Spirit of mercy, and bringing barrenness and death into his soul. He is on the watch against the approach of temptation; and he is armed to meet the enemy. He walks humbly before God. He walks cautiously amid the snares of the world. He ventures not upon forbidden ground, in the spirit of self-confidence, nor seeks for opportunities to show the strength of his virtue. He possesses a tender conscience, always awake, and alive to the honour of God. He has a moral sensibility that shrinks at the sight of evil, and is pained at its approach. He

lives in some measure as seeing him who is invisible. He lives soberly, righteously, and godly. With a heart overflowing with holy love and confidence, he goes forward in a constant course of watchfulness and active obedience.

This remark brings us to consider the second grand trait in the character of the man described in the text. "Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that *obeyeth* the voice of his servant?"

If the word *servant* refer to the prophet, obedience to the commands of God must still be intended in the passage, since the prophet was inspired and commissioned as a messenger from heaven, to declare divine truth in the name of God. But there is reason to regard Christ as the servant here spoken of. The fact that Christ had not yet appeared in the flesh, and with his own lips published the requisitions of his gospel, is not an insuperable objection to the opinion that he is the servant spoken of in the text. There are other parts of the Old Testament, in which men are commanded to obey Christ—to love him, and trust in him. In the second psalm, which is often quoted by the evangelists and apostles as written concerning Christ, it is said, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

The Son of God made known his truth to patriarchs and prophets by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by conversing with them as the Angel of God, and sometimes by speaking of himself in their persons, and declaring his will as if it were their own. To obey this divine Servant of the Lord, is to repent of sin, and believe in him as the only Saviour of the soul, and perform all the particular duties involved in these two grand requirements of the gospel. Such obedience the reigning Redeemer has peculiar right to demand, of the lost sinners, for whom he has died. In addition to his high claims upon them as their benevolent Creator and Preserver, he has others of infinite weight, derived from all that he has done as their Deliverer, from the chains of eternal despair. If all the

righteousness and majesty and holiness of his throne furnish abundant reasons for his claims to their affections and services, how are these reasons doubled by all the condescension and mercy and dying love of his cross. These reasons commend themselves to the conscience of the sinner; and it is not for want of a just degree of strength, if they do not subdue the rebellion of his heart. By his very constitution, as a moral and accountable agent he is made capable of rendering a willing obedience to the requirements of the gospel. All the motives presented in the gospel, are just such, as are best calculated, to win him to obedience. But with all this ability to obey, and all these motives to obedience, he continues to transgress, till he is brought into willing subjection, by the divine Spirit, in the day of his power. He now takes the laws of Christ to be the rules of his conduct. From day to day he does this thing and that, because Christ commands him to do it. He no longer governs his life by the maxims and principles of an ungodly world, but by those which will bear the scrutiny of the Searcher of hearts and the test of the final judgment. It is his high aim, to act always with supreme reference to the authority of the King of Righteousness, and bring every thought and feeling and imagination into sweet subjection to the Prince of Peace. He endeavours to live in such a manner, as to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. The common relative duties of social life, he performs with as strict a regard to the divine commands, as he does those that are more sacred to special occasions, and have the Divine Being more directly for their object. And in every thing that he does, he feels his accountability to the great Lawgiver and Judge of the universe and his obligation to glorify him.

Having now before us a brief and general description of the man, who fears God and obeys the Gospel of his Son, we are prepared to contemplate,

II. His particular situation, as spoken of in the text—"that of one walking in darkness and having no light."

Though the darkness here mentioned, may be considered

so general, as to include any severe calamity or affliction which the righteous have to endure, yet in the language of the text, as a whole, there is sufficient peculiarity, to justify its being applied, with special force, to that state of mind, in which the light of God's countenance is hidden, and the sensible manifestation of his presence and favour is withdrawn. To this particular application the present discourse is designed to have a prominent reference.

When a child of God falls into open and gross sin, and then lives in neglect of the duties of the closet and the ordinances of the sanctuary, or observes them without the spirit of devotion and without any relish for them, we are not surprised to see him walking in spiritual darkness, without the light of the divine presence, and without the smile of a reconciled Father. This is what we expect to see in such circumstances. This is what we wish to see, as the effect of such grievous backsliding. We think it much more in his favour, to behold him cast down in spirit, and enveloped in darkness, during his departure from God, than to behold him cheerful and confident. But the case, here introduced, is not the one contemplated in the text ; for to a man so deeply fallen, the proper direction, instead of being the encouraging one, ' Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay himself upon his God,' is rather the alarming one. Let him repent, and weep in bitterness of soul, and break off his sins by righteousness, and return unto the Lord, that iniquity be not his ruin. The man spoken of in the text, is represented as in a state of distressing darkness, at the time that his habitual course of conduct, notwithstanding many imperfections, is such as to show, that he is living in the fear of God, and in obedience to his requirements. This is not a case introduced by the sacred prophet as a mere supposition. It is one that often exists in real life ; as the private history of good men, in every age of the church, clearly shows. It is found in some part of almost every example of such history. Many of the most eminent saints have for a season felt themselves forsaken of God, and left to mourn the loss of spiritual light and enjoyment.

David often laments, in strains of the deepest and tenderest sorrow, the hidings of God's countenance, and the departure of his Spirit ; and Job, at a particular period of his life, when overwhelmed with outward calamities, mourns over his desertion by God, as an additional stroke, too heavy to be borne. He cries out in the bitterness of his grief, " 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, that I cannot see him." Many remarkable instances, of similar desertion, might be adduced from the lives of devoted Christians—such as Baxter, Cowper, Scott, Brainerd, and Bellamy. Instances of a less striking character are frequently occurring, within the reach of common observation, and within the limits of each particular church. Perhaps, indeed, there are but few Christians, who have been such for any considerable number of years, without suffering some distressing interruption in their enjoyment of God's gracious presence, and walking for a time in cheerless darkness. Happy beyond the common lot is the child of God, whose sky is never clouded, and whose path is always enlightened by the Sun of Righteousness.

Respecting the nature of that spiritual darkness, through seasons of which so many of the heirs of heaven are called to pass in their pilgrimage below, it may be sufficient to remark, that it consists essentially in the loss of that happiness, which springs from the hope of God's present and everlasting favour, and in a deep enduring sense of that loss. In this respect, it is the same in all instances ; while, in other respects, it varies, in some degree, according to the various causes producing it, and the various circumstances with which it is attended. Some of these causes and circumstances are, the kind of education, mode of life, constitutional temperament, overwhelming affliction, error in doctrine, strong temptation, the malice of Satan, and the sovereign will of God for the trial of faith. This variety of causes and circumstances re-

quires a corresponding variety of particular directions ; but does not destroy the propriety, nor lessen the importance, of others that are general. Such there are in the sacred volume ;— those that are adapted to every humble and obedient child of God, who, from any cause, and under any circumstances, is walking in spiritual darkness.

This brings us to contemplate,

III. The direction given to him in the text,—“ Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

While the thoughtless men of the world, and even its sober moralists, direct the desponding Christian, to seek relief in the noise and hurry of business with its multitude of cares, or amid the exhilarating sights and sounds of pleasure, and while the philosopher directs him to his own resources in the pride of his fallen nature, the inspired prophet gives him the far different direction now before us. While one voice invites him this way, and another that, into promised regions of light and joy, and a third bids him stand still and suffer with a stoical apathy, a voice from heaven calls upon him, to look up with holy confidence to the throne of the Most High. Whatever may be the occasion of his sad despondency, let him listen to this voice of love divine, and he cannot fail of finding relief, in the return of his hopes and joys. “ Let him trust in the name of the Lord.” Let him confide entirely in the power, and wisdom, and goodness, of his Father in heaven. Let him believe with all his heart when he cannot see, and love when he cannot rejoice, and serve when he cannot hope. Let him give up himself, and all his interests, into the hands of the great and glorious Jehovah, without a doubt respecting the rectitude of his government, or a murmur against the chastisement of his providence, or a fear for the consummation of all things in the highest good of the universe. Let him not faint, and sink in despair :—“ let him stay himself upon his God.” Let him lean for support on the arm of the Almighty ; and cast his whole burden upon it ; and pour out his sorrows before the eye of infinite mercy ; and look, and watch, with anxious longing, for the smile of everlasting

love. Let him not yield for a moment to the suggestion, that God has forgotten to be gracious—that he in anger has shut up his tender mercy, and will be favourable no more.

Let him trust in that mercy which is free as the light, rich as heaven, and lasting as eternity. While he feels the loss of spiritual comfort, and mourns over it, he surely has no reason to think himself given up to a reprobate mind, and to the horrors of unpardonable guilt. Why should he regard his crimes as too great to be forgiven, when he knows that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that there are already, among the ransomed and glorified immortals of heaven, some that were once transgressors as vile as himself? Let him trust in God in the faithful use of the means of grace. Let him not neglect the bible, as a sealed book; nor open it only to find bitter things against himself. Let him not close his eyes against every ray of light, and turn a deaf ear to every word of consolation. Let him not envelope himself in a thicker cloud, and increase his distance from the Sun of Righteousness, by shutting himself away from the privileges of Christian intercourse and public worship. Let him not refuse to come to the consecrated table of the Lord, from the fear of a fatal unworthiness. In his attendance to the means of grace, and the duties of religion, let him be governed by principle instead of feeling. Let him not cease to pray, when he feels no delight in prayer. On the contrary, let him pray with more fervency and perseverance, till his heart grows warm, and his importunity prevails. The devotions of the closet, and the services and ordinances of the sanctuary, he is not at liberty to neglect, because he has lost for a while the sensible manifestation of the divine blessing. His course is marked out for him by the hand of God; and, in that must he walk without fainting or wandering. No darkness that he may find, no coldness that he may feel, no want of enjoyment that he may experience, can justify him in departing from it.

Finally,—Let him trust in God in a course of active benevolence. Committing himself entirely, with his own peculiar wants and sorrows, into the hands of his merciful Father, and leaving all there in the forgetfulness of implicit confidence, let him expend his thoughts, and feelings, and time, and talents, in supplying the wants and relieving the sorrows of others. Let him diligently employ the passing hours in doing good, and forget the past. Let him press forward in pursuit of hope, instead of looking back for this heavenly companion, or idly waiting for her return. She forsook him while he slept, or wandered, or fainted. If he would find her again, let him not run back, and search the ground that he has gone over, but press forward, and double his speed, to regain lost time ; and soon the glimmering of her distant lamp shall greet his longing eye and cheer his benighted soul. Her perfect light shall ere long shine around him, if he stray not, nor slumber, nor grow weary again. Or rather, if he would regain lost hope, let him not make her the direct object of pursuit, but pray and act, and she will come unsought ; the timid angel will then quickly return ; for prayer and action are the wings of hope.

Let him thus go forward in the path of duty ; and, after the trial of his faith, he shall come forth as gold seven times purified. This remark is warranted by christian experience. An eminent minister of Christ, was once, for a considerable season, in such deep spiritual darkness, as to give up all hope of the forgiving mercy of God and the happiness of an eternity in his presence. This was after he had been for some years a faithful and successful preacher of the gospel, and had given to all around him the best evidence of his being in reality a follower of Christ. He came however to the conclusion that he was a self-deceiver, and should finally be a cast-away. His inquiry now was, What shall I do the rest of my days on earth ? In what manner shall I spend them ? Shall I now give myself up to the pursuit of earthly vanities, and abandon the service of God ? Shall I no longer make any attempt to

glorify him? What other object can I propose to myself worth living for? Will it not be at least as well for me in the end, to continue steadfast through life in his service, as to desert it for the service of Satan? My resolution then is formed—I will preach the gospel faithfully till death, and leave the eternal interests of my soul in the hands of God, and then if I go down to hell, I shall have the satisfaction of looking upward and seeing others going to heaven, who were directed thither by my hand. In consequence of his acting in accordance with this resolution, his darkness soon vanished, and light divine broke in upon his soul. But if in the case of any desponding saint this happy result be long delayed, let him not cease to trust in the wisdom, rectitude, and infinite benevolence of God. Let him trust and trust till death. Let his constant language be, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”—though he strip me of every earthly good, and then hide his face from me, yet “why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”—Let him take to his heart the consolation of the full assurance, that whatever may become of him, there will always be a God—there will always be a God of goodness and glory, on the throne of the universe; and he will always have an innumerable company of holy and happy beings, to live in his presence, enjoy his smiles, perform his commands, and sing his praises. I would not, for the world, lift my finger against the government of such a God;—no, I would not, though it were to raise me to the rank of an archangel. Let God reign; let his will be done; let his name be glorified; and it is enough.

If such be the language and spirit of the Christian in the time of darkness, he will soon be brought into a region of light—he will have light through his pilgrimage below, and light at the end, in the dark valley of the shadow of death; or if not, let him trust in God entirely, and trust on through every trial till death, without wavering and without abandon-

ing the service of God, and when this transient night of darkness is past, and the morning of eternity has come, and poured full day on all the works and ways of the Most High, he will be satisfied, and more than satisfied, as he awakes in a world of perfect light—in the general assembly of the sons of light—and in the unveiled presence of the God of light.

SERMON IX.

MATTHEW, xi. 28.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.”

THESE memorable words of Christ were addressed to the great multitude, in distinction from the twelve apostles, and from the scribes and Pharisees. Taken in connexion with the context and other passages, they bring to view the easy requirements of the gospel, and exhibit them in strong contrast with the burdensome rites of Judaism as it then existed. The service enjoined by the scribes and Pharisees, is here represented as a miserable bondage, while that of Christ is a happy freedom; and the text is an affectionate and earnest invitation, to leave their service for his, on account of this difference. “Go not after them,” says the compassionate Redeemer according to the full import of this invitation, “Go not after them, for they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers”—“but come unto *me* all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest; take *my* yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is *easy* and my burden is *light*.”

Such is the particular course of reasoning, in which the text occurs as it was originally spoken. But this reasoning, instead of limiting the invitation of the text to that class of persons to which it was first given, clearly implies its extension to all others in circumstances sufficiently similar to render it applicable. Though it was given with primary refer-

ence to those, that were burdened by the ceremonial observances, imposed with intolerable severity by the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, yet the nature of it, viewed in connexion with the character and divine mission of its Author, leaves no room to doubt, that it may be extended as far as any occasion for it is to be found among the children of men. But where shall we look, to find no occasion for it? Where shall we look for the persons, to whom it cannot with propriety be addressed? If there be any, who have no burden of grief or of guilt to be removed, no wounds of the heart to be healed, no tumult of contending passions to be hushed to peace, no tears to be wiped away, no sins to be forgiven, and no soul to be saved, they have no need to listen to this invitation. They can lose nothing by turning a deaf ear to it. They can gain nothing by accepting it. Indeed they cannot accept it. If there be any in this house, who have no need of divine light, to guide them through this wilderness, and through the dark valley at the end; and no need of divine strength, to sustain them under the weight of earthly trials, to deliver them from spiritual foes, and give them the victory in the hour of death; and no need of divine grace, to procure their justification at the judgment of the great day, and introduce them into the abodes of endless rest, I may venture to say of such, that the invitation before us is no message from God to them. The Saviour is not now speaking to them. Indeed they have no Saviour. They have no interest in the redemption of the Son of God;—no place in his heart of infinite mercy. He thought not of them, when he came down from heaven. He felt not for them, when he agonized in Gethsemane. He shed not one drop of blood for them, when he hung on Calvary. And when he rose from the dead, and ascended on high, he opened no bright pathway, for them to follow him, from the tomb to the skies. But beings so free from the burden of sin, with its present and future miseries, as to need no relief from the divine Redeemer, are not to be found in this assembly, nor in any other that can be gathered on the face of the earth. The invitation of the text may therefore be

given to all the members of the human family; during the whole of their mortal life; and it is at this time given to all that hear it. On whatever shore the herald of the cross may land, to whatever tribe he may go between the rising and setting sun, he may proclaim it on every side in the name of Jesus; and it will ere long be proclaimed in every valley and on every mountain of our world, as it is this day proclaimed wherever the gospel is preached. The Son of God will soon lift up a standard for the nations, and call them to himself from the ends of the earth; as he now stands with open arms, saying in accents of melting benevolence, to those within the sound of his voice, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest."

In further discoursing upon these words, it is my design, to explain the import of the invitation, and the nature of the promise, which they contain.

I. I am to explain the import of the invitation, *to come to Christ.*

This may be done indirectly, by showing in a direct manner what it is to comply with it. And though by viewing the subject in this *attitude*, our attention may seem to be turned from Christ as speaking, and fixed on ourselves as hearing, yet the subject may be so viewed with the most immediate interest, since compliance with what we hear is our greatest duty and privilege.

What then is it to come to Christ? To answer this question, is to answer the most important one, that can be asked in our world. It is to tell how depraved and ruined men may obtain deliverance from the bonds of iniquity, and the chains of everlasting despair. It is to tell them by what means they may find that joy of reconciliation to God, which nothing in life or death can destroy; and which will be consummated in a happiness, great as the soul can contain, and eternity can yield. It is to tell them, what it is to enter the path, and the only path, that leads away from earth and hell to the world of glory.

The expression "to come to Christ," like its equivalent "to follow Christ," in its original and literal use denoted the external act of forsaking home and secular employment, and attending his person in his ministrations of mercy from one village to another. At the commencement of his public life as a preacher, he required this service of a chosen few, that by his constant instructions, he might fit them to go forth as his apostles. But this external act was not even then all that was meant by coming to him. It was only the visible part by which the whole was signified. It implied all that has ever since been necessary to make men his sincere disciples. Whenever it existed alone, it was the shadow instead of the substance. Though Christ declared, "He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," the scribes and Pharisees, and many others, who frequently resorted to him, and accompanied him, from unhallowed motives, were cast out as hypocrites. The phrase "coming to Christ" soon lost a part of its literal meaning, being used to express the act of waiting on his ministry as opportunity occurred, and believing in him as the Messiah, without attending his person, as he went about doing good, through the cities and villages of Israel. After his ascension it became wholly figurative, being used to express only the act of becoming a sincere convert to his religion. It is hardly necessary to add, that this has since been, and is now, and ever will be, the whole of its meaning.

But it is necessary to explain more particularly what is implied in becoming a true convert to Christianity, or in coming to Christ in this sense of the term.

In coming to Christ it is implied,

1. That we are sensible of our natural distance from him.

No time can now be spent in proving, that by nature we are in a state of distance from him—in a state of spiritual darkness and death, under the dominion of other lords, giving our supreme attention to other objects, and loving them with our whole heart,—putting our trust in other refuges, looking to other sources of happiness, and devoting ourselves to the service of other masters. The proof of this fact exists on

every page of the bible, and in the testimony of every conscience. Of this fact we can have no sincere doubt. But it is necessary that we do more than believe it, as we do many other facts in the natural and moral world, with which we have little or no concern as probationers for eternity. We cannot be safe in a state of insensibility respecting it. We cannot safely shut our eyes against it, and turn them to some more flattering sight, nor fix them upon it with an idle curiosity, or with the blank gaze with which we fix them on vacancy. We must look upon it with the trembling concern, with which we should look on a wound that may never be healed, or on the darkness of a night that may never end, or on the horrors of a dungeon that may never be opened. If it be an undeniable truth, that while unregenerate we are far off from Christ, it is a truth that we must not merely believe; we must understand its real meaning, and feel its full power. We must be deeply sensible that we are not true disciples of Christ, and heirs with him to an incorruptible inheritance, merely because we behold the light and breathe the air of a Christian land, and live in the uninterrupted enjoyment of the various means of grace,—nor merely because we profess to be such, and perform some of the outward duties required of such,—nor merely because Christ has died for us, and rendered it possible for a righteous God to save us. The strong conviction must be fastened on our minds, that we are naturally destitute of the pure and the benevolent spirit of Christianity, and averse to many of its humbling doctrines and precepts, and uninterested in its exceedingly great and precious promises. The glorious views of God which the gospel gives, the holy affections which it enkindles, and the sublime hopes which it inspires, are not possessed and cherished by us, while we are in the state of unregenerated nature. It is therefore of vital importance, that all our sensibilities should be awake to the solemn truth, that we may be excited to inquire what we shall do. We shall never begin the work of coming to Christ, till we are tremblingly sensible of our natural distance from him. See our distance we must, and fee!

the guilt and danger of it, or we shall never take the first step in the way to Christ.

In coming to Christ it is implied,

2. That we are sensible of our absolute need of him.

This is the second step to be taken. It is sufficiently distinct from the first, to claim our particular attention. The first may be taken ; and the second may follow, or may not. Infidels, and scoffers, and many others, may be convinced of their distance from Christ, and glory in it, or think lightly of it. They may not feel the need of coming to him. They may be fully persuaded that they are not the real followers of Christ, and yet be not deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of becoming such. They may sometimes discover so much of their guilt and danger, as to acknowledge the expediency of doing it, and still feel not the weight of obligations and the impulse of motives, springing from the fact that Christianity is not merely a thing of convenience, favourable to human virtue and happiness, and more so than any other religion, but an exclusive system for the recovery of fallen men, and their deliverance from destruction. If the religion of Christ be of divine origin, it is the only one that is so ; for such it claims to be ; and, coming from the God of truth, it cannot claim to be what it is not. It is a religion, not merely convenient for men in time, but necessary for them in eternity. If the name of Christ deserve any regard, it must be regarded as the only one under heaven, by which we can be saved. If we come to Christ at all, we must come to him as the only Saviour of lost men. If we come to him for any thing, we must come for eternal life. We must feel, that, while away from him, we are perishing in spiritual darkness and bondage, and that none but he can bring us to the light and freedom of immortality. Sensible of our natural blindness and enmity to the revealed system of truth, respecting the dispensation of God towards our world, we must be equally sensible of our need of divine teaching. To sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him, is a duty, that we cannot refuse to perform, without remaining in fatal ignorance. To look to

him for the mild graces and exalted hopes of his religion, to make our way through life a way of pleasantness and peace, and to sustain us in the last sinking hour, is a privilege that cannot be neglected, without losing infinite good. The absolute necessity of his atoning blood, to provide for the regeneration of our natures, the pardon of our sins, and the rescue of our souls from merited perdition, must be deeply and permanently felt. The fullest conviction of this truth, must lie at the foundation of all our views, respecting our state and prospects, as subjects of the divine government. If we overlook this truth for a moment, the light shed on the ways of God to men becomes darkness. If we attempt to reason on our relations to the divine Being, without bringing this truth into the account, we can only reason ourselves into despair.

That the Son of God, in all the offices which he sustains in the work of redemption, is just such a mediator as the various necessities of men require, must not merely be adopted as an article of our creed. There must be a deep sense of its practical bearing on us as individuals, or we shall never receive him as our prophet to pour divine light on our minds, and our priest to offer sacrifice and intercession for us, and our king to establish within our hearts and over our lives a reign of righteousness and peace. Who will come to Christ, till he feels himself in the utmost need of such a Saviour, as Christ is revealed to be? Who will come to Christ for salvation, till he is convinced that he is otherwise a ruined immortal? Who will grasp at the proffered hand of Christ, and cry, "Lord, save me," till he feels himself ready to perish? If there remain in our breasts a secret hope, that all will be well with us at last, though we never fly to Christ, that hope, however faint it may be, will be enough to keep us from him forever. Away, then, with every such hope! Perish we must without a personal interest in the salvation of Christ. If the ills of a few fleeting days on earth can be borne, can we be delivered from the woes of an undone eternity? What shall we do without an Almighty Redeemer, when our spirits are separated from our bodies by a power over which we have no control, are cast into the

hands of our righteous Judge, and are borne into that unseen world, in which we can have no agency in determining, where shall be the place of our abode, and what shall be our employment? Shall we not stand in the utmost need of Christ to take our spirits to heaven at death, to raise our bodies in glory on the morning of eternity, to appear as our Advocate at the last tribunal, and finally to present us spotless and blameless before the throne of his Father, and cause us to shine forth as the sun in his everlasting kingdom? If so absolute will be our need of Christ hereafter, can we now be insensible to it, and not be in imminent danger of losing all the happiness of an indissoluble union to him, and bringing upon ourselves all the misery of eternal banishment from him?

In coming to Christ it is implied,

3. That we mourn over our natural distance from him.

We shall come to the Redeemer without any errand, unless we feel that we have sins to be forgiven, and washed away; and we shall come equally in vain, if we indulge a disposition to retain, extenuate, or cover them, instead of freely confessing them, and lamenting them bitterly, and entirely forsaking them. But all our sins are included in the fact of our distance from Christ. We are just as far from perfect holiness as we are from him. To mourn over the want of holiness, is to mourn over the want of nearness to him. It is to mourn over our natural hatred of the light of his glorious gospel, and disobedience to its requirements, and destitution of his own moral likeness. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." We shall never come to Christ in sincerity, unless our spirits are subdued with grief in view of our wandering from him. Would the return of the prodigal son have been any thing but hypocrisy or selfishness, unless his soul had been filled with penitential sorrow, for his wicked departure from his father? What have we to do at the foot of the cross, or before the mercy-seat, but to prostrate ourselves in the dust, and bring down all our lofty imaginations, and pour out the sorrows of a broken heart? How can we become the followers of the meek and lowly Redeemer,

without being humbled and melted in penitence, that we have not always been such ? How can we become his friends, without sincere and lasting contrition for having been his enemies ? How can we fix on him a look of delight or hope, with eyes that never shed one tear of heart-felt grief for our countless offences against him ?

In coming to Christ it is implied,

4. That we put our whole trust in him.

We must have a full and active belief in the truth of his declarations, respecting things that have been, and things that shall be, which are now beyond the reach of our senses. We must have entire confidence in the sufficiency of that sacrifice which he has once offered, and that intercession which he makes continually, for the pardon of transgressors. And we must have the same confidence in the power of the Spirit, sent down by him, to give light to the blind, and life to the dead. The firm persuasion, that no one who comes to him shall be cast out, must have an abiding place in our minds. Doubt of his ability and willingness to save to the uttermost must be banished. We must also depend entirely on him for all that is necessary, to secure our personal interest in the blessings of his full and free salvation. What will it profit us, to receive him as a Saviour but in part, by seeking for only a part of the blessings of his salvation, or by depending on him in seeking them all, no farther than to make up some deficiency in our own exertions. What will it avail us to look to him for deliverance from the woes of the bottomless pit when we die, unless we look to him for deliverance from the bonds of iniquity while we live ? Of what avail can it be, to trust in him, to take us to heaven hereafter, unless we trust in him to fit us for heaven now ? Or what good can result from attempting, independently of him, to work out a righteousness upon natural principles, in order to recommend us to his favour, and dispose him to complete what we have begun ? Can we enter the path of life, and walk onward a while, before we submit to his guidance ? Can we rise half way to heaven ; and then cast ourselves into his hands, to be borne

through the other half? No, brethren; our trust in the Son of God must be entire, or it is vain. He will be all in all to us, or nothing. The attention of the redeemed on high, must never be divided, between the glory due to him, and that due to themselves. Their song must be one forever. Our present trust in the Redeemer must therefore be single and entire. We are not at liberty even to ask, or to cherish an inclination to ask, whether there may not be some ground of hope, besides that of simple reliance on Jesus of Nazareth.

In coming to Christ it is implied,

5. That we give him our whole heart.

This is what he claims of us; and this claim, high as it is, cannot be proved unreasonable, while we retain the faculties of moral agents, and he continues unchangeable in the perfections of his character, and the principles of his government. He has revealed himself as a Being worthy of all that devotedness of heart which he claims. Obligations and motives of infinite weight press upon us, to call forth all that love of gratitude, and all that love of moral delight, which he requires. He does not require that we love no other being at all. But he requires that our direct love to him be supreme, and that our love to other beings be in direct love to him, by being exercised in conformity to his will, and with an ultimate regard to his glory, and this is loving him with all the heart. Less than this he cannot require, and be just to himself, and to the universe for which he acts. Less than this as a living principle we cannot possess, and yet be his followers. He must be to us the chief among ten thousands, and the one altogether lovely. A sweet sense of delight in him must pervade our souls. We must take delight in contemplating the perfections of his character and the wonders of his redemption,—in holding communion with him, and imitating his example of purity and benevolence. We must delight in his truth, in his worship, in the various institutions of his religion, in his people, in the spread of his gospel, and the increase of his kingdom and visible glory. Thus will it be manifested that our hearts are fixed on him, and our lives hid

with him in God, and our souls united to him so firmly, that we shall grow into his likeness, and appear with him in glory at his final coming. What shall break the cords of love that have once bound us to Christ ? Nothing here, or hereafter.

In coming to Christ it is implied,

6. That we devote our all to his service.

We are his property by creation ; and all our temporal blessings are the gifts of his goodness. But we are his by a higher claim, founded on the work of redemption. If we would enjoy the eternal blessings of his redemption, we must acknowledge this claim, by making a voluntary consecration of ourselves and our possessions to his reasonable service. We must acknowledge that we are not our own, but are bought by the Son of God with the price of his heart's blood, and are therefore under infinite obligation to present to him our body and spirit as a living sacrifice, and devote to him our time, and talents, and substance. To do this, it is not necessary, that every moment of life, and every faculty of body and mind, and every article of property, should be employed in doing direct acts of service to him in his church ; but it is necessary, that all should be used in that obedience to his various commands, by which he is glorified. Christ is served when he is obeyed. If all that we do, be done in conformity to his will, it is enough. It must be remembered, however, that it is a part of his will, that we should make constant sacrifices and exertions, for the direct purpose of building up his kingdom in the world. Be his followers then we cannot, without a heart to do this. The fruits of repentance, and faith, and love, must appear in the various good works of devotion and benevolence, or we are far from him, and are going farther continually, and thus diminishing the probability that we shall ever come to him, and prepare to spend our eternity in his presence.

What I have to say, respecting the import of the invitation in the text, is now finished.

II. I am to explain the nature of the *rest* that is here promised.

Only a few prominent things in this rest can now be brought into view. It begins with deliverance from the burden of guilt at the foot of the cross, when the heart is first melted into penitence, and the tumult of doubts and fears is hushed into the calm of faith, and the gentle reign of love is set up in the breast, and the peace of reconciliation to God is shed abroad in the soul. At the foot of the cross, the Christian enters the way of humble and holy obedience to the gospel and runs on and is not weary, and walks on and is not faint, carrying with him a peace of mind, which the world could not give when he dwelt in it, and cannot now take away while he is passing through it. And he finishes his course with the composure of perfect resignation, or in high triumph amid visions of glory.

In this life the follower of Christ enjoys many foretastes of the rest of heaven. His mind is settled down into a state of entire confidence in the perfections and ways of the Most High, in the wisdom and goodness of his universal providence, and in his power and will to devise and execute a plan of government, that shall result in the greatest possible good. He finds rest in communion with God, in the exercise of holy and benevolent affections, in freedom from the tormenting tyranny of evil passions, from the stings of an accusing conscience, and from the prevailing fear of death and hell. It is true that he has labours to perform, and trials to endure, and conflicts to fight; but none of these so move him, as to destroy the deep-felt peace derived from the gracious presence of his God and Saviour, and the hope of a blessed immortality in his kingdom.

In the pilgrimage of life, Christ is to his followers like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. In him they find a source of happiness that will not change with every change of external circumstances—one that will not fail in every trying hour—one that they can carry with them into the hut of poverty.

What on earth can compare with the peace of the Christian, when with the world receding from his view and heaven

opening before him, he breathes out his spirit in aspirations of confiding love into the arms of his almighty Redeemer, and in the full uninterrupted light of his countenance. Like the peace of all nature after a storm,—when the winds are hushed, and the woods and waves are still, and the clouds are gone, and the sun shines down from a serene sky upon a serene world,—such is the rest of the Christian after this tumultuous life is over. When a shipwrecked mariner is rescued from a watery grave by some kind friend, how sweet is the rest that he enjoys as he leans on his deliverer, and looks from the shore over the wide waste of waters, and feels firm ground under him, while he hears the billows roar, and sees them dash at his feet in vain,—such is the rest that the believer enjoys as he leans on his almighty Saviour, and from the verge of eternity looks back over this tempestuous world. But the chief rest of the Christian is in the midst of the paradise that is above. There it is consummated—perfect in nature, everlasting in duration.

The rest of heaven is not like that which we take in sleep. It is not a calm of the soul, in which it ceases to reason and feel and act. It is not a contemplative repose of mind from which nothing ever awakens. The ransomed hosts in glory do not dream away the ages of eternity. The faculties of the understanding will doubtless be in constant and vigorous exercise. The mind will make uninterrupted advances in knowledge. The affections of the heart will be in lively exercise. Love supreme to God, and disinterested love to saints and angels, will beam in every breast. The tongue will find employment in recounting the histories of redeeming mercy, in conversing on the perfections, the works, and ways of the Most High, and in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Perhaps the hands may have their offices of love to perform. Perhaps the wings may bear the happy spirit on errands of benevolence to other worlds. The rest of heaven then will not be a state of cessation from the active service of God. But it will be a state of peaceful freedom from sin—from the disturbing and tormenting power of evil

passions. No unholy emotion will ever rise, to stain the heart, and break the tranquillity of the breast. No vain thought will ever pass through the mind. No idle word will ever escape from the tongue.

The rest of heaven will be a state of quiet deliverance from the tortures of an accusing conscience.

It will be a rest from the assaults of spiritual enemies—a rest from temptations,—from those of an evil heart, those of an evil world, those of wicked men, and those of the great adversary of the soul. All these will be far away; and the liberated spirit will dwell in peace and safety before the throne of its almighty Deliverer.

It will be a rest from the wearisome toil of earth, appointed as a part of the original curse for man's apostacy from God.

It will be a rest from the conflict of faith with the things that are seen and temporal. Her conflict is over, and her victory complete;—her trials are at an end.

It will be a rest from all that "fear which hath torment"—the dread of forfeiting the favour of God, and bringing destruction upon the soul. The redeemed in heaven will be confirmed in a state of holiness that shall not end. And of this they will be assured by God himself; so that they will not be left to one moment's trembling lest at some period of their existence, in some unguarded hour, they should indulge a feeling of enmity to the divine character, or utter a word of rebellious discontent, and hurl themselves down, as did the fallen angels, from the abodes of glory to the bottomless pit.

It will be a state of rest from all the doubt and anxiety arising from the mysterious dispensations of the divine government. Clouds and darkness will never more surround the throne of the Most High. Those clouds are scattered forever; and that throne rises to view in the fulness of its glory. The light of eternity will pour full day on all his works and ways.

And, finally, the rest of heaven will be a state of perfect freedom from sorrow and every cause of sorrow. In that

blessed world the Lamb of God shall lead his followers to living fountains of waters; and God himself with his own right hand shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. "There the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest. O that I had wings like a dove; then would I fly away, and be at rest."

In the conclusion of this discourse, permit me to remind you of the tender love and endearing mercy of the Son of God, in giving to sinners like us, such an invitation as that of the text. He condescends to reason and plead with us in the character of a friend. The High and Lofty One, who telleth the number of stars, and calleth them all by their names, entreats the broken in heart to suffer him to heal them, and bind up all their wounds. O if this were not so common a sentiment, it would be one of overwhelming interest. It is true that in other parts of his Oracles the Divine Being puts on the authority of a lawgiver and the majesty of a moral governor, and commands our obedience as his right. But here he puts on all the tenderness of a father, and beseeches us to accept of eternal life at his hand. He would win us by entreaties. He would save himself from the necessity of executing upon us the penalty of his violated law. He would lead us into the path of life by the hand of love. He would take us to heaven in the arms of everlasting mercy.

The invitation in the text is not a solitary one from the lips of the Redeemer. In the prophecy of Isaiah he cries "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Again he cries, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And again he calls in the words of the text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." And, finally in the last chapter of his gospel, after having opened to our eyes the holy and the glorious city above, with its gates of pearl and streets

of gold, and all its bright and blessed inhabitants,—and after showing us the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, he cries, standing as it were under the open heavens, he cries aloud, “ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” And with this call of mercy his gospel is closed. This is the last sound from his lips—the same that is left ringing in our ears, as the heavens receive him and close behind him. But from the throne of intercession he sends down the same merciful call by the Holy Spirit and it is continually echoed in our ears. “ Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.”

SERMON X.

II. CORINTHIANS, v. 8.

“ We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

We know not that death reigns over any other race of intelligent beings, but that to which we belong. It has not been revealed to us, whether there be any other planet, in which creatures like ourselves come into existence in successive generations, and, after living a few days or years, undergo a separation of body and spirit, in which the former is left to moulder into dust, and the latter is borne away to a distant world in a state of conscious life. But certain it is, that if such a revelation were made to us, it would awaken in our minds a train of solemn and sublime thoughts, if it did not excite deep and lasting emotions in our hearts. Why then do we think and feel so little respecting that great and eventful revolution of being, which is constantly carried on throughout the earth, and before our eyes, while we ourselves are hastening towards it, and may at any moment be called to pass through it? What is this mighty change in the mode and the circumstances of our existence? What is it for men to die? And what will come to them after death? What shall I be, when my pulse beats no more, and my last breath is drawn? Whither will my spirit fly, when it leaves this mortal frame, and bids farewell to these sublunary scenes? On what faces shall I open my eyes, when I have closed them on those of the friends that may stand around my death bed? Has the world to which I shall go any connexion with this? Is it a world of retribution? Is that retribution for eternity?

Will it make any difference in a man's eternal condition, whether he dies an infidel or a christian, a profligate or a saint, a proud transgressor or a humble penitent? If it were only probable that there is a moral state of the soul, in which it is more desirable to leave the world than in another, it could not be unimportant to know what that state is. If it were certain that there is a character, which will secure to men in eternity a greater degree of happiness than any other, it must be the part of wisdom to possess that character. If then it be made sure by the God of truth, that there is in reality but one character, with which it is safe to die—but one character which will lead to a state of perfect felicity, while every other leads to a state of hopeless misery, it must be the very madness of folly, to suffer life to pass away, without any efforts to obtain that character. Now it is abundantly evident, that the character, formed under the influence of the high and holy principles of christianity, is the only one that will fit us for a glorious immortality. It becomes therefore of the utmost importance, to ascertain what are, and what are not, decisive proofs of the existence of such a character. We can have no difficulty in ascertaining some things that are, and many things that are not; unless indeed we deny the need of any preparation for death, and believe that all men will be treated alike hereafter, whatever difference there may be in their present character. But there are other things, of which it may not always be so clear, whether they are or are not evidences of that moral state of the soul, required by the gospel as a preparation for its departure from the body. Some things are evidences of such a state, or are not, according to the different circumstances, with which they are connected. Thus in the text before us, the *willingness* to die, expressed by the apostle, furnishes unquestionable proof of his preparation for death, when it is taken in connexion with his desire to be with Christ; but when it exists in cases, where there is no similar desire, it can furnish no such proof. And yet there is perhaps no one thing more commonly spoken of as a proof of preparation for death, than mere willingness to

die, without any reference to the motive exciting it, and the spirit accompanying it. When we hear it asked respecting the dying man "Does he appear prepared for his departure?" how often do we hear it answered, "O yes, he appears perfectly *willing* to go." No reason is given for this willingness. A dreadful blank of uncertainty is left to be filled up at the last day. The holy apostle would not have stopt here. He would have inquired why the man was willing to die, before he judged him prepared for death. Is the expiring mortal "willing to be absent from the body, that he may be present with the Lord"—"that he may see him as he is"—"that he behold his glory?" Is he filled with a holy desire to go into the unveiled presence of the God of infinite holiness? Does he long to mingle in the society of saints and angels, and engage in their divine employments, before the throne of God and the Lamb? Or has he no such desire? Is such a prospect far from his thoughts? Or does he think of it with indifference or disgust? Who then will say that he has any moral fitness for heaven? And without such fitness, is he not unprepared for death?

With these remarks in view, I proceed to announce the following general sentiment for our serious consideration.

Mere willingness to die is no evidence of preparation for death.

To establish the truth of this sentiment, is the principal object of the present discourse. To accomplish this object, it will only be necessary to show, that willingness to die may spring from various other causes, besides that expressed in the text, and those which evince the same holiness of heart.

The principal ground of the opinion, that mere willingness to die affords evidence of preparation for death, is probably to be sought in the habit of viewing the act of dissolution, as too full of terrors to nature, to be approached without a reluctance too great to be overcome by any natural or any incidental causes. That there is some such cause for this willingness, in a multitude of cases, must appear manifest to the faithful inquirer after truth.

1. Willingness to die may spring from the influence of disease. Men are so much affected by present sensations, that even a small degree of pain, continued for a long time, will often make them willing to undergo almost any change, to be delivered from it. How willing then may they be to risk a leap into an untried eternity, in order to escape from the rage of a fever that is burning in the veins and drinking up the spirits, or from the power of any other acute disease, that is sending its darts of agony through the frame, and torturing it like a "strong man armed" crushing an infant victim in his iron grasp. The violence of pain, that is present, and is felt in every nerve, may make the sufferer unmindful of misery, that is yet untried, and is in a distant world. The intensesness of this present and this deep felt anguish, may concentrate all his thoughts upon the passing moment, and shut out of sight a coming eternity. And what wonder, if in such a state, he be willing to die ; when all that he thinks of, is deliverance from the intolerable pain, that he is now enduring ?

At other times there may be in disease such a stupifying power, that the mind is almost inactive, the conscience is asleep, the affections are chilled, the heart-strings cease to vibrate at the touch, and both hopes and fears are laid to rest. In this listless condition the poor mortal is willing to die, because he knows but little of his present state or of his future prospects, and cares nothing for either. He is willing to die, because he has not thought and feeling enough in exercise, to form the wish to live.

There are still other cases, in which there is neither intense pain nor deep lethargy, but a weak and disordered state of the mental faculties, in which things no longer appear in their true light and proper connexion, but truth and error, religious feeling and natural, appear in one confused and ever changing view. Visions of light and of darkness, of joy and of terror, pass to and fro before the eye of a bewildered fancy. The whole mind is occupied with the shadows of things rather than the realities. In such a state of the soul, there may be no difficulty in being resigned to death. The

man has no distinct conception of what it is to die. Perhaps he dreams of lying down in the grave in sweet repose, or of flying away into a land of everlasting sunshine and flowers and songs. Life and death, body and spirit, time and eternity, are all viewed through a deceitful mist. Or if the impressions of a correct education on these subjects be so deep, as to preserve him from wandering over them at random, and enable him to converse upon them with some propriety of thought and feeling, yet if he is restored to health, how often is all this religion forgotten or remembered only as "a dream when one awaketh." How many upon a sick bed have talked, in elevated strains, of the high things of God and heaven, and expressed an entire willingness to leave the world, and yet after an unexpected recovery, have been able to recollect nothing respecting any such conversation, or any thoughts and feelings corresponding to it, and have been much surprised at the account of it given them by others. No trace of its effect remains in their hearts or their conduct. All is gone; and they continue to be just what they were before their sickness.

2. Willingness to die may spring from philosophical pride.

There are not wanting men, who can approach the final hour, with a hardihood of nerves braced to meet the shock, and with a firmness of soul gathered from the arguments of unsanctified reason. Why should they not be resigned to death, when it is the universal lot of man, when they always expected to encounter it in their turn, and when perhaps they have lived to the common age of man, or at least longer than one half of the human family? With these and similar arguments of a worldly philosophy, they fortify what is weak in their souls, and calm what is troubled into a kind of submission to their fate. They wish to appear above the weakness of repining at what cannot be avoided. They would not be thought so irrational, as to make a fretful or sullen resistance against the king of terrors. Such resistance can be of no avail—can do them no good. It will only expose them to pity, when they would rather attract admiration. Resist

they may for a while ; but they must yield at last. Why then should they not do it quietly and nobly ? Thus reasoned some of the ancient philosophers, till they could meet death without a sigh, or with the proud welcome of one who would play the hero. And what numbers at the present day are enabled by similar reasoning, to obtain something of the same courage or calmness in the dying hour.

3. Willingness to die may spring from the melancholy of worldly disappointment. When plans for earthly happiness have all failed one after another by the death of friends, the loss of property, and other like calamities, men are sometimes driven to such a state of desperation, as to rush into the arms of death, and with their own hands direct his shaft to the seat of life. But not to dwell on these instances of self-destruction, it is enough that there are others, in which the spirits are so crushed by a weight of troubles, that nothing earthly can raise them ; and, while the refuge to be found in God is forgotten, an imaginary one is looked for in the dark and silent grave. The grave is regarded only as the termination of a long series of misfortunes. It is a bed of rest, a home of peace, a safe asylum, which no oppressor's arm, nor any change of fortune, can destroy or disturb. Perhaps a sentimental misanthropy and sickness of the world spread their blighting influence over the soul. The earth appears a wilderness of blasted prospects—a land wherē there is no friendship, and no virtue, and no enjoyment. There seems no more good to hope for from remaining here. Perhaps an indefinite idea of some kind of happiness, somewhere beyond the tomb, has an influence in reconciling the soul to its departure, but at all events that departure will be a release from this dungeon of a world.

4. Willingness to die may spring from the unwarranted consolation of friends. When one who has lived all his days, in acknowledged impenitence, is brought to the borders of the eternal world, the christian friends, who may stand around him, often have a conflict in their feelings, between sympathy in his distress, and compassion for his soul. Thus they are

tempted to be unfaithful in christian duty. And too frequently natural affection prevails over spiritual benevolence to such a degree, that they speak only "smooth things" to the dying sinner. Perhaps they venture to say to him with a faltering voice, "Can you not give us some hope? Are you not willing to die?" The poor sufferer, affected at the sight of their tears, faintly replies, "O yes!" He sees that this answer comforts them; and he too is comforted. He sees that Christians are beginning to hope for his safety; and with that he is ready to think himself out of danger. What wonder if he be now willing to die? And yet if the repentance and faith required in the gospel be the only preparation for death, the man has not given the least evidence of being prepared for it. He has shown no sorrow for sin, nor any trust in the Saviour. Not a word has been said about repenting and believing. From all that appears there is clearly no proof, that he has any desire to be delivered from the bondage of iniquity, and brought into the holy liberty of the kingdom of heaven.

5. Willingness to die may spring from spiritual stupidity. The opinion that impenitent men are awakened on a death-bed to a sense of their real condition, if they are not brought to repentance, is probably more general, than the fact will be found to be from extensive observation. It may be true that most of them manifest some degree of alarm; yet in what a multitude of cases this alarm is evidently that of a sufferer instead of a sinner, and arises from the dread of punishment rather than the hatred of iniquity. Who can have any doubt of this, when hardly an instance can be found, in which the terrors of a sick bed have issued in a piety, which has not vanished with the return of health? Does it not then follow that they, who are thus terrified at the approach of death, may still be stupid as to every thing truly spiritual? They show no conviction of the guilt of sin—no sense of their criminality in the sight of God. They are not awakened, to see and feel their condition, as transgressors of God's law, and as ruined immortals without his mercy through the blood of

atonement. And when their natural fears are overcome, as they often are in various ways, they may be so insensible to spiritual things, as to feel no unwillingness to die. But there are others among the impenitent, in whom the near view of death produces no alarm whatever. Not only is the conscience too deeply stupified or seared, to be affected by a sense of sin, but through its influence, and that of a hardened heart, the soul is too much asleep to be sensible of its danger. Here is no wakefulness of any kind. The eyes and ears are closed ; and in this universal sleep the things of religion are most of all forgotten. The light of heaven is not seen ; the calls and warnings of the gospel are not heard. Truth finds no entrance into the understanding ; touches not the conscience ; and makes no impression on the heart. In such a state of the soul there may be no reluctance to die. If men pass through life in stupidity, why may it not be expected, that God will leave them to close it in stupidity ? I know it has often been said, that “ men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.” And yet this is by no means so near a general truth, as the sentiment, that “ men die as they live.” Ask those whose profession leads them, to make frequent visits to death beds ; and they will tell you so. Ask the aged, who have seen two or three generations pass away ; and they will tell you so. If men are willing to *live* in stupidity, it is probable, that in the same stupidity they will be willing to die.

6. Willingness to die may spring from religious error. If a man believes that no preparation for death is necessary, or regards that as a preparation which is none in reality, or thinks himself possessed of the true preparation when he is not, he has embraced a delusion, which may give him a false peace in the dying hour.

The first class of men, here mentioned, believe that no preparation for death is necessary. This they believe, because they look upon Christianity as a fable, and eternal life as a dream, or because they regard the end of this earthly course as the beginning of everlasting happiness to all men. It surely cannot be strange, if the settled belief in the doc-

trine, that God will hereafter make no distinction in the destiny of men, according to their present difference of character, should reconcile the soul to its departure from such a world as this. Why should the act of expiring be terrible to one, who regards it as opening the door of heaven, to the believer and the infidel, the holy and the unholy, thus rendering his own salvation sure, whatever may be his moral state? It is true that men, who have spent years of health and pleasure in the belief of this opinion, are sometimes driven by the king of terrors, to renounce it in anguish of despair. But this is by no means uniformly the fact. And why should we expect it to be? Why should it be thought strange, that men who are given up to strong delusion, in the midst of their days, should also be given up at their end? Upon what principle can it be expected, that the sentiments which have been long cherished, and openly avowed, and contended for with the enlisted power of the passions and prejudices, should be at once renounced in dismay, at an hour when the motives to hold them fast are considered to be more and greater than ever? When the dying man thinks that his sentiments are now brought to the test, and sees his opponents watching the trial, and hears his abettors bidding him be of good cheer, and be true to their common cause, it must be a mighty influence from above, that in the face of all these obstacles can make him willing to desert this cause, and desert the friends of it, and in the presence of its enemies pour contempt upon all his past reasonings in defence of it. No, no,—he will not do it. Pride and honour forbid; and come what may, he will not do it. The power of God can indeed produce such a change, however great the difficulties to be overcome; but how seldom is his power put forth for this purpose; and how little ought we to expect it to be.

The second class of men, mentioned under this head, regard that as a preparation for death, which is none in reality. Some of these look upon a life of mere negative virtue, as securing them from punishment hereafter; and they are not afraid to die, because they have never injured any one—have

done no harm in the world. Others consider a life of active morality, as entitling them to happiness beyond the grave; and they can close their days in quiet, by making their appeal to a Judge who will not wrong them. "God is just" say they; and this is thought to be enough for them. There are some that regard their attendance on the means of grace, or their outward observance of the institutions of Christianity—their baptism, or their church-membership, as securing for them a seat in heaven; and why should they tremble at the thought of going to occupy it? Others there are, that esteem it a sufficient preparation for death, to have a speculative belief in the truth of the Christian religion; and there are others still, that depend for salvation on the mere fact, that Christ has died for sinners. Why should it be matter of surprise, that such men should leave the world without terror, or even with joy? It may justly excite astonishment, that they, or any of those now enumerated, can, with the bible in their hands, receive what they do, as the ground of their acceptance with God; but when they have once done this, and brought themselves to believe that their names are in the book of life, it is surely no surprising thing, that they can hear the summons of the last messenger without dismay.

The third class of men spoken of under the present head, consider themselves as possessing the true preparation for death, when they do not. They have neither denied nor mistaken the terms of salvation. Their error lies in the belief that they have complied with them, when the sad reality is, that they have not. They acknowledge the necessity of repentance and faith; but they think that they have renounced their sins, and put their trust in Christ, when they have done it only in appearance, and not in heart. They are deceived respecting the state of their affections, and the character of their motives, in the sight of God. On this deception they have built a false hope of heaven. It is a hope which must fail them in the day when it is fully tried; but that day may not come in this world. Though their house is built on the sand, the storm that is to sweep it away may not come at

death. It may then be a refuge, in which they can hush their fears to sleep, and delight themselves with dreams of safety and everlasting rest.

As respects the three classes of men, that have now been enumerated, it seems abundantly evident, that they may be made willing to die, by the influence of erroneous views of the subject of religion, or of their own religious character. It cannot be important to add any more to the particular illustrations under this head of the discourse. Nor can it be necessary to multiply any farther the reasons why men are willing to die. It must be plain that there are many, besides the one recorded in the text—many besides those which proceed from holiness of heart. No doubt then can remain respecting the truth of the sentiment, that mere willingness to die is no evidence of preparation for death. This is the sentiment which was proposed for proof; and if it has been shown to be an undeniable truth, it is one that suggests several reflections of solemn and practical moment.

I. Great caution is necessary in speaking of the evidences of preparation for death. If through the influence of sympathy for the bereaved, or from any other cause, we allow ourselves to speak of any thing as an evidence of such preparation, when the gospel decides that it is not, we may do much towards deceiving our fellow men to their ruin; and we ourselves by this practice may at length be deceived in like manner. It is a practice which sets up a wrong standard, for men to judge themselves by; and removes the right one out of sight. It puts darkness for light, and light for darkness. It tends to make men live at ease in sin, with the expectation that charity will find something in the circumstances of their death, on which to build a hope of their happiness. It makes them forget the necessity of repentance and faith, by showing them how easily the want of these in the dying hour can be overlooked. When the opinion is circulated, that this man and that have made a happy exchange of worlds, merely because they were willing to die, or on any other unscriptural ground, many are more ready to receive wrong impres-

sions, than they are to receive right ones from the reading and the preaching of the gospel. It may be asked, if we can have the cruelty to tell the mourning, that their departed friend gave little or no evidence of being prepared to leave the world. No—we cannot. And it can hardly ever be our duty to do it. But, on the contrary, it cannot be our duty to tell the mourning, that their departed friend gave evidence of being fitted for heaven, when he did not. It is far better to be silent, on this subject, in their presence, than to speak only to deceive them. We had better say nothing, than to say that which will not bear the test of God's word. We cannot be too careful on all occasions, to produce or to deepen the impression, that men give evidence of preparation for death, just so far as they give evidence of having renounced their sins, and put their trust in Christ, and no further. Show me proof of a man's penitence and faith; and the gospel bids me hope for him, and comfort his friends with this hope. But tell me merely of a man's willingness to die; and the gospel bids me say nothing, till I have inquired for the reason of this willingness. If it be that given in the text, or one like it in holiness, there is scriptural ground for strong hope and rich consolation.

2. The true preparation for death is a moral one. If the view which we have now taken of the subject before us be correct, we can turn to no part of it without making this reflection. It is a truth that appears at every step in the preceding course of reasoning. It is the all-pervading spirit of the whole. To prepare for death is the work of the heart. It is not a mere exercise of the understanding receiving this or that system of religion as true, or interpreting parts of the Bible in this or that manner. It is not a mere set of opinions of any kind, either right or wrong. Nor does it consist in a mere outward performance of some of the duties of Christianity. It is not a round of lifeless ceremonies. It is a deep thing of the soul; and takes strong hold of the seat of life. It has much to do with the affections and motives; and exerts a governing influence over all the springs of moral action.

It consists in that holiness of heart and life, which is the fruit of repentance and faith. Without this holiness no man shall see the Lord, and be present with him, when he has closed his eyes on all sublunary things, and is absent from the body. It is a clear and a deep-felt sense of this truth, that sometimes makes such men as Baxter and Edwards and Scott and Dwight, after a long life of eminent piety, approach the eternal world with more or less of the trembling of doubt and fear. They see a holy God on the throne, and around him a world of holy beings—a world shining with the glories of holiness, and resounding with its everlasting songs. All this they see with the full gaze of faith, while they know and feel their own deep vileness. But when such men tremble on their death-bed, O it is pitiable to see those, who have spent all their days in forgetfulness of God and eternity, willing to die.

3. The true preparation for death is one that is to be made in life. Preparation for any event is something to be done previous to the event itself. It is absurd to talk of a man's preparing for death when he is actually dying. There is not the least proof from the bible, or in the nature of things, that the event, which dissolves the union between the soul and the body, produces a radical change in the moral character. What is there, what can there be, in the passage through the dark valley, to take the affections at once from objects, on which they have been fixed for years, and fix them on objects as different from these, as heaven is from earth? Can it be believed that the man, whose last accents in this world are, "Gold, thou art my portion," will be prepared to say the moment after, as he awakes in eternity, "Whom have I in heaven, O God, but thee?" Will the man whose supreme object in life has been, to lay up treasures on the earth, find himself, the moment after death, in full possession of that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away? Will the man, who has drunk, all his days, and drunk deep, at the polluted stream of this world's pleasure, be prepared as soon as he dies, to drink of that pure river of bliss,

flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb ? Will the man who, during all his mortal life, has loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, find himself the moment after death standing and bowing with the adoring hosts of heaven, and ready to cast down his crown with theirs, and take up their song of " Blessing and honour and glory and power unto Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb that was slain ?" In short, my hearers, will they that are unjust through life and in death, be righteous afterwards ? Or will they be unjust still ? Will the filthy here be holy hereafter ? Or will they be filthy still ? Let the word of God decide.

Will it be said that though the moral character be not changed by the event of dying, it may be changed just before the event ? Through the power of divine grace there is a possibility that it may. But judging from the conduct of men who recover from alarming sickness, and from other arguments, there is most fearful reason to think that it is seldom the fact. On the contrary it may doubtless be received as a general truth, *that men die as they live*. We are now, then, my dear hearers, from one year to another, and every day and hour, forming our characters for eternity. It becomes therefore a question of immense interest whether we are preparing to be present with the Lord when we shall be absent from the body. Have we felt sincere and lasting sorrow for our sins and forsaken them with all the heart ? Have we come to Christ and cast our souls on his mercy through the blood of atonement ? If we have, and continue to the end of our days, to manifest the reality of our penitence and faith, by the graces and virtues of a holy life, we shall not be deceived in the dying hour by a false and fatal peace. Nor shall we have to mourn in the bitterness of despair, and say " My days are passed," and heaven is lost forever.

SERMON XI.

JOB, xiv. 19.

“Thou destroyest the hope of man.”

IN this world of intermingled good and evil, mankind live upon hope. Were there nothing here but good, hope would probably be lost in enjoyment ; and were there nothing but evil, it would probably be lost in despair. The diversified and fluctuating state of earthly things is just that, in which this principle of action might be expected to become universal and predominant. Accordingly, we find, that men endure the present, rather than enjoy it, or enjoy it chiefly in their anticipation of the future. Where is the man, that is not looking forward to better days ? and is not now living for the happiness, which they promise ? Who is there, that says in his heart, “Sufficient for the day is the *good* thereof ?” Who that hopes for no more, than he receives, as he passes along from one year to another ? Who would not feel his present happiness destroyed at once, were he to be fully convinced by the assurance of God, that no greater is in store for him ?

In making these remarks on the influence of hope, I have not intended to intimate, that it is a principle of action unworthy of a rational being, or unjustifiable in a subject of the divine government. On the contrary, its influence is so important, in the present state of things, that it is impossible to conceive, how the common business of life, or the more sacred duties of religion, could be performed, without the motives, which it affords. Reason would soon be dethroned, and the soul subjected to the dominion of animal appetite,

and the life of depraved man would be changed into that of a beast, were he to be deprived of the privilege of looking for good to come, and limited in his views and desires to the objects of the passing moment. The principle of hope is in itself as exalted, as the exercise of it is delightful. It is to be condemned only when it is fixed on forbidden objects, or on lawful objects in a forbidden degree. When it is fixed on God,—on the prosperity of his kingdom, and the glory of his name,—on the participation of his holiness, and the enjoyment of his everlasting favour,—it is in obedience to the divine commands, and is in no danger of becoming too great in its power over the heart and the conduct. When it is fixed on the gratification of the senses,—or the acquisition of wealth, rank, and power, for the purposes of self-aggrandizement and self-indulgence,—it is in violation of the divine commands, and is deceiving the soul to its eternal ruin. When it is fixed on such earthly objects, as are needful for our comfort and usefulness, and agreeable to the will of Heaven, it is sinful and destructive only by becoming supreme, or possessing an undue power over our affections and actions. This latter manner of abusing the principle of hope is not less general than the former. Indeed, the man is not to be found, however great may be his attainments in piety, who is never, in any degree, guilty of his placing hopes too much on those earthly things, that are in themselves blessings, but are thus rendered hurtful to the graces and enjoyments of the most exalted piety; while, in such as have no piety at all, they unite with the unlawful objects of hope, in leading the soul onward, through multiplied disappointments, to the woes of an undone eternity. All men, of every age and condition, of every variety of character in the two great classes of the righteous and the wicked, are more or less guilty, of hoping for happiness in ways and from objects, that are in their nature sinful, or of hoping for it with a sinful degree of strength, in ways and from objects, that are in their nature lawful. These are the earthly hopes of men. They are those, which God destroys. However bright and promising they may be

for a while, the time comes when he blasts them with a breath of his anger, or by a chastising stroke of his mercy,—and they are gone.

Thou, most righteous and merciful God, destroyest the earthly hopes of men.

This, my hearers, is the plain and affecting sentiment of the text. It was uttered by Job, in an address to the Divine Being, in view of that rapid succession of judgments, by which this greatest of all the men of the East was deprived of his ten children, stripped of his immense possessions, afflicted with a painful disease, and thus left to mourn over the destruction of his own earthly hopes, and those of every member of his numerous family. In his lips, therefore, the language of the text must have been full of meaning.

In making it the theme of the present discourse, it is my purpose, to call your attention, to the fact that is stated,—to the cause of it,—to some of the designs of God in it,—and finally to several practical inferences. Let us then contemplate,

I. The fact that God destroys the earthly hopes of men.

That mankind are disappointed, in their expectations of happiness from the world, is a truth made evident by the history of all past ages, and the experience of every individual,—by daily observation, and the confession of every tongue. From the annals of every generation, since the fall, there might be collected a sad record of blasted hopes, and thwarted plans, for individual and national happiness. In such a record, some men would be seen fighting to obtain crowns, that eluded their grasp, or were worn but for a day, or proved the means of exposure to miseries and dangers from the deadly ambition of rivals and traitors. Some would be seen employing the treasures of a kingdom, and the labours of half its subjects, for many years, in building monuments, to gratify a pride that soon ended in their own destruction by the reaction of an oppressed people, and to perpetuate names, that were soon forgotten, or doomed to infamy. With such examples of disappointed hopes, among the great ones of the earth, would be seen similar instances without number,

among the vast multitude, in their pursuit of humbler vanities. But why need we search the annals of past generations, and trace the progress of the high and the low through their momentary life, to find arguments in proof of the sentiment in question? It is enough that they are gone—the men and their vanities together. It is enough, that the millions of every generation have been carried away as with a flood, and with them all their hopes and plans for earthly enjoyment. Death has cut short their expectations from the world, and completed the train of their disappointments; has awaked them from their dreams of power, turned their bright visions of pleasure into darkness, crumbled their monuments of fame into dust, and scattered their treasures to the winds, and brought down their pomp and glory to the level of worms and ashes. Over them, and their blasted prospects, the king of terrors shakes his iron sceptre in triumph; while he points the multitudes of the living to this scene of destruction, and calls upon them as they walk thoughtlessly over it, to prepare to lie down in its gloom and corruption. Let us then turn to the living, for instruction on the subject before us. And let us confine our attention to those within the reach of our acquaintance or observation,—to the poor and the wealthy, the humble and the eminent,—to the young, that are just coming forward into the active scenes of life,—the middle-aged, that are buried in its cares, or driven to and fro by its tumults,—and the aged, that are bowing beneath its load of infirmities, and tottering along its last stages, on the brink of the invisible world. From this near view of mankind, in all their varieties of character and condition, what a multitude of facts crowd together before our eyes, and rush upon our memories, to give us a heart-felt sense of the vanity of those hopes, that terminate on the shadows of time. We see the poor disappointed in their plans for acquiring wealth, and the ambitious in theirs for obtaining the bubbles of rank and fame. We see the young disappointed in their anticipations of pleasure, the middle-aged in theirs of grandeur, and the aged in theirs of dignified retirement. Or if these various objects appear, now and then, to

be gained, the enjoyment derived from them falls far below the calculations of hope. We see parents looking to the world, for more good, to be the portion of their children, than the world with all its fair promises can give. We see children cut down in their bloom, like the flowers, that flourish in the morning, and wither at night. Many who are flattered into high expectations of long life, by the animal vigour and buoyant spirits of youth, we behold continually dropping into the grave, and leaving behind them no memorial of their existence. The few, that have reached the age of threescore years and ten, we behold not without the expectation of living another year because they have lived through the last, and yet another for the same reason, and because others have lived still longer; so that even they are surprised by death, and torn from a world to which they fondly cling. Thus are the earthly hopes of men destroyed, one after another; and the ruins of all are at last swept into the grave together, and forgotten. Men pass through life, in pursuit of phantoms, that keep ever before them, eluding their grasp, but tempting their sight, till they vanish at that stroke, which blots from their view at once this whole world of vanities. Many a time, at longer or shorter intervals, they come to the period set for the fulfilment of their hopes; and, being disappointed, they remove it further forward; and, coming to it again, they remove it further still, for the same reason; and thus they go on, till, having reached the end of their course, they cast back, over its train of thwarted plans, and blasted prospects, a look of longing and despairing, and then close their eyes in the sleep of death. The cords that bind men to life are like the threads of the spider, broken by a touch, or a breath; and those that bind them to any earthly portion can be no stronger. Their firmest fabrics of sublunary happiness are built upon the sand. This sentiment is not the mere declaration of melancholy, or poetic enthusiasm. It is contained,—all of it,—in the plain language of the text, strengthened as it is by an accumulation of striking allusions, introduced to prepare the mind to feel its whole force. “Surely the mountain”—the *mountain*, “falling, cometh to nought, and the *rock* is removed

out of his place ; the waters wear the *stones* ; thou washest away the things that grow out of the dust of the *earth* ;—*and thou destroyest the hope of man.*” Plans for terrestrial enjoyment are like buildings erected along the margin of a rapid stream, that gradually undermines them, or, swollen to a torrent by a sudden storm, overthrows them in a moment, and buries their scattered ruins in depths unknown, or sweeps them away to distances, from which they can be gathered no more. Thus are the earthly hopes of men destroyed. The fact of their destruction no one with his eyes open can doubt. That they are destroyed by *God*, must be equally evident to every believer in divine revelation. *Thou*, Lord of heaven and earth, destroyest the hope of man.

To you, brethren, it is clear as the language of eternal truth can make it, that this destruction is not effected, either by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, or by an inherent necessity in the constitution of things, or by any independent power of Satan over mankind, or of mankind themselves over each other. You see in the work the agency of Jehovah’s all-ruling hand. You know that there is not, in the universe, any agency in operation, that is not entirely under his control ; and this knowledge is the ground of all your confidence and delight in him. This ground of confidence and delight will not fail, even in the day when he destroys your own earthly hopes. If you have the temper of Job, it surely will not. Soon as the tidings, of his loss of all things, reach this man of God, he exclaims, “The *Lord* gave, and the *Lord* hath taken away ; *blessed* be the name of the *Lord.*” This he says, when the work of destruction, over which he mourns, is particularly ascribed, in every part of its progress, to the prince of fallen spirits, as the subordinate agent. The holy patriarch entirely overlooks Satan, and his emissaries, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, as well as the fire of heaven, and the wind of the wilderness ; and, regarding them all as instruments, the former voluntary, and the latter involuntary instruments, in the hands of the Divine Being, fixes the eye of faith on him alone, as the righteous Author of his afflictions.

He looks up to a benevolent Sovereign on the throne, and praises him, while surrounded with clouds and darkness; and thus obtains support, and even peace, in the midst of an overwhelming flood of calamities. It is the living God, who takes away the earthly props, on which mortals lean. He gives wings to their riches; dries up their streams of pleasure; and stains the pride of all their glory. He sends the cup of affliction round from one family to another; and requires all to drink of it in their turn. He makes human life like a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. He makes the beauty of man fade as that of a leaf; and causes him to say, with his expiring breath; in the language of Job in the context, "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart;—and where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?"

But, not to dwell any longer on the fact, that God destroys the earthly hopes of men, let us proceed to consider,

II. The cause of his doing it.

You cannot expect me to prove in a formal manner what this cause is; or to waste time in searching for it in one direction and another, as if it were hard to be discovered, instead of being the most prominent thing in our world. Your thoughts are turned at once to sin, as the cause of all the evil, with which God afflicts the human family. You probably see no room for the least doubt, or difference of opinion, on this subject, among believers in divine revelation. You see not why all must not find the same doctrine on every page of the sacred volume. And all would find it, were there not some, whose systems of philosophy require them to be wise, above that which is written, if not in opposition to it. These men venture to advance the opinion, that had our first parents remained holy, and all their posterity been like them, they might still have suffered as sensitive beings, though not as moral agents. This they feel obliged to say, in order to account for the sufferings of infants, since the doctrine of natural depravity, is no part of their philosophical system. In support of this opinion they bring, not only their own con-

jectures respecting what would be necessary or probable in the human constitution without sin, but also the actual sufferings of the brute creation. These sufferings, however, cannot with propriety be brought for this purpose, till it be shown, that mankind, in regard to the animal part of their constitution, sustain a relation to their Maker like that of brutes, and are no more accountable for the manner of using their animal powers and appetites. But to show this, is what was never attempted, except by those atheistical philosophers, who include it in their doctrine of man's entire freedom from accountability to a Higher Power. There is therefore no proof, that mankind, if they had never fallen, would have endured pain as sensitive beings. God was certainly able to form bodies, that he could preserve forever free from distress and decay. That such were the bodies of our first parents, when they were made, is evident from the fact, that the death of their bodies is a part of the penalty of that law, under which they were placed for trial, and also from the fact, that toil and pain of body are included in the curse, pronounced on them after their apostacy. It may then be asserted without hesitation, that all the miseries, which mankind endure, are the effects of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Sin entered, and the long train of earthly calamities ending in death quickly followed. Sin opened the door into our world, as a traitor opens the gate of a besieged city, and in rushed a host of enemies, to plunder, and enslave, and destroy. Why is there no misery in heaven? Why do angels never mourn over blighted hopes? Why does God never hide from them the light of his countenance? No one can be at a loss for the proper answer to these questions. Perfect holiness reigns in heaven,—in the breast of every angel. And were the original holiness of mankind to take immediate possession of every soul now on the earth, how would all the happiness of paradise return as in a moment. The voice of sorrow would be heard no longer. All tears would be wiped away. Every heart would

beat continually with joyful emotions. Every bosom would be the abode of peace that nothing could disturb. In all this world of immortals, there would be no sense of any present evil, and no dread of any to come. The curse would be removed from the face of nature. Instead of the thorn would come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier would come up the myrtle tree. The mountains would break forth into singing; and the heavens and the earth would rejoice together. This scene of universal joy would be no longer imaginary, were it not for the pestilence of sin. A righteous God keeps it from becoming real, only because the subjects of his moral government here below, have all rebelled against him. It is wholly in consequence of their rebellion, that he stretches forth his hand to afflict them,—to plant thorns and briars in their path, and give to the winds their hopes of terrestrial happiness.

But let us pass to consider,

III. Some of his designs in doing it.

The Governor of the universe does not act in this thing without any design, nor without one that is perfectly benevolent. He does not inflict suffering on men, as they often do on each other, from the impulse of anger, or for the gratification of cherished revenge. He has an object beyond the suffering itself; and that object is a good one. If this could not be answered, the suffering would not be inflicted. In destroying the earthly hopes of men, the Divine Being has designs, consistent with all his perfections.

Among these, one is, to exhibit his own holiness. That this is an object of infinite importance to the universe, must be acknowledged by all, who believe in the moral government of God. If the character of God be not clearly revealed, his creatures must be ignorant of the nature and extent of their obligations to him. But how can he fully exhibit his character, except in what he does? Is it enough for him to say, that he is possessed of every excellence?—to send heralds to proclaim it through the universe?—or give to every race of intelligent beings a book filled with declarations that such is his charac-

ter, and with laws requiring them to possess the same character? What would be the effect on them, if he should assert his own perfect holiness, and yet manifest the same tokens of his favour to the holy and to the unholy, and make them equally happy? The influence of motives would be destroyed, and the moral government of God at an end. It may be objected, that Christ commanded his disciples, to love their enemies and not their friends only, that they might be the children of their heavenly Father; and adds, "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." To this it may be answered, that the atonement of Christ, by which the law of God is magnified and made honourable, renders it consistent with perfect holiness, to suspend the punishment of transgressors, and place them in a state of trial, in which by repentance and faith and their proper fruits they may be fitted for final restoration to Heaven's holy family. Without being the friend of sin, therefore, God may bestow on the human race, while in this state of trial, all the blessings necessary to their existence, and a multitude more, to show them his abundant mercy, as long as there remains an opportunity for that mercy, to have any influence in melting their hearts in penitence or inspiring them with gratitude. But should he visit them with no judgments during their probation, they would lose sight of his holiness. His judgments are calculated to keep it ever in view in living characters, and to keep a strong sense of it always alive in the mind. So jealous is he of the honour of his name, and so careful not to deceive men in regard to his true character, that even under the present reign of mercy, he surrounds them with striking tokens of his justice, at every step from the cradle to the grave. It may be asked, how God can exhibit his holiness, in afflicting his children with many of the same temporal evils, with which he afflicts his enemies. The answer is to be found in the remaining sins of his children; in chastising them for which, he makes a clearer display of his holiness, the greater his love is to them. Thus fully and constantly does God manifest his perfect holiness, in de-

stroying the sublunary hopes of mortals. He manifests it to mortals themselves, and to the higher orders of intelligences, the principalities and powers, that from other worlds watch with intense interest, his dealings toward our fallen race.

Another design that God has, in destroying the earthly hopes of men, is to convince them of sin. The display of his holiness in this destruction has a tendency to produce this effect, by bringing him into distinct view, and his character into a near comparison with their own. The same effect is the proper result of the destruction itself. And though it may not be actually produced by this cause alone, yet the natural fitness of the cause to produce it cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied, that a state of mind is often in reality occasioned, which is favourable to the reception of divine truth, applied by the convincing Spirit. This fitness and this fact lead us to the design of God. He afflicts men, to excite them to inquire why he does it, then to conduct them to a second inquiry respecting his character, and thence to the conclusion that they are transgressors in his sight. He sends judgments upon them, to humble them under a deep conviction of their guilt. He multiplies their sorrows, to lead them to see and lament the multitude of their offences. From the clouds of adversity that often come over them, from the bed of sickness, the house of mourning, and the opening grave, he mercifully calls on them to wake from the slumbers of unbelief and worldliness. In wonderful mercy he wrings the human heart, to produce the pangs of conscious guilt, that sin may be hated and the soul saved. He disappoints our expectations from the world, that we may see and renounce our idolatrous attachment to it.

Another design of God, in destroying the earthly hopes of men, is to make them sensible of their dependence. He takes away their various props, to let them fall into his hands. In the day of their prosperity, while enjoying a fulness of temporal good, they are inclined to forget the Author of their blessings, if not to boast that their own hands have procured them, and indulge the exultation of pride in the midst of their

abundance. God deprives them of these blessings, to teach them humility, the hardest lesson for mortals to learn. It might be urged upon us continually by commands and exhortations, and yet we should go through life ignorant of it, were we not taught it by afflictions. Even the best of men go astray before they are afflicted ; but afterward they walk humbly with God. The trouble to which we are born, springing not from the ground, but from the will of our benevolent Maker, is calculated to convince us of our helplessness, and lead us to put our whole trust in him. When we feel the irresistible workings of disease,—when we feel it coming upon us we know not from what secondary cause, and operating we know not in what manner, to send its thrilling pangs through our frame, and shake us over the grave, we must have an atheistical hardihood of soul, not to be sensible of our entire dependence on the Almighty Arbiter of life and death. When we stand by the dying bed of a dear friend, and see the work of the king of terrors going on, notwithstanding all our kind offices, and tears, and prayers, it is then if ever, that we feel powerless in the hands of the Most High, and prostrate ourselves in the dust before his throne.

A further design of God, in destroying the earthly hopes of men, is to lead them to make him their portion. He takes away our idols, to assert his right to our supreme affections. He breaks asunder the nearest ties, to remind us, that whoso loveth father or mother, wife or child, more than him, is not worthy of him. He wounds our hearts, to bring us to him for the balm of mercy to heal them, and for the cords of love to bind them up. He causes us to pass through the deep waters of affliction, to constrain us to call aloud for his supporting hand. Afflictions are his swift messengers, sent after us in our various wanderings, to bring us back to him. He makes our streams of earthly happiness fail, to lead us up to the eternal fountain. He brings a cloud over us, to constrain us to look to him for light. He frowns upon us, to convince us of the value of his smile, and induce us to seek it as the sunshine of the soul. Let those, therefore, who are walking in the

darkness of affliction, and mourning over the ruin of earthly hopes, give all diligence to secure the blessings of this benevolent design of God. Let them draw near to his throne of grace, and pour out their sorrows before his pitying eye, and seek a refuge under the shadow of his wings. Let them cast their souls into his hands, and yield their hearts to the full influence of his purifying and comforting Spirit. Let them take him for their portion, his word for their rule of life, his service for their employment, and his favour for their everlasting reward. Then shall light divine rise on their darkness; and though weeping may endure for a night, joy, pure and exalted joy, shall come in the morning.

A still further design of God, in destroying the earthly hopes of men, is to lead them to make heaven their home. Were our path through life always over firm and smooth ground, covered with flowers, we should dance along in the giddiness of present pleasure, and lose sight of the eternity at the end. We should forget that we are pilgrims and strangers, having here no continuing city, but passing quickly through this wilderness to another country. Were there no thorns on our pillow, we should sleep life away, without any labour for the rest beyond the grave. God disturbs our peace here, to draw our thoughts and desires to eternal peace hereafter. He breaks our plans for earthly happiness, to fit us for the perfect happiness of heaven. He follows us with disappointment after disappointment, from one year to another, to wean our affections from things below, and fix them on things above. While in this sublunary vale we *build and rebuild* upon the sand, he *throws down* again and again, to lift our thoughts to the skies, there to build on everlasting rock. Often does he make the earth appear to us like a desert, that our eyes may be raised with delight to the glories of heaven, as on the barren plains and mountains of Arabia the wayworn pilgrim looks above the desolate earth, and gazes with solemn silent rapture on the lights of the firmament.

From the view which has now been taken of this subject, we are brought to the following inferences.

1. We see the folly of not profiting by the experience of past generations.

If we would receive instruction from the experience of the millions of our race, that have sought a satisfying portion in the world—have hoped for it, and planned, and laboured, and after all died without obtaining it, how deep would be our conviction of the vanity of the world, and how full would be our belief in the happiness of having a treasure in the skies. If we would learn all that can be learnt on this subject, from the history of those of whom we have read, and of those with whom we have been acquainted, what a fund of knowledge should we possess, for the regulation of our conduct. Are not the lessons of almost six thousand years enough, to teach us the truth respecting the road to happiness? Are they not enough, to show us what it is not, and what it is? Must they then be lost to us? Must they be buried with the generations that have gone down to the grave? With all the instruction before us, which has been accumulating ever since the fall, shall we be content to be no wiser than the men of former ages? How sad the thought, that every generation as it passes away, should carry with it the benefit of its own experience in the pursuit of earthly pleasures, and leave the next generation to find out their vanity by the same fatal experience. Why have we not wisdom enough, to take the results to which men have always been brought in this pursuit in all past ages, and regarding them as established truths, adopt them at once as principles of moral action? Why must we try the world ourselves, in order to prove its vanity? We never think of making a similar trial, to learn whether fire will burn or water will drown. But the vanity of earthly hopes is a fact as well settled as the power of these two elements. Why then do we not act as reasonably in one case as the other? Is it not the extreme of folly in us, to regard our situation as so peculiar, that we in some unaccountable manner shall succeed, where all others have failed? Where all that have lived before us have found barrenness and thorns, we fondly expect to find nothing but fruit and

flowers. We blame them for trusting so much to the world for happiness, and perhaps mourn over their disappointment ; but, while doing this, we imitate their conduct, and expect to escape their misery. What reasons then have we to give for regarding ourselves as exceptions in this case ? We have none ; and is it not the very madness of folly, to act without being able to give reasons for our conduct ?

2. We see the folly of not forsaking sin.

In looking at the progress of sin from the fall of Adam, we behold Death on his pale horse and hell following in its train over the world. Or to look back further than the origin of the human family, we behold sin rolling its desolating tide over a part of heaven, and sweeping a multitude of angels from their thrones down to the bottomless pit. The first sensation of pain in the universe was the effect of the first act of transgression ; and the continued sensations of pain are the effects of continued acts of transgression. To see our earthly hopes destroyed is to see the ravages of sin. Where then is our wisdom, in hoping to reach a state of permanent felicity, while walking in the path, that has led none to any other end but that of despair ? Why should we *build and rebuild*, and yet cherish an enemy to *throw down* without mercy the works of our hands ? Why should we look for a life of peace and safety, while we nurse a scorpion to sting and to poison unto death ? Why should we put far away the thought of destruction, and yet open our door to let in the pestilence ?

3. We see the folly of not embracing the religion of Christ.

In this religion there is a remedy, and the only remedy, for every kind and degree of evil. To reject it, is to shut our eyes against the light, shining from heaven, to guide us through the darkness of this world. It is to shut our ears against the voice from heaven, calling us from the paths of the destroyer into the way of life. It is to put from us the hand, that offers to us the balm of mercy, and the cords of love, to heal our broken hearts, and bind up all their wounds. It is to spurn from us the hand, that is stretched forth, to blot out our iniquities, and wipe away our tears, and sustain us under the

weight of earthly trials, and raise us above the ruin of earthly hopes, and take us up to the dwelling-place of all pure and happy spirits, there to set crowns of glory on our heads, and and give us to drink of the river of immortality. In the midst of our earthly disappointments the gospel comes to us, and reveals to the eye of faith the things of a better world, to excite within us higher hopes than those that are fixed on the vanities of earth. The gospel assures the believer that "these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus does it bring from eternity a light to scatter the gloom of time. It makes us happy here, with the hope of immeasurable and unending happiness hereafter. O then reject not the gospel, if you would not wrong your own souls in this life, and ruin them in the life to come. Reject not the religion of Christ, if you would not spend eternity in lamenting your folly. Embrace this religion, and though weeping may endure for a night, the dark night of time, joy will come in the morning, the bright morning of eternity. Embrace it and build your hopes upon it; and you shall not have to mourn at death and say "my days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart."—Where is your *hope*? You will know where it is. Instead of being torn from it, and from a world where it was built on the sand, you will be carried to it, and to the world where it was built on the Rock of Ages. Who shall *see* your hope? The general assembly and church of the first born shall see it; the innumerable company of angels shall see it; the admiring universe shall see it; and the blessed vision of it shall burst upon your own eyes, and fill your souls with all the fulness of God forever. Amen.

SERMON XII.

HEBREWS, xi. 1.

“ Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”

The word “ faith” is used by the sacred writers with some variety of signification.

When Christ said to his disciples, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove,—he did not mean to imply that they had not the smallest degree of the faith which is necessary to salvation, for they were really in a state of salvation ; but he meant that they had none of that miraculous faith, which was a gift peculiar to the age. When St. James says that faith without works is dead—that the devils believe and tremble, he must refer to an historical or speculative faith, which is the bare assent of the understanding to the existence of truth ;—for the belief of the heart is unto righteousness, and is known by its fruits. When, therefore, it is said, Believe and thou shalt be saved, a kind of faith different from either of these must be intended. The difference between the faith of the intellect and that of the affections is often apparently marked in the sacred volume by a slight difference of language. When the former is spoken of, the word believe almost always immediately precedes the word expressing the object of belief.—“ If ye *believe* not his writings how shall ye believe my words ?” —that is, *regard them as true*. On the contrary when the latter is spoken of, the particle *or* or *in* generally occurs between the word believe and the object of faith.—“ How can they believe *in* him of whom they have not heard ?” “ Believe *on* the Lord Jesus

Christ, and thou shalt be saved"—that is, *trust in him, rely on him*. The faith that justifies and saves is a cordial and entire reliance, upon the atonement and righteousness of Christ—a receiving of Christ into the soul, in all his offices as revealed in the scriptures.

Saving faith appears in various exercises, according to the various objects in view of which it is exercised. That faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, is a particular exercise of saving faith ;—is included in it as a part in the whole.—There is, indeed, an exercise of speculative faith corresponding to this exercise of saving faith. A man may have a kind of belief in things hoped for and things not seen, without being governed by them, as easily as he can have a kind of belief in Christ without embracing him as the only Saviour, and obeying him as the Supreme Lawgiver.

But the faith intended in the text is genuine ; for it is that without which, as it is said in the context, it is impossible to please God,—and to illustrate which by its effects, a long catalogue of eminent saints is introduced.

The object of the present discourse is to consider the *nature*, the *reasonableness* and the *effects* of faith in the invisible things of religion.

I. The nature of this faith.

Faith is the substance, [or subsistence,] of things hoped for and the evidence, [or, according to the strong meaning of the original word, the demonstration,] of things not seen.

That is, faith in its full exercise regards the future, and unseen things of revelation as though they were really present and visible ; and allows them the same influence upon the temper and conduct.

The first part of the passage respects future good only ; for nothing else can be the object of hope.

The latter part is more general. " Things unseen" include all the objects of revelation, that lie beyond the reach of our senses. They embrace those examples in the catalogue subjoined to the text, which have no concern with " things hoped

for"—such as the creation of the world, and its destruction by a flood. Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, was moved with *fear* to prepare an ark.

The meaning of the text, then, taken as a whole, may be thus expressed—Faith is a full assurance of the reality of all the invisible objects pertaining to religion, so clear and firm as to produce the same effect, as if they were before the eyes in a visible, substantial form. A man needs only to glance at the lives of that family of the faithful arranged under the text, to be convinced that the idea of *effect* enters into the very nature of this faith. It does not deserve the name of faith without it. It is a living principle, that reigns in the heart, flows out in the life and overcomes the world.

It is no shadow—no dream of a bewildered imagination; but a sober, thorough conviction of the judgment, the conscience, and the heart,—founded upon infallible evidence and wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God.

No such monuments, as these erected to the honor of faith in the achievements of her worthies, could be built upon a visionary foundation. But to be more particular.

We are the creatures of sense—surrounded by sensible objects. We acquire our ideas of these objects, either directly or indirectly, through the medium of our external senses; and we are inclined to believe in their existence, upon the evidence of our senses, rather than any other. Though there may be other evidence as conclusive in the amount, yet nothing seems to satisfy us like this—we have seen with our own eyes—we have heard with our own ears. Thus when we are called upon to believe in the existence of an invisible object, we are inclined to turn instinctively to the same source for evidence,—as is often the case in children with respect to the existence of God; and when reason forbids us to expect such evidence, we are inclined to supply its place as nearly as possible by imaginary forms.

This inclination is kept alive, by the constant use which we are obliged to make of the same language in speaking of invisible objects, as in speaking of those that are visible.

Thus in speaking of God, whom no mortal eye hath seen, or can see and live, we use language borrowed from the form and properties of man, which inclines us to figure to ourselves an imaginary being similar to man.

When we speak of Heaven as the dwelling-place of the Most High—of his being seated there upon a throne, we may imagine that in some region of ineffable brightness and beauty, above these visible skies—somewhere amid suns and systems, one like the sovereigns of earth sits upon a similar throne, surrounded with similar ensigns of power and royalty—not considering that God is a Spirit, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. And it may be supposed by some, that it is thus we are to set the Lord always before our eyes—and live as seeing him who is invisible.

We may imagine a beautiful person with open arms and a benign countenance, beckoning and beseeching us by the sight of his bleeding hands and side, to come and embrace him—and this may be called a glimpse of the love of Christ by an eye of faith—believing on him whom we have not seen.

We may imagine a city with foundations of precious stones, and streets of gold, and gates of pearl—filled with an innumerable company of happy spirits arrayed in white, with palms, and harps, and crowns—and then call this an exercise of that faith which gives substance to things hoped for.

To let our fancy wander through an ideal paradise, filled with every thing that can regale the senses, may be thought the same thing as to have our conversation in Heaven.

We may imagine a bottomless pit, filled with all the horrid images of that prison of despair—and call this that faith which keeps eternal things in view.

I do not mean that this vivid conception of invisible objects is never found where there is true faith. It frequently accompanies it, and when not employed upon God himself, may sometimes strengthen it, if the foundation of the faith itself be something more solid. That it should is agreeable

to our nature, and to Divine wisdom, as appears from the language and whole tenor of the Bible.

But what I mean is—that the liveliest conception of things unseen is not faith itself—is no part of it—no exercise of it. It may exist where there is no spiritual discernment—no heart-felt conviction—not a spark of that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

The imagination may be awake, or it may be asleep, while the child of God is in the exercise of a genuine and lively faith in invisible things.

It may be awake. This is often the fact for some time after old things have passed away, and all things have become new to the regenerated soul.

It may be asleep. This is often the fact in the established saint—one whose contemplations on invisible eternal things have long been so familiar, as to have acquired a consistency of meaning without being embodied into imaginary representations on which to fix.

He can now exercise faith in Christ, and come to him in the spiritual sense of scripture, without any thing like an image before the mind; and though now he see him not, yet believing in him, he can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

He has been so long accustomed, upon the testimony of him who cannot lie, to regard the state and the abode of the righteous after death as unspeakably happy and glorious, that the bare mention of Heaven without any allusion to sensible objects, may awaken the strongest desires, and rouse to the most vigorous action. His faith has become emphatically spiritual, and yet so consistent and steadfast that he rests his all upon it, and is at peace.

Though his imagination may no more attempt to conceive the things that are prepared for him in Heaven,—still knowing whom he has believed, he is as fully satisfied, as confident of their reality, as if they were in actual sight, and actual possession.

Blessed indeed is the man with such a prospect of Heaven—for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto him, but the Father who is in Heaven.

This is solid, spiritual, effectual faith—that faith which is the subsistence of things hoped for, and the demonstration of things not seen. It is a serious, thorough conviction of the judgment, which the conscience approves, and the heart embraces; and is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God.

We are to consider,

II. The reasonableness of this faith. It is reasonable,

I. Because it is founded upon evidence.

Skeptics have treated the idea of such a faith with contempt; and ridiculed its possessors as pitiable visionaries, who trust in a phantom. They believe, they know not what, but their belief makes it true—say they with an air of triumph. We know what we believe is our reply; and our belief is reasonable, for it is founded upon evidence. They pronounce it impossible for a man in the exercise of a sound understanding, to believe in the existence of God while invisible, as really and fully as if he were visible. But if the existence of God while invisible be as certain as if he were visible, it is not only possible, but reasonable that our belief should be as certain.

The evidence in support of the Divine existence amounts to absolute demonstration. If God were visible it could amount to no more. The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made—for things that are made must have a maker.

A visible appearance of the Godhead, therefore, could not make his existence more evident than it now is. As much as this is rendered probable by the effect of those few occurrences in nature, which seem to approach the nearest to such a visible appearance. The thunder and earthquake seem to speak a present God in plainer language, than many other events, which are really exhibitions of equal power, because their recurrence is less frequent, and their instrumental cause less obvious.

But, though they strike the senses more strongly at first, they do not render the Divine existence more necessary and evident, than the growing harvest and the flowing stream.

If we had seen the sun rise this morning for the first time, it would have struck instantaneous conviction of the existence of an unseen Almighty hand, while we were trembling with the expectation of seeing it followed as a forerunner, by some yet more visible display of the Godhead breaking forth from the hiding-place of his glory : but the rising of the sun this morning was really the same thing as its first rising ; and consequently the evidence of the Divine existence is the same that it was on the first morning of time.

It is reasonable then, that our belief should be as firm as it would have been, had we been present with rejoicing angels at the creation of the heavens and the earth, and had heard the Almighty command " Let there be light." And I repeat it, if we had seen God himself with our bodily eyes, such a sight, though it might overwhelm our senses, could not make his existence more evident than it now is, in the view of sober, candid reason—could add nothing to the evidence upon which a reasonable faith is founded. Moses had no more evidence of the Divine existence, after having been upon Mount Sinai, and conversed with God forty days by an audible voice, than he had before—and his faith was the same as before, and the fruits of his faith in his life were essentially the same.

It is then possible and reasonable to believe in an invisible God, whose existence cannot be otherwise than certain, as really and firmly as if he were visible.

And it is further possible and reasonable, in virtue of this belief, to exercise love towards him, as readily as if he were visible.

What is it that we love in our friend ? Is it any thing which we see in form or feature ? or is it the secret soul within ? We may indeed behold expressions of his lovely qualities in his countenance, but these attract us only as they indicate the character of the soul which we love.

And so the child of God beholds expressions of intelligence

and benevolence in the face of the earth and heavens ; but they only lead him to love that Eternal Spirit, who operates unseen and animates the whole.

That faith which is the subsistence of things hoped for, and the demonstration of things not seen, so far as it relates to those invisible objects which God has revealed, is also possible and reasonable, for it is founded upon the evidence of infallible testimony—even the sure word of him who cannot lie. Is it not possible and reasonable for an American, who never crossed the ocean, to believe in the existence of such a country as England or India, as really and firmly as if he had seen it? And is it not possible and reasonable for a man who has never crossed the Jordan of death to believe in the existence of a heavenly Canaan, as really and firmly as if he had seen it?

The merchant does not maintain a commerce for fifty years with a country whose existence is a mere matter of opinion with him, and not of absolute belief. No—he believes its existence as positively and firmly as he could if he had seen it a thousand times ; and he would never think of saying upon the first sight of it—Now I am satisfied of its existence. His belief is founded upon the testimony of his fellow-men. The Christian's belief in the existence of a heavenly country, is founded upon the testimony of God.

The merchant's belief is beyond all dispute, and has never been disturbed for a moment by the least shadow of a doubt. And it is perfectly reasonable ; for it is founded upon testimony which is morally certain ;—which however, if we were disposed to meet the skeptic in his own way, we might attempt to weaken, by calling it the testimony of creatures who are all liable to mistake and full of deception—while the testimony of Christ, who came from Heaven—proved that he did, by the nature of his errand, by his miracles, his own character, and the character of his gospel, is the testimony of one who spake as never man spake—one who was infallible in knowledge, and who was truth itself. And must one who believes in the existence of a country which he never saw, so

confidently as to govern all his plans, and risk all his worldly interests in virtue of such a belief, as promptly as if it were founded upon actual sight, be pronounced perfectly reasonable—while another who believes in the existence of an invisible Heaven, so confidently as to govern all his plans, and risk his eternal interests in virtue of such a belief, as promptly as if it were founded upon actual sight, is pronounced unreasonable ?

Has the child of God, then, no reason to give for his faith, as well as his hope ? Is he who walks by faith and not by sight a visionary ? Is he not rather the only man who grasps at real substance ? And is not his faith the only belief that deserves to be called reasonable ?

If we will not believe in the invisible realities of eternity upon infallible testimony—if we will not believe Moses and the Prophets, the Apostles and the Son of God himself, neither should we be persuaded, though one arose from the dead, and appeared to our mortal eyes—Though Lazarus should come down from his celestial seat, clad in the habiliments of light—or the rich man rise from his place of torment with the dark appalling countenance of a fiend—though all heaven were opened to our view, and we lived and acted all the while beneath a transparent sky through which all the glories of the upper world, from the throne in the centre to its utmost boundaries were distinctly visible, and the eyes of every being there were seen fixed upon us, and followed us in all our movements—though hell itself were naked before us, and destruction were stript of her covering.

Faith in things future and unseen, which are objects of promise or threatening, is reasonable,

2. Because it is founded upon the immutable perfections of God.

This idea has been partially anticipated, or rather implied ; in as much as it is the ground of that infallibility of testimony, upon which rests the truth of all the invisible objects of revelation except the Divine existence itself ;—but its importance demands a distinct consideration.

All the attributes of God are engaged to perform his word—whether it be a promise or a threatening—whether it be to save, or to destroy—to plant and build, or pluck up and pull down. But his power and veracity are conspicuous, and therefore claim more particular attention.

If God is both able and faithful to perform his word, the foundation of the believer's faith standeth sure—and the inference follows that it is reasonable.

In proof of the power and faithfulness of God, in performing his word, we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. The apostle begins with the creation, proceeds onward through a long line of patriarchs and prophets, and rising with the inspiration of his theme, is borne along from example to example, until time fails and he is obliged to fill up at once the chasm from David to his own day, with a flood of wonders that were wrought, and sufferings that were endured. In all these examples the effects of faith are not more manifest, than are the power and faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

I shall notice two or three examples, in which the most implicit confidence in the word of God was not in the least degree disappointed.

The faith of Noah was exercised in view of promises and threatenings—promises to himself and family, and threatenings to an ungodly world. By faith, Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

When God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, he said to Noah, who alone had found grace in his eyes—The end of all flesh is come; behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every living thing that is in the earth shall die; but with thee will I establish my covenant. He commanded him to build an ark for the saving of himself and his house-

hold. And thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Had his faith been less than implicit, and less than the demonstration of things not seen, he might have raised a thousand scruples respecting the certainty of such an event as God had predicted, and the practicability of such an undertaking as God had commanded. Who hath seen such a thing? Who hath heard such a thing? How shall the beasts of the field be assembled from their dispersion, two by two into the ark, and the fowls of the air collected from the four winds? Will not the flood leave us still a refuge in the highest mountains?

But no—thus did Noah; according to all that the Lord commanded, so did he—without saying a word. The Lord hath spoken, was enough for him. He seems not to have thought of looking beyond this for evidence—or of starting any objection to it from the region of improbabilities and impossibilities; believing with his whole heart that all things are possible with God, and though earth and heaven also pass away, his word should not pass away.

He showed by his conduct, that his faith was as full and firm, as if he already saw the heavens opening, and the torrents descending—the fountains of the great deep breaking up, and the waters rushing in upon every side. The event proved that his faith was reasonable—but what became of an unbelieving world?

The history of Abraham's faith is still more remarkable. The Lord said unto Abraham—Up, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make thy name great—will make of thee a great nation, and will bless thee.

Once satisfied that this was the voice of God, he arose, and without questioning the reasonableness of obeying such a command, or trusting such a promise, went immediately out, not knowing whither he went. And was he following a phantom, in thus submitting to be guided by an unseen hand?

Was it unreasonable to be thus led by the Spirit of God? Let the sequel answer this question.

But the severest trial of his faith was yet to come. The tender father is commanded to take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, the very child given according to the promise of Heaven, and in whose single person the existence of the great nation of descendants promised to him, and I may add, the veracity of his God, were at stake, in the sight of an unbelieving world—the child of all his hopes and prayers—the child of his fond old age—he is commanded to take this object of interest so exclusive—to tear him away from ties so endearing and prospects so bright,—and under the collected weight of all these circumstances lead him off alone to a distant mountain, and there, on the altar of blood and burning sacrifice, with his own hands—take the life which in any other situation he should have preserved at the risk of his own. How many objections might a weak faith have raised against obeying such a command. Its nature, and object—could it come from the eternal Father of mercies? How long might a weak faith have found some pretence for waiting to be satisfied again and again, that such was in reality the command of Him whose goodness is infinite and everlasting.

But no such weakness of faith appeared in the father of the faithful. Without a doubt or a murmur he bowed his head in silence at the well known voice of the Lord, and then departed with that lamb by his side whose unsuspecting dutifulness must have stung him to the heart, while they went both of them together, with the wood, the fire and the knife, all that mournful way to the place appointed for the unexamplèd sacrifice.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was *able* to raise him up even from the dead.”

Faithful is he that hath promised, was all in all to the holy patriarch. “He staggered not at the promise through unbe-

lief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was *able* also to perform." And he did perform it. He *did* give his seed the land of Canaan for an inheritance—he *did* multiply them as the stars of the sky, and as the sands by the sea-shore innumerable.

God has ever showed himself to be a faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy to a thousand generations. The bow in the cloud is a witness for him. Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, are perpetual witnesses. As God is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever,—his power and veracity are as much engaged for the performance of all his promises and threatenings, as they were for the performance of those which we have contemplated. Their performance then is as certain, and consequently our faith in view of them should be as firm and effectual. God hath appointed a day of judgment. And the language of unbelief is—"where is the promise of his coming?" for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the creation—The sun rises and sets;—the moon and stars withdraw not their shining—the seasons hold on their course uninterrupted. The heavens are calm over our heads, and the earth is steadfast under our feet:—We see nothing of danger, we hear nothing. But God destroyed the world by a flood according to his threatening; and he will as surely destroy it by fire according to his threatening.—He saved Noah and his family, according to his promise,—and he will save all that flee into the Christian's ark of mercy according to his promise. He gave the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham, according to his promise—and he will give to his Son the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession—and he will give to all his children an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away.

If then that faith which is the subsistence of things hoped for, and the demonstration of things not seen, was reasonable in Noah and Abraham, as the event abundantly proves, the same in Christians now with respect to things still future

and unseen, is also reasonable,—for it is founded upon the same immutable perfections of God.

We come now to consider,

III. The effects of this faith.

These effects are numerous and great ; but they are all expressed in one sentence from St. John—“ This is the victory that *overcometh the world*, even our faith.”

Faith overcomes the world.

The world is seen :—Heaven is hoped for. Sense governs those whose hearts are in the world ;—and faith those whose hearts are in Heaven. Both cannot reign together. One therefore must overcome the other. In them who are born of God, this victory is given to faith.

It overcomes all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It treads the world beneath its feet, triumphs over it, rises above it, and stretches forward into futurity.

It looks upon this life as a dream, an empty show, for it has an eye upon the end, and upon that eternal life beyond. It turns from the trifles of time, to grasp the realities of eternity—weans the affections from things below, and sets them on things above.

It renders afflictions light and momentary, by contemplating that far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, which they shall work out. In bringing distant and invisible scenes into present view, it gives them all the influence of realities, over the temper and conduct.

Such was the power of faith in those whom the apostle has enumerated. By faith Noah overcame the world, as well as condemned it. While all around him were eating and drinking as if the earth were to abide forever ;—he stood alone on the high and holy ground of implicit confidence in God, he stood alone a preacher of righteousness, warning them of the fatal day ; and, though made a gazing-stock, went on unmoved, with the work of preparation.

“ By faith Abraham sojourned even in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac

and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:—for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

“ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly, that they seek another and a better country, even an heavenly.”

“ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

And what shall I say more ? for the time would fail me to tell of—prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, who believed all things, and under the mighty influence of this faith performed all things, hoped all things, and endured all things,—of prophets who stopped the mouths of lions in their den, and quenched the violence of the fiery furnace ;—of apostles and martyrs, who wandered about destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy—who were stoned and sawn asunder,—but who in the tortures of martyrdom accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection—even to eternal life.

This is indeed overcoming the world, and all that is therein,—and triumphing over the grave, by the power of faith.

“ Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let *us* lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before *us*, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Faith overcomes the world, by keeping eternal things in view.

A spiritual discernment of invisible eternal realities, which is the conviction of the judgment, conscience, and heart—which is founded upon the immutable perfections of God, and is wrought in the soul by his Spirit,—is a light, that shows all beneath the sun to be vanity.

While we look steadfastly at the things which are unseen and eternal,—the things which are seen and temporal appear in their true character, and lose their power.

If at any time the world appear so inviting, as to cause a sigh at the thought of leaving it, faith despoils it of every charm, by seating us upon the ruins of the last conflagration.

When the world presents her intoxicating cup—faith dashes it to the ground untasted, while she points to a holy God, and a judgment to come.

When the world would overcome us by her frowns or flatteries, faith steps in, and gains the victory, by giving us a glimpse of our resting-place.

Faith takes us away from earth and time, and carries us forward ten thousand ages into eternity ;—bids us turn, and from that point look back upon this world—then O how she triumphs over it !

Faith overcomes the world by surrounding us with the presence of the invisible God.

To set the Lord always before us—to live as seeing him who is invisible—must turn away the eyes from beholding vanity, and keep the heart from minding earthly things. While we feel that we cannot flee the notice of his eye, that we are beset behind and before, and that his unseen hand is upon us, what power can the world have to lead us astray ?

Faith overcomes the world by revealing a refuge in the invisible God.

In this warfare with the world we all need an Almighty arm to protect us and bear us up, lest we fall and be overcome ourselves. The contest is not yet decided—the final victory is not yet ours. We are weak—our enemies are ma-

ny and powerful. We are in the enemies country, beset with dangers, and kept in constant alarm by foes without and fears within. We want then a tower, a strong-hold, into which we may run and be safe.

Amidst all the trials and vicissitudes of life, we want an object of trust beyond the reach of change, on which we may rest forever without wavering—that our confidence may become a habit so inwrought with our very existence, that when we cease to trust, we may cease to be.

Faith discovers such a refuge—such an object of trust,—in the invisible God.

With a faithful God for his portion, the believer wants nothing here. He lets the world pass. With the eternal God for his refuge, he has nothing to fear. His victory is certain. He will not fear what flesh can do unto him. Though an host encamp against him, he will not be afraid. The Lord is at his right hand, and he cannot be moved.

He can look into the grave without fear, while he knows—*knows* in whom he has believed, and is persuaded that he is *able* to keep that which he commits into his hands, and *faithful* to remember it at the rising of the just.

He can even look upon the end of all things without trembling ; for while the heavens are passing away, and the earth and the works that are therein are burning up, he shall hear the Almighty Judge from his throne in that great and terrible day, saying to him in accents of infinite mercy—with all the condescending tenderness of a reigning Redeemer—“ It is I, be not afraid.” From his ark of safety he shall see the flood of Divine wrath coming upon the world, and while the unbelieving and ungodly are fleeing to the mountains, quaking with fear and wailing because the day is come, “ he will not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea—though the waves thereof roar and be troubled—though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”

“ The Lord of hosts is with him—the God of Jacob is his refuge.”

This is the final triumph of faith. The warfare is over, and the victory complete. Her trials are at an end:—her reward is come—the reward of her patience, her prayers and her tears. She opens her eyes upon the sight of all that she believed, and loses herself in the enjoyment of all that she hoped for. The believer has now done forever with beholding through a glass darkly: henceforth he sees face to face; henceforth he sees as he is seen, and knows as he is known, and loves as he is loved.

SERMON XIII.

JEREMIAH, ii. 32.

“Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.”

IN looking over the face of society, among many features characteristic of human nature, forgetfulness of God strikes the eye of contemplative piety as not the least prominent. To listen to the conversation of the vast multitude, to watch them in their innumerable pursuits of business and pleasure, and to follow them into the retirement of the family, is to find melancholy proof of their inclination to forget the great and good Being that made them. Nor will any candid man find, in the retirement of his breast, less convincing proof of this strong and universal inclination. Were there nothing to bring the eternal God to mind, but the natural disposition of men, he would not be in all their thoughts. Left to themselves, when would they begin to inquire after the Author of their being and their blessings, in order to render him the tribute of gratitude and obedience? Never!—Neither in the boasted innocence of childhood, nor in the loveliness of youth, nor yet in the wisdom of manhood, nor even in the sobriety of age. The millions of one generation after another would live through every period of their mortal course, without any devout recognition of their Creator; and death would find them all, in every important respect, without God in the world—without any love to his infinite excellence, any hope in his mercy, any fear of his justice, or any knowledge of his perfections.

And now that he has revealed himself in so many ways, in manifestations so clear, coming in from every quarter, to bring him to view, the conduct and condition of multitudes, even in christian lands, is hardly less lamentable. These find themselves in possession of an intelligent existence, destined to be prolonged for ages without end ; and yet this gift of an existence so exalted, is enjoyed, as if it were no gift of divine benevolence, but a blessing of their own procuring, or conferred on them in the revolutions of chance, and therefore bringing with it no governing weight of obligations to a higher power. They find themselves upheld, and borne along from one year to another, in the midst of all the instruments of death in operation around them, and yet they seem to care not by what almighty hand. They find their path scattered with a rich variety of mercies, but the hand that scatters them is unseen and forgotten. Thousands pass through life, not only without any spiritual knowledge of their Maker, but even without any serious thoughts about him. When they look upward to the glories of the firmament, they see not the glory of God. When they look around on the loveliness and munificence of earth, they see not the loveliness and munificence of God. They look upon the universe as an empty edifice, and not as the abode of the omnipresent Maker of all things. Were the sun as near the earth as the moon is, it would cover the whole visible heavens, and all above and around us would be nothing but one blazing firmament. This image affords but a faint illustration of the glory of the all-surrounding Divinity ; and yet these men see him not. In him they live, and move, and have their being ; and yet they feel him not. He speaks to them in the soft accents of mercy, and in the thunders of omnipotent justice ; and yet they hear him not. He is about their path by day, and their bed by night ; he is ever behind them and before, on the right hand and on the left ; and yet they live all this while unconscious of his presence. They live at ease without even inquiring whether he have any claims upon them or not, and whether he will be their friend or their enemy, and will make them happy or miserable be-

yond the grave. They live as if there were no God of holiness on the throne, whose eye is ever fixed upon them, and to whose righteous tribunal they are hastening with the speed of winds. They overlook the infinite Jehovah; they think not of him. They can think of any being but him—any being but that God, whom all the hosts of heaven contemplate with unceasing adoration, and whom they would remember, though every other object in the universe were forgotten. They can employ their thoughts with intense interest on the veriest trifles of the world; but they cannot thus employ them on the great and glorious Jehovah. A maid cannot forget her ornaments, nor a bride her attire; but the offspring of the infinite God can forget him days without number. Yes—they can do it days without number. Life is not too long to be all spent in forgetfulness of God.

In the observations that have now been made, we have before us a fact, that ought to be as alarming to us, as it must be astonishing to angels. It cannot be denied to be a fact of deep and fearful interest to us, as helpless creatures in the hands of this forgotten God, and bound by every possible obligation to remember him without ceasing, and with all the love of a humble and holy heart.

With this fact in view permit me to call your serious attention to the following remarks respecting it.

I. Forgetfulness of God is consistent with enmity towards him.

It is evident that the forgetfulness spoken of in the text is of the most literal kind—that in which God is not in all the thoughts. This is the forgetfulness, which has now been presented to your view, as a fact of dreadful moment. Men are said to forget God, when they refuse to acknowledge their obligations to him, and to fulfil these obligations. This they can do, and still think of him. My present object, however, is to show that this kind of forgetfulness is included in that under consideration. It may be asked, if it be possible to feel enmity towards any being, without thinking of him. In answer to this question, it may safely be asserted, that men

can be enemies to a fellow man, without being always conscious of the existence of active enmity towards him. They can be such at the time, that there is in reality no direct enmity in exercise towards him, and even while he is not present to their thoughts. Subjects of an earthly monarch are surely his enemies, when they take the ground of rebellion, so that every act of theirs becomes in effect an act of hostility to his throne; and yet the idea of him may not be always before them. Subjects of the divine government hate the king of heaven, when they are at war with him. They are at war with him when they live in wilful and habitual violation of his laws; and this they can do while he himself is far from their thoughts. What command of his can they not break, and still not think of him? Can they not profane his Sabbath, his house, and even his name, and yet not think of him? Can they not neglect his word, his worship in the family, and in the closet, and all their duties to him and his creatures, and still not think of him? And have they then no enmity towards him? Can the righteous monarch of the universe regard them as friends, or as no enemies, though they leave their obligations to him thus unfulfilled, and live in open rebellion against him? Has he so little respect for the laws which he has given to us, that the uninterrupted violation of them is considered by him as evincing no hostility to himself? May the statutes promulgated to our world with such overwhelming majesty, and enforced by sanctions of such eternal weight, be treated as idle words, and yet the Governor of the world be regarded with love, or without hatred? So far is forgetfulness of God from being inconsistent with aversion towards him, that it marks that aversion as great, and stamps upon it the character of no ordinary guilt. When men, for instance, have become so accustomed to profane the name of God, as to do it without any thought of him, they surely are no more the friends of God, than they were when the commission of this crime brought him to mind at once, and filled them with trembling.

If men are justly required to obey God, then are they furnished with the means of obtaining a knowledge of his requirements, and with a natural power to obey them. To refuse to obey must therefore be an act of hostility to God; and this act may be committed while God himself is far from the mind.

It is certain that God cannot be loved, while days and months and years are suffered to pass without any serious thoughts about him, for an object of love is an object of frequent meditation. But in moral and accountable creatures, not to love God is to hate him. There is no ground that men can occupy, between the dominion of allegiance and that of rebellion—no ground where they can cast off their obligations, and live as they list, without being either the friends or the enemies of God.

Men may be said to be in heart opposed to God while they are not thinking of him, if this opposition is brought into action whenever the true character of God is clearly presented to the mind.

In these several ways may men be regarded as at enmity with God, while they are living in forgetfulness of him. While he is far from their thoughts, they may break his laws, when they cannot do it without hostility to himself; they may neglect to love him, when they cannot do it without hating him; and they may possess a spirit, ready to be waked into feelings of direct enmity towards him, whenever he is brought distinctly to view. Thus may men live day after day at enmity with the High and Holy One, while not an action is performed, nor a word is uttered, nor an idea is conceived, in which his existence is voluntarily and immediately recognised.

II. Forgetfulness of God is occasioned by enmity towards him.

It may be thought, that when men live in forgetfulness of God, it is because he is not an object of sense, while they themselves are, and are placed in the midst of other sensible objects, and acquire their ideas of them, either directly or in-

directly, through the medium of their senses. God they see not—they hear not. No image of his personal glory is always before them; no blaze of it bursts at times on their view. No voice from his throne in the skies reaches their ears; and from the invisible air around them they never catch the soft accents of his love. But may not an earthly friend, while unseen and unheard, be an object of constant remembrance, especially if we have before us the written expressions of his friendship, and are surrounded by tokens of it in the works and gifts of his hand. The cause of this constant remembrance of such a friend is to be found in the state of our hearts towards him. And if God thus reigned in our affections, or if the state of our moral feelings were such as to render it natural for us so to love him, he would be as constantly remembered, encompassed as we are by the wonders of his power, and loaded as we are with the blessings of his providence and his grace, and having before us the written declarations of his love to us. From what then can habitual forgetfulness of God proceed, in such circumstances, but from aversion towards him? Could men move about in a world, where every object bears the bright impress of a divine hand, and yet live in such forgetfulness of God, if they did not dislike to retain him in their knowledge?

Some may think that God is thus forgotten because he is infinitely above mankind in the scale of existence. It may be urged that the difficulty of fixing our thoughts on an infinite Being, the impossibility of comprehending him, and the weariness of the labouring mind in making the attempt, unite to prevent his being a subject of frequent contemplation. It may be said that the human mind must of necessity find more pleasure in contemplating subjects more on a level with its capacities—subjects in which investigation is attended with greater success, and what is sought after is more within the reach. It may be thought that the intellectual powers of an angel are necessary, to render the infinite God a pleasant and therefore a frequent subject of meditation. It must be acknowledged that there would be some force in these consid-

erations, if in order to think of God in a devout and profitable manner, it were necessary to regard the mysteries of his existence as an eternal and omnipresent Spirit, rather than the moral perfections of his character as the Lawgiver and Judge of the world. A child can easily think of God as a holy and a merciful being; and the wisest man on earth can go but little further, without meeting difficulties that he cannot remove, or wandering in the midst of useless speculations, or losing himself in clouds and darkness. Or at least it is the peculiar province of piety, to contemplate God as such a being, and leave it to philosophy to indulge in conjectures respecting the mode of his existence. The humblest intellect may understand enough of God, as the benevolent Father and righteous Governor of the universe, to furnish inexhaustible themes of contemplation. Why then need any live in forgetfulness of him? Why do any live thus? Why is there one to be found, who rises in the morning, and goes through the business of the day, and lies down at night, and does all this as an habitual thing, without any thought of God? Why are there so many thousands that live thus? Must not this dreadful uniformity of conduct in such multitudes spring from the same source? And can any thing but hatred to the divine character be the source of such conduct? Would men, once possessed of the knowledge of God, ever cease to remember him, if he were the object of their supreme delight? Would God ever be shut out of the mind, if he were not first shut out of the heart? Would he have been forgotten as he has been in our world, if the first parents of our race had retained their original love to him, and all their descendants had felt towards him no other emotion? Have not the great multitude of every generation spent their days in forgetfulness of God, because they have first said to him from the heart, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?"

Want of time or means, for obtaining and preserving the knowledge of God, cannot be the cause of this forgetfulness, any more than the spirituality of God, or his infinite greatness. For what is time given, but to be spent in obtaining

the knowledge of God, and in performing his will? And why are the volume of nature, and that of inspiration, with all their divine wonders, spread before our eyes so constantly, if it be not that they may be as constantly read, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the perfections and the requirements of God? What have we to do on God's earth, if not to ascertain our relation to God, and so to live in view of it, as to prepare for another and a better world beyond the grave? And can we so neglect this great work of life, as to forget God, and still plead in our excuse the want of time or means to do otherwise? We may make such a plea with our lips; but we never can feel it to be sufficient, to satisfy God or our own consciences. I ask then again, what but enmity to God can be the cause of this forgetfulness?

Can it be that the consequences of living in such forgetfulness, and the consequences of pursuing the opposite course of conduct, are so unimportant in themselves, or so little different from each other, as to afford no preponderating weight of motives, in favour of avoiding the former course of life, and choosing the latter? Do any live in forgetfulness of God, because no evil is to be feared from it? or because they believe that there is none? And, with the bible in their hands, are they excusable for such a belief? Does not even this spring from hatred to the character of a holy God? Can the consciences of men be so perverted or seared, that they can live in forgetfulness of God all their days, and still expect, and feel that they have reason to expect, nothing but good from it in the world to come? Are sinners able so to stifle the voice of God within them, that it shall never utter a whisper respecting the claims of his violated law, and waken "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment?" However this may be, it will not alter the fact, that there is something for transgressors to fear beyond the grave. It will not turn the truth of God into a lie. It will not dissolve the connexion between sin and misery. It will not make the broad and downward way end amid the glories of the upper world. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

And is there not in such a doom as this, enough to keep alive that remembrance of God, by which only it can be avoided? Is there not enough to do this, when on the other hand a heaven of unutterable blessedness is the reward of such remembrance? With ruin impending on one hand and salvation inviting on the other, can men choose the way of transgression, from the want of sufficient motives to fix their choice on the way of obedience? On the contrary, does not the fact, that they can make such a choice in such circumstances, afford the most convincing proof, that it must be made under the influence of as deep and dreadful a principle, as that of hatred to the character and requirements of Jehovah? From what but such a principle, could they derive sufficient moral hardihood, to live at ease without God in the world, in the certain prospect of losing all that is glorious in the immortality of heaven, and bringing upon themselves all the woes of a ruined eternity? If men can live in forgetfulness of God in such circumstances, can they do it from any reason but enmity against him? Will any other reason be given at the tribunal of the last day? Among all the excuses that may now be urged for such conduct, will there be one that death shall not sweep away, or the solemnities of the judgment put to silence?

From the view that has now been taken, of the subject under consideration, I trust that our minds are in some measure prepared, to acknowledge the truth of the following reflections.

1. The depravity of mankind is great.

It would seem as if the thought of such a being as God, after once entering the mind of man, would never leave it for a single waking hour. How can he but be wrapt up continually in this solitary thought? Why is it that all whom we meet, are not thinking of him, in whom they live and move and have their being? On the contrary, why is it so possible, that not one whom we meet is thinking of him? Why is it so certain that the great multitude of every land and of every generation live in forgetfulness of him? Who are the creatures that

thus forget their Creator ? And what world is this in which they dwell ? Have they no understanding, to obtain the knowledge of God ; and no memory, to treasure it up ; and no conscience to feel the obligations involved in it ? Is this little round of months and years the whole of their existence ? And is this world of theirs a dark and desolate spot in the universe, without one ray of divine glory, or one trace of the divine presence ? Is there nothing here to bring the eternal God to mind ? In all this earth are there no voices to plead for him ? Is all as silent as the grave ? Has no voice from heaven reached the ears of mortals ? Has no book of laws and overtures infinitely benevolent been handed down to them from the throne of the Most High ? Has no redeeming blood been shed for them ? Has no Spirit of truth and grace been poured out upon them ? Has no bright pathway been opened for them from the tomb to the skies ? And have they been surrounded by no mighty array of means and motives to press them into it ? If such were the condition of men in this world, then might it be expected that God would not be in all their thoughts. But their condition, however lamentable, would not be one of immeasurable guilt as it now is. Are we struck with horror at the guilt of those angels, that rose in rebellion against God at the very foot of his throne, and, casting contempt upon his righteous authority, and upon his infinite goodness, threw away all the glory of eternal life in his presence ? And can we regard with insensibility the guilt of men, who banish from their minds the thought of God, while they are living at the very gate of that path, which the Son of God, with tears and conflicts and dying cries, has opened for them, up to the lost thrones of those apostate angels ? Can it be believed that men, who thus banish God from their thoughts, and do it from enmity against him, still retain any trace of his moral likeness ? Talk they of the dignity of their nature ? Do they glory in the marks of their high origin and intrinsic worth, that are to be discovered amid the ruins of the fall ? It is true that they still possess the faculties of a rational existence ; but what dignity is

there in so abusing them, as to change them from blessings into everlasting judgments? It is true that they are still immortal; but what intrinsic worth is there in an immortality, which, after a few days of trouble and vanity, they would gladly exchange for the doom of the beasts that perish? When we hear men, that live without God in the world, boasting of their exalted rank in the scale of being, what do we hear but infatuated immortals exulting at the thought of occupying a height, from which their fall will only be the more certain and dreadful? Why should any glory in being allied to angels and to God, by the possession of an intelligent and imperishable soul, if by wanting all moral affinity to them, they only fit themselves to be driven from them into eternal exile? Will the thought of their intellectual eminence mitigate the horrors of that exile? Will the recollection of their high origin reconcile them to an end in the depths of hell? Will they become satisfied with such a doom, by gazing up into heaven, and ranking themselves with its inhabitants in understanding and immortality, when they cannot but remember that they should have been with them in that happy world, had they been like them in moral excellence? Will they then think but little of their moral degradation, while they lived on the earth, surrounded by the light of heaven's open gates? Will there then appear but little depravity, in spending this life in forgetfulness of God, from latent enmity against him? On the contrary will they not look back upon such a life, with amazement at their blindness and insensibility? Will they not cry out against the strange infatuation that possessed them, and hurried them through a career of vain pleasures, far away from their Maker and from all enduring good? O the bitter memory of their guilt! How gladly would they bury it, by burying themselves under everlasting mountains! My impenitent hearers, beware of such a day, when the light of truth shall burst upon you and blaze around you only to make visible the darkness of despair. Spend no more time in making work for such remembrance. Think of your past guilt as it is, ere the hope of deliverance be gone. Wait not

to learn in the world of retribution, how dreadful a thing it is to live unmindful of him, who is the Arbiter of life and death.

2. The enmity of them that forget God here will be greatly increased hereafter.

This must be acknowledged to be a dreadful reflection, if the truth of it be not doubted. No such doubt can exist in the minds of any, who receive as true the preceding remarks, on forgetfulness of God, and on the great cause of it. For if men can possess enmity against God, while they live in forgetfulness of him, and in such a world of mercy as this, who can deny that their enmity must upon natural principles be far greater, when they shall live with God ever present to their thoughts, and in a world of unmingled justice? If there be in unregenerate men in this life, an enmity towards God, which is waked into exercise when his holy character and government are brought but faintly to view, and constitutes the secret spring of moral action while they are out of sight, how can we avoid the inference, that this enmity will be greatly augmented in the life to come, when the holiness of God shall be the object of unobscured and uninterrupted vision? Who does not shudder at the thought? Who does not feel a trembling of terror at the bare possibility, that such a strong and undying enmity against the divine character and government may take possession of his soul hereafter? Do any flatter themselves, that they shall be able to escape from the anguish of such enmity, by banishing God from their minds? Banish him they cannot. They may forget him in this world, where he surrounds them with the blessings of his providence and his grace; but they cannot forget him in that world, where he shall pour out upon them the vials of his wrath. They will there behold no bright and happy scenes, like those of earth, to keep him in view. There will be above them no heavens like these, to declare his glory,—no firmament like this, to show the work of his hand. No day unto day will utter speech; nor night unto night show knowledge. No sun and moon will rise and set at his bidding. No innumerable host of stars will roll over their heads, meeting

the eye wherever they look, and filling the vault above with the light of his universal presence. No revolving seasons will spread around them all the riches of his goodness. No bible will reveal to their sight the wonders of his love. No Sabbath with its hallowed stillness will call them away from scenes of tumult and iniquity, into the calm retirement of communion with God. No sanctuary will open its doors to invite them into the gate of heaven. No cross will be erected as a monument of his mercy. No Holy Spirit will be sent down from heaven, to give energy to his truth, and make known the fulness of his grace. There will be none of these things, to keep God in view; but there will be the remembrance of them all. They can then forget God no more, till the power of memory be gone. And O think, my hearers, what misery there must be, in spending eternity, in contemplating the perfections, and the ways, of a God forgotten in time. But there will be more than the memory of the past to bring him to mind. There will be the deep and abiding sense of his present justice, in inflicting upon them the punishment which they suffer. He will be deemed afar off only as respects the resemblance of character and the union of love. In other respects he will be regarded as nearer than ever. They will see him as he is. They will see him, and hear him, and feel him, as beings that are all sense, and thought, and feeling. The idea of him as he appeared on the judgment-seat, measuring out to them their portion for eternity according to their works, will never leave them. The sound of his voice, as he passed upon them the sentence of returnless banishment, will ring forever in their ears. They will sink forever under the weight of his almighty hand pressing them down. Does this look as if he derived a malignant pleasure from their sufferings? The sufferers themselves cannot think so. If they could, it would take away the bitterness of their cup. They will be convinced of no truth more deeply, than of the benevolent equity of their Judge. And yet will they feel any the less enmity towards him? Did they feel less while on earth, as they obtained a clearer dis-

covery of this truth, and a firmer belief of it? On the contrary, was it not then the benevolent equity of God, in threatening them with endless punishment, that more than any thing else excited this enmity? And will not this very thing excite it in a far greater degree, when they are enduring that punishment? I say again, this is indeed a dreadful reflection. But what is there, in the doom of the wicked beyond the grave, that is not dreadful? This reflection is not merely an inference from the preceding premises, depending wholly upon their correctness. If they could be proved false, this would still be true; for it has the word of God for its foundation. With the weeping and wailing of the bottomless pit there will be mingled the blaspheming of irreconcilable enmity against God. Again I ask, Who does not shudder at the thought? And who that has feeling enough, to shudder at such a thought, can live at ease without obeying the command of God, "My son, give me thy heart?"

3. Many are greatly deceived respecting their disposition toward God.

They think that they have no enmity against him—that they never had any. But why do they think so? Is it not because most of their time has been spent in forgetfulness of him? Is it not because this enmity has not been always in direct exercise? And when they have occasionally felt it stirring within them at some exhibition of the justice of God, have they not been ready to flatter themselves, that it is felt only against a false view of the divine character? The true character of God they would fain think that they love, and that all men love and must love whenever it is presented to them. They pronounce it impossible for men to hate a being of infinite goodness, and when that being is the author of their existence with all its blessings. On the other hand they pronounce it impossible for men to love God, when his goodness is made to include infinite justice. Was it then a false view of the divine character, which Christ exhibited in his preaching, when he affirmed of the men of the world, that they had both seen and hated both him and his Father? The

character which Christ ascribed to God, was certainly his real character; and it was this which he declared to be thus hated by all except his few disciples. The fact that this character was thus hated proves, that it was not represented as one, from which transgressors have nothing to fear.

And now, my impenitent hearers, let me say to you with becoming faithfulness, Be not deceived respecting your feelings toward the true character of God. Think not that Christ misrepresented the divine character, or the human heart. Think not that you have no enmity against God, because you are not generally conscious of the exercise of any. Are you generally conscious of the exercise of any love toward him, or even of any thought about him? Come directly to the test of his word. If you love him you keep his commandments. Do you then keep them? Can you say in sincerity, that you make it your constant business to obey God in all things? How has it been with you the past week? Fellow-sinners, come to the test. By this trial you will see what is in your hearts toward God, if you are willing to see it. Have you lived through the last week without prayer? If you have, is not your case a plain one? Can you fail to see your own moral image? Can you escape from the sight? Does not the command, "Pray without ceasing," meet you on one hand; and the declaration, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," meet you on the other? And are you not compelled to stand trembling between them, and acknowledge that you are destitute of the love of God? And after this acknowledgment, must not the further declaration, "He that is not with me is against me," rise to your view, and flash into your minds the truth, that you are numbered among his enemies? Or are you determined that you will not be brought to this conclusion by any such process of reasoning? Will you oppose your own consciousness to the united testimony of God's word and your conduct? What can this avail you, when you see the vilest of men do the same? Ask them if they hate God, and they will answer, No! we feel that we do not. But ask them, if they pray daily; and

they answer, No!—Do they keep the Sabbath holy? No!—Do they always speak the name of God with reverence? No!—And yet they will tell you, that they have no enmity against him? But can you believe them? Do you not stand amazed at their blindness? And can you be insensible to your own? Can any thing but the power of God open their eyes? And what else in the universe can open yours? Again I say, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked”—*No, he is not mocked.* “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

SERMON XIV.

JOB, viii. 9.

“ For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.”

THE brevity of human life is illustrated in the word of God by a variety of the most striking comparisons. The days of man are said to be swifter than a weaver's shuttle. The generations of the human family are said to be carried away as with a flood. Life is called a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. It is likened to the grass of the field, which is gone soon as the blasting wind of the east passes over it. It is likened to the flower, which groweth up and flourisheth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withered. It cannot be necessary to say any thing, to show the propriety or force of these similitudes. We have only to look around us, to see them justified in their full extent by an uninterrupted succession of facts. Not only are they appropriate and forcible, when applied to the life that is terminated in childhood or youth; they are but little less so, when applied to that which is prolonged to the utmost limit allotted to man on the earth. For to an immortal being how little in reality is the difference between ten years and eighty, or between the life of a single day and that of a century. It is a difference, which it would seem will hardly be thought of, after we have spent ages in the eternal world. How like the passing and fading vapour of an hour appears to us at present the life of our first parents, and of their immediate descendants. And when we have

existed a thousand times as long, as the whole period from the beginning to the end of the world, it would seem as if, on looking back to this dawn of our existence, we shall hardly remember whether its length was one year or twenty years, or fifty or three score and ten. Children are cut down like flowers of the morning; youth pass away like the bright vapours of noon; and the aged spend their years as a tale that is told. One generation after another is carried away as with a flood; centuries follow each other like shadows of flying clouds; and time with all its ages, will be as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

In the passage selected as the theme of the present discourse, this brevity of human life is given as the reason of the small amount of human knowledge, or rather as a reason why this amount must be at most but small. "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow." How can our knowledge be great, when we have existed only as it were since yesterday? We have not had time to learn much. We have been in being but just long enough, to look around on a few of the works and ways of God, and make a few inquiries respecting his character and his will, and respecting our own state and prospects, and come to a few conclusions on these important subjects. Our days on the earth are so like a fleeting shadow, that we can only begin to learn before they are gone. We can cast only a look or two on a single page of the vast volume of nature, before our eyes are closed in death. We can search but a hand's breadth into the treasures of wisdom and goodness in the providence of God, before we stumble upon the dark mountains and drop into the grave. We can only begin to speak or hear a little of the wonders of holiness and mercy in the revelation of Jesus Christ, before our lips and our ears are sealed up in the sleep of the tomb. The most learned in secular knowledge may justly say, at the close of the longest life, "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow." The same may be said with equal propriety, and in like circumstances, by those

who have made the greatest attainments in divine knowledge. This was said to the holy and venerable patriarch Job, by one of his three friends and counsellors, in a day of mysterious calamity. And it was said with direct reference to that knowledge which relates to the moral character and government of Jehovah. Job is requested to inquire of former ages, and search into the history of men of past generations, in order to learn whether the Almighty would pervert justice, whether he would cast away any but for their transgressions, whether he would not awake for the help of them that sought him, and whether he would not make prosperous the habitation of the pure and upright, and make the paths of them that forget him, like the rush and the flag, that wither in their greenness as soon as the water at the root is gone. It is in the very midst of these subjects of inquiry that the text is found; and the knowledge spoken of in it is most evidently that which relates to these and similar subjects. It is divine knowledge, or perhaps more generally the knowledge of religious truth. On the great subject of religion, then, in its infinite extent and variety of particulars, in its height and depth, its length and breadth, we know but little in reality, and we know nothing in comparison with what there is to be known, and that because we are of yesterday, and our days on the earth are a shadow.

If in the remarks that have now been made a correct view has been given of the direct meaning of the text, we may derive from it indirectly the following sentiment:—The religious knowledge of saints will become unspeakably great in eternity. The time will come when they can no longer say, that they are but of yesterday; and they can never say that the days of eternity are as a shadow. They will not be interrupted at the very commencement of their progress. The darkness of death will not overtake them just as the light of truth is beginning to shed on their path a few glimmering rays. The ages of immortality, as they roll away, will afford a period long enough for them to make attainments in knowledge, far beyond the conception of mortals. Nor can it be

believed, that they will see those ages roll away, and live in the midst of higher orders of intelligences, and near the great source of all light, and yet make in reality no such attainments.

But it may not be unprofitable, to consider more particularly some of the arguments, in support of the sentiment, that the knowledge of saints in eternity will become unspeakably great.

1. The subjects of their knowledge are infinite. They can therefore never be exhausted by finite minds. Here is room for everlasting efforts and attainments. Here is a race set before immortals, to which there is no end; but a higher and higher prize at every step invites them onward forever. The character and government, the works and ways, of the infinite Being on the throne of the universe, will afford an unlimited field, for the discovery of new treasures of wisdom, and wonders of benevolence. It may seem at the first thought that nothing new can be discovered in the perfections of God. And it is doubtless true, that the light of eternity will show us no new perfection—none of which we are now wholly ignorant. There is no reason to think that we shall hereafter become acquainted with any new attribute in the character of God, as they who go into eternity from heathen lands will come to the knowledge of his mercy through the redemption of Christ, when they may have been before entirely ignorant of the existence of such an attribute. On the contrary we have the best reason to believe, that, with the book of revelation open before us, in addition to the book of nature and that of providence, we are now able to ascertain all the constituent principles of the divine character. But is this the end of all possible or all desirable knowledge of God? Is this finding out the Almighty to perfection? Is there not beyond this, enough even for angels to learn, and enough for eternity to teach? Though we know that God is possessed of infinite wisdom for instance, are we acquainted with all the proofs of that wisdom, and with every manifestation of it in the kingdom of nature and of providence and of grace, from the fall

of a sparrow, to the revolution of a world, and to the death on Calvary? Though we know that God is infinitely holy, do we know every thing involved in this attribute—every thing which it requires God to do, in all worlds, and in relation to all his moral creatures? Though we know that God is infinite in mercy, do we know all the instances in which that mercy has been or shall be exhibited, and all the instances, in which it may be, or may not be, consistently with the honour of his throne and the highest good of the universe? And thus we may say of the other attributes of God. Well then may we exclaim, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” However much we may have studied the works and the word of Jehovah, we have not learnt a thousandth part of the whole, that is to be known respecting his attributes. Indeed we can say no more than that we have begun to learn.

But the attributes of God are not the only exhaustless themes for contemplation, and subjects for everlasting growth in knowledge. To these we may add his natural and moral government, his providential dealing towards the human family in various ages, and towards different nations and individuals in all their variety of circumstances, and his work of redeeming love in all its mysteries and glories. It is true that these subjects, and others of the same general kind, are not entirely distinct from those contained in the personal attributes of God, for the knowledge of the works and ways of God leads directly to the knowledge of his attributes, and the latter increases with the increase of the former. These subjects are mentioned separately, for the purpose of giving our thoughts a wider range, over the different branches of the primary and ultimate subject of all religious knowledge, the infinite God. All religious truth is truth relating to God; and all centres in him. To grow in religious knowledge is to grow in the knowledge of that Being, who fills immensity and inhabits eternity, and who is the overflowing fountain of light

and life and joy to the universe. The history of the material creation, is a history of the power and the goodness of God. The history of providence is a history of the righteousness and loving-kindness of God. The history of redemption, the history of the church, and the history of every ransomed and sanctified soul, are all histories of the perfect holiness and everlasting mercy of God. And whenever any one becomes the theme of meditation in heaven, it leads all the thoughts to God. He is then in reality the one great subject of contemplation in that blessed world; and being a subject literally infinite in extent and glory, why should not all the inhabitants of heaven grow in knowledge through interminable ages? And if their eternity be so employed, will not their knowledge become unspeakably great?

2. The capacities of the soul will never fail. Whether they will be greatly increased or not by an immediate act of the Almighty, as soon as the soul takes its happy flight from earth and enters the world above, is perhaps not determined in the word of God. It is evident from several passages that the children of God will acquire a great increase of knowledge immediately after the change produced by death. They will at once become acquainted with many things, which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, and which had never entered into the heart of man. The opening of the heavenly world at death, to the man who has lived by faith in its invisible glories, is like the first view of the starry firmament, to a man just cured of a natural blindness, after having learnt something of astronomy, and believed upon the testimony of others in the existence of thousands of grand and beautiful orbs while yet unseen. But from the sudden increase of knowledge, after the saint's departure, it cannot with certainty be inferred, that his capacities must be increased in like manner. The most that can be inferred is, that such an increase is probable, in the case of those who die in childhood. But whether this be the fact or not, there is unquestionable evidence, that the capacities of the soul are in no case diminished, either at its departure from the body, or at any

subsequent period of its immortal life. If then on entering the world of spirits they should only remain as great as they are here, and should afterwards increase only by the natural expanding and strengthening power of increasing knowledge, who can measure the attainments that may yet be made in the ages of eternity? Let us look for a moment at that progress in knowledge, which the human mind is capable of making on the earth, though it be comparatively nothing, because the days of men on the earth are a shadow. Let us look at the growth of knowledge, from childhood to old age, in the mind of a Newton. At first he becomes acquainted with one object after another in the dwelling of his parents, then with the objects immediately around it, then with those in his native valley, then by the help of books with those in his country, and those in the four quarters of the globe, with their mountains and rivers and seas and islands, then with the history of all the empires and all the generations of men, then with the nature and the action of the elements, and the laws of the mineral and vegetable and animal kingdoms, and then with the magnitudes and distances and revolutions of those planetary worlds, attending one of the eighty millions of suns discovered in the boundless firmament. Though the knowledge here described be called secular and generally used as such, yet this progress in it illustrates no less clearly the capacities of the human mind. But this knowledge may be brought to bear on the subject of religion, and may be consecrated to the service of God, and thus become in effect like that which is more appropriately called religious knowledge. Let us then look at the mind of an Edwards, making the vast progress just mentioned, and employing all its attainments for holy purposes, and at the same time adding to it, in the unlimited range of truth more strictly religious, a similar progress, from the first idea of the being of a God, to the knowledge of his various attributes—of his creating all things out of nothing—his filling all places with his presence—his sustaining and directing every thing that lives and moves—his ordering all things in the natural world throughout the changes

of day and night and seasons and years—his maintaining a providential government of judgments and mercies over every nation and through every age—his revealing himself as the moral Ruler of his intelligent creatures, giving them laws which are holy, just, and good, in their nature, and in their eternal sanctions—his creating mankind in his own holy image—his providing a way of infinite wisdom and mercy, for their recovery from the ruin of the fall, by the incarnation and death of his Son as a mediator—his raising this mediator from the grave, and exalting him at his own right hand, to intercede continually for all his followers—his sending down the Spirit of truth and grace, to give repentance of sin and faith in the blood of atonement, and thus to sanctify and save the soul—his bringing life and immortality to light in the gospel—his proclaiming the future rising of the dead, and assembling of all nations before his throne for judgment, and their receiving an eternal allotment of joy or wo, according to the deeds done in the body—and his establishing a church in the world, and preserving it through the revolutions of empires and amid hosts of enemies, and his promising to make it at length the glory of all lands—and in short his revealing by his word a vast system of doctrines and duties, connecting heaven and earth, angels and men, time and eternity, creatures of yesterday and their eternal Creator. If then the human mind is capable of rising so high, and reaching so far, and grasping so much, in this momentary life; and yet all this knowledge is called nothing, by him who sees what remains to be known; can we doubt that the mental powers, should they only continue hereafter what they now are, will be forever employed by the saints above, in learning more and more of the perfections, the works, and the ways of the Most High? Can we believe that these powers will be inactive in the midst of a universe of divine wonders? Will the redeemed in glory dream away the ages of eternity? Or will they do nothing but sit down and enjoy the reward of their earthly labours and sufferings, and feed the flame of holy love with the knowledge acquired on the earth? Will they pant after

no more? Is not heaven a world of light as well as of love and enjoyment? And is not that light the source of that love and enjoyment? Will they not then open their eyes, and keep them open forever, to behold it? Though we know not the particular means, by which they may receive instruction, or the particular manner in which they make attainments in knowledge, have we not reason enough for believing the fact, and for believing therefore that their knowledge will become unspeakably great?

3. All hindrances to growth in knowledge will be removed. In the present life there are many and various things to retard this growth. Many of the necessary occupations of men are such, as to contribute little or nothing to its advancement, and leave but little time for its advancement by other means. Thousands are kept in a state of comparative ignorance by poverty; and thousands are kept in such a state by slavery. The outward circumstances of vast multitudes in every age are such, that they have but little opportunity for making progress in knowledge. There are comparatively few, who have it in their power to devote half of their time, to the acquisition of knowledge, to be employed in the service of God. Other hindrances arise from the natural constitution of men and from their moral propensities. These bodies of flesh and blood, with all their diseases and infirmities, often hang as it were like a dead weight upon the soul. Through their influence the powers of the mind are often disordered and enfeebled. They require that one third of our time should be spent in sleep,—that is, ten years in thirty, twenty years out of sixty. The moral condition of men is also a great hindrance to their growth in religious knowledge. The depravity of their hearts naturally awakens a hatred of the light, and has a constant tendency to bring on a dreadful blindness towards it. Its natural effect is to excite prejudice against the truth, to turn away the eye from beholding the proofs of it, or the judgment from acknowledging their weight, or to fill the soul with unbelief respecting it. To prevent this effect

requires the constant exercise of the opposite principle of holiness. In no case however, not even in that of the most eminent saint, is the principle of holiness so uniformly powerful, as altogether to prevent this effect from remaining depravity.

But in the world above all these hindrances will be removed. There will be no sin to pervert the judgment, and hide the evidences of truth, and bring a cloud of darkness over the soul. There will be no high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God. Among all the inhabitants of heaven, there will never be a moment's dislike to retain God in their knowledge. It will never enter into the heart of any to say to the great and good Being on the throne of heaven, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." There will be no mortal bodies, to clog the wings of the soul with their wants and weaknesses, and to require an almost uninterrupted succession of labour and sleep for their support. No chains of sense will be there, to bind down the faculties of the illimitable mind. The soul will be all eye to behold the truth, and all ear to hear it, and all intellect to comprehend it, and all feeling to glow with the love of it, and of its eternal Source and glorious End. There will be nothing in the outward circumstances, to drive or to tempt the soul away from the study of the infinite subjects of knowledge. It will be free to expatiate forever over the boundless extent of religious truth. And will not this liberty be enjoyed? Will not the untiring spirit—having escaped from the bondage of sense, and shaken off the incumbrances of flesh, and laid aside every weight of sin, and having shone forth in perfect freedom on the plains of immortality, and fixed upon Jesus an unchangeable look—will it not then run with delight the endless race set before it? And will not every voice in the great cloud of witnesses around bid it God speed forever? Who then shall ever say to it, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further?"

4. The motives to growth in knowledge will always be powerful. There is probably, among speculative believers in Christianity, a very general impression, that when eternal

misery has been escaped, and eternal happiness secured, so that the fear of the one and the hope of the other exist no longer, the great governing motives to obtain religious knowledge will be taken away. They seem to think, that when once the sound of "Come ye blessed" has greeted the ears of the redeemed, and the gates of the celestial city have opened to receive them, and an impassable gulph has been fixed between them and the far-off prison of despair, they will sit down in the contented enjoyment of present good, and seek to know no more of the infinite Jehovah. Nor is it strange that such an impression should prevail among men, who take no delight in religious truth for its inherent excellence, and desire an acquaintance with it for no other purpose but to secure their own safety. Though the child of God cannot be insensible to the love of happiness and the hatred of misery, and though he ought not to be, yet he is capable of feeling a mighty influence from another motive, or from the same motive operating in another manner than by the mere hope of heaven and dread of hell. His happiness is directly promoted by a discovery of the intrinsic glory of divine truth, and of him who is the great subject of it; and while this happiness is enjoyed, he cannot but be excited to search for further discoveries. Here then is a powerful motive, which will last when the hope of heaven is consummated in its actual enjoyment, and the fear of hell is lost in the assurance that this enjoyment shall never end. This motive may perhaps be denominated the love of happiness. The happiness however is any thing but selfish; and the love is any thing but selfish. Both are purely disinterested; both are high and holy as heaven. This motive may perhaps be regarded as a general one, including such particulars as the love of truth, the love of holiness, and the love of the general good, from all of which there flows an exalted pleasure, by which the love itself is strengthened. Or the general motive, including these and all others felt in heaven, may be called the love of God. And from what we know of the operation of this principle on the earth we may safely argue, that the joy arising

from the exercise of it in eternity will prompt the soul to use the proper means for augmenting the power of the principle itself. These means are found in an increase of the knowledge of God. In that blessed world, where every thought, as well as every affection, is sanctified, there is the best reason to believe, that the more there is known of God, the greater will be the love to him. The saint that is highest in knowledge will be highest in love, for all his knowledge will be employed to swell the tide of love. As he looks in one direction, he sees some new manifestation of divine wisdom; his love glows afresh at the sight; and the increase of joy which follows becomes in turn a strong motive to continue the search. He looks in another direction, and sees some new manifestation of divine holiness; and the same effect is produced. He looks in yet another direction, and sees some new manifestation of divine benevolence; and the effect is still the same. Thus is he borne forward on the wings of a love that grows stronger and stronger forever. His spirit will never grow weary in its flight, and will never wander from its course. Who then shall set bounds which it cannot pass? Who can measure the amount of knowledge which it will gain in a progress without termination, when it breathes the atmosphere of love, and lives in its glowing element, and moves and acts under the full impulse of its ever-growing power.

Having now considered some of the reasons, why it is probable that the children of God, who know comparatively nothing in this momentary life, will acquire knowledge unspeakably great in eternity—having shown this probability from the infinite subjects of knowledge, from the unfailing capacities of the soul, from the removal of all hindrances, and from the operation of everlasting motives, the discourse will be closed with two brief reflections.

1. The view which has been taken of this subject shows us the extreme folly of being stumbled at mysteries in the present life. It is the declaration of God, that while in this world “we know but in part,”—nay, that “we know nothing,”

compared with the immensity of truth that is to be known. Life is so transitory that we have not time to make great advances in knowledge, encompassed as we are by so many powerful obstacles, from a body of flesh, a heart of iniquity, and a world of temptation.

It may be important to remark in this place, that the smallness of knowledge, within our reach on this side of the grave, is not spoken of in the bible as an excuse for indolence in the pursuit of it. Nor does it furnish ground for that skepticism, which finds nothing but difficulty every where, and throws the darkness of doubt over the whole subject of religion. All the essential principles of Christianity, involving our present duty and preparation for our immortal destiny, we are permitted—nay, we are commanded to know. Here all is light; no one need stumble in this noon-day, and grope as if he had no eyes. But beyond this sphere of practical truth there is an unlimited field, where are heights which we cannot climb, depths which we cannot fathom, and labyrinths through which we cannot find our way. And we have reason for everlasting gratitude to God that there is such a field for future discovery, and that it is now beyond our reach, lest it should draw us far away from the plain path to heaven.

2. From the view which has been taken of this subject, we learn the glorious destiny of the children of God in eternity. Following them in thought beyond the bounds of earth and time, and far along the ages of their immortal state, we behold them tracing with an angel's pen the characters of truth stamped on every part of the great volume of the universe; and while eternity pours in its light from every quarter we behold them rising higher and higher in the knowledge of God, as well as advancing from one degree of grace to another, and from glory to glory. For the sake of illustration, let us suppose that one of the patriarchs of the infant world, after having received a revealed account of the recent birth of time and the creation of the heavens and earth, and after having obtained all the know-

ledge within the reach of the wisest and best men of his generation—let us suppose that he had then been made immortal here below in the full possession of all his powers, and had been carried forward from one generation to another, down to the present, and had gathered from each all that man could gather, respecting the works and ways of the Most High, and were now in possession of the whole, with what admiration should we behold him—and how like an angel's flight, would seem to us his future course, amid scenes continually multiplying and brightening, into the glories of the millennium, and onward to the consummation of all sub-lunary things. But how soon do we lose sight of this man's exaltation, when we look at that of the man who has lived as long, or a thousand times as long, in that world which is in the highest sense full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,—and where that knowledge is increased continually by the many bright and burning spirits, that fly to and fro through the universe,—and where Divine Wisdom lifteth up her voice in the streets of gold, and crieth at the openings of the pearly gates, and in the chief place of concourse for saints and angels before the throne of heaven,—and where there is no need of the sun or the moon, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light and the glory forever. When we look at a mountain, whose summit is among the clouds, we feel within us an expanding and elevating emotion; but how would this feeling be strengthened, were we to behold it continually growing wider and rising higher. And it is a glorious sight to behold an intelligent being rescued from the dominion and the condemnation of sin, and from the ruins of a burning world, and set down on the shores of immortality; but how is the glory increased, when we behold him moving forward in an endless course of improvement—growing wiser and holier and happier—his crown ever brightening, and his voice and his harp sounding sweeter and louder in the high praises of eternity.

