



*Epitaph of the Theological Seminary,*

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

*Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.*

SCB  
10295





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2011 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library



REV. THOMAS ROBERTS, M.A.

REV. OF J. JACKSON, B.A. DEAN OF W. I. RY.

*of the University of the Holy Spirit, in the Diocese of...*

REMAINS,

THEOLOGICAL AND POETICAL,

OF THE

REV. THOMAS ROBERTS, A.M.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY JAMES BUCKLEY.

AND A GENERAL PREFACE,

BY GEORGE CUBITT.

LONDON :

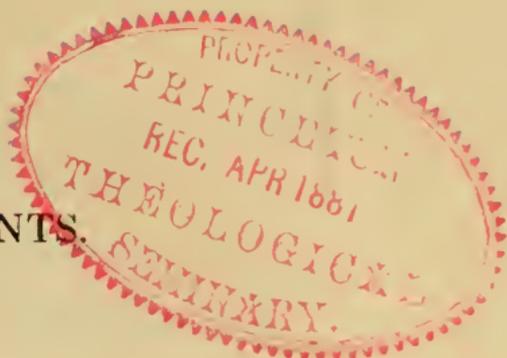
SOLD BY SIMPKIN & MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT ;  
AND BY JOHN MASON, 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

---

1838.

---

LONDON :—Printed by James Nichols, 46, Hoxton Square.



CONTENTS.

	Page.
GENERAL PREFACE.....	vii

MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. THOMAS  
ROBERTS, M.A.

<i>Dedication</i> .....	3
<i>Preface to the Memoir</i> .....	5
<i>Memoir</i> .....	11

SERMONS AND SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

SERMON I. <i>Preached at the South Wales District-Meeting, June 12th, 1811; immediately after the Rejection of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, for limiting the Toleration-Act. (Isaiah lxi. 5.)</i> .....	203
II. <i>Illumination, Help, and Comfort. (Psalm cxlvi. 8.)</i> .....	225
III. <i>Confident Expectation of the Divine Blessing, the Ground of Encouragement in the Cause of Religion. (Neh. ii. 20)</i> .....	243

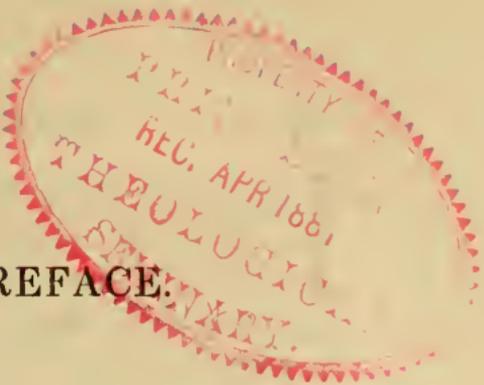
	Page.
SERMON IV. <i>Preached under the Sycamore-tree, at Kingswood, on Mr. Wesley's Birth-day. (John i. 6, 7.)</i> .....	268
V. <i>Job's Sincerity. (Job xix. 28.)</i> .....	281
VI. <i>Missionary Exertions considered in their Object and Obligations. (Isaiah xl. 3—5.)</i>	291
—	
SKETCH I. <i>Devout Solitude for a Revival of Religion. (Habakkuk iii. 2.)</i> .....	307
II. <i>Sanctified Bereavement. (Job xxiii. 10.)</i> ..	316
III. <i>Evangelical Obedience rewarded. (Isaiah xxxiii. 15—17.)</i> .....	321
IV. <i>The Sinfulness and Redemption of Man. (Romans iii. 22—24.)</i> .....	330
V. <i>Christmas-day. (Matthew i. 3.)</i> .....	335
VI. <i>Good-Friday. (Zechariah xiii. 7.)</i> .....	339
VII. <i>The Rest of the Soul. (Psalm cxvi. 7—9)</i>	343
VIII. <i>Believers the Subjects of Divine Illumination. (Ephesians v. 8.)</i> .....	346
IX. <i>The good Man in Affliction. (Psalm cxix. 107.)</i> .....	349
X. <i>The Season of Harvest improved. (Isaiah ix. 3.)</i> .....	353
XI. <i>Primitive Christian Preaching. (Acts viii. 35.)</i> .....	359
XII. <i>The ready Preacher and the devout Hearer. (Acts x. 33.)</i> .....	363
XIII. <i>The Doer of the Work blessed in his Deed. (James i. 25.)</i> .....	369

	Page.
SKETCH XIV. <i>Christian Diligence.</i> (2 Peter i. 10.) . .	372
XV. <i>The Vanity of Man.</i> (Isaiah xl. 6—8.) . .	375
XVI. <i>The Effects of the Outpouring of the Spirit.</i> (Isaiah xlv. 1—5.) . . . . .	381
XVII. <i>For Good-Friday. Part I.</i> (Isaiah liii. 10.) . . . . .	384
XVIII. <i>Good-Friday. Part II.</i> (Isaiah liii. 10.)	389
XIX. <i>Preached in Connexion with the Formation of a Bible Society.</i> (2 Thess. iii. 1.)	393
XX. <i>The Work and the Effect of Righteousness.</i> (Isaiah xxii. 17.) . . . . .	398

## HYMNS AND OTHER POEMS.

<i>St. Matthew xxv.</i> . . . . .	407
<i>Written at his Lodgings in Bandon, Ireland, in 1787—8</i>	408
<i>On the Death of Mr. Wesley</i> . . . . .	409
<i>A Wanderer</i> . . . . .	411
<i>Missionary Questions and Answers</i> . . . . .	412
<i>Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his People.</i> . . .	414
<i>Encouragement</i> . . . . .	415
<i>Twilight</i> . . . . .	416
<i>Job xix. 28.</i> . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
<i>Christmas-day</i> . . . . .	417
<i>Sanctified Affliction</i> . . . . .	418
<i>The Song of Moses</i> . . . . .	420
<i>Morning Hymn.</i> . . . . .	423
<i>Evening Hymn</i> . . . . .	424
<i>Some Persian Verses imitated.</i> . . . . .	425
<i>New Year's Day—1819</i> . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
<i>A Hymn for a Child, on New Year's Day.</i> . . . . .	426
<i>Hymn, to the Spirit</i> . . . . .	427

	Page.
<i>The Sluggard</i> .....	427
<i>The Forget-me-not</i> .....	431
<i>Nunc Dimittis</i> .....	<i>ib.</i>
<i>We all do fade as a Leaf</i> .....	432
<i>Gaudilla and Lavinia</i> .....	433
<i>St. Matthew vi. 33.</i> .....	436
<i>Joshua vii. 19, 20.</i> .....	437
<i>Psaln xxiii.</i> .....	438
<i>Messiah</i> .....	439
<i>Amos iii. 1—6.</i> .....	440
<i>A Hymn in Praise of the Author of Nature</i> .....	441
<i>Psaln xx. 1, 2.</i> .....	443
<i>Numbers x. 29</i> .....	444
<i>The Fall of Antichrist</i> .....	445
<i>Paraphrase on Psalm cxlviii.</i> .....	446
<i>Horace's Twentieth Ode, Book II. imitated</i> .....	450
<i>Horace's Fourth Ode, Book I. imitated</i> .....	451
<i>Abraham interceding for Sodom</i> .....	453
<i>2 Samuel xxiv. 14.</i> .....	455
<i>Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9.</i> .....	456
<i>Morning</i> .....	457
<i>Noon</i> .....	459
<i>Jeremiah xiv. 7—9.</i> .....	467



## GENERAL PREFACE.

---

I HAVE been requested by the children of my much-respected friend to write a general preface to the volume containing the Memoir of their father by the Rev. James Buckley, and a selection from his manuscripts, theological and poetical. I could not refuse such a request, unless I had first forgotten the many happy hours I had spent in his society, and the advantages I had derived from his neighbourhood during a long season of deep personal and family affliction. What I may term my direct and personal acquaintance with Mr. Roberts, began in the year 1825, when I was appointed to the Bristol Circuit, where he was then residing as a Supernumerary Preacher. We were opposite neighbours, and, for three years, (at the end of which I removed from Bristol, and he went to reside at Bath,) not many days passed in which there was not some intercourse either between ourselves, or some of the members of our respective families. If, therefore, my acquaintance with him was short, it was nevertheless close and constant, and afforded me every opportunity of noticing what one of his friends has, with great precision, called his "interior character;" the only difficulty in perceiving and describing which, the respected writer very forcibly states. (p. 187.) There was a remarkable agreement between the interior and exterior character of Mr. Roberts; between that moral and intellectual form which his mind had

assumed, and those visible expressions of the inner man which his ordinary life presented to the inspection of others. He was free from guile; he was free also from those little artifices and concealments which sometimes obscure the excellence of the truly good man, and which, in point of fact, disguise nothing, and make no other impression on the beholder than that of littleness and infirmity. In the character of Mr. Roberts there was an almost transparent simplicity; he appeared just as he was, without display or effort, with all his excellencies, and with all his failings. His whole deportment was so unconstrained, that they whom he admitted to his friendship at once felt themselves to be perfectly *at home* with him. There are persons whose principles are substantially right, who, nevertheless, appear to have an ambition to enact a character not naturally their own, and, in attempting this, every movement is marked by stiffness and formality. It may be observed, in passing, that this is a line of conduct always to be carefully avoided. An artificial character never attracts, and sometimes it even repels; for it is impossible to avoid the approaches of a suspicion, that though all *may* be in perfect unison with the character maintained with such resolute labour, yet that the cloak and mask *may* conceal that which the wearer is perhaps even more anxious to conceal from himself than from others. The Christian is bound not only not to disgrace the doctrine of God his Saviour, but to adorn it in all things; and this cannot be done unless in “SIMPLICITY and GODLY SINCERITY, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he has his conversation in the world.” Not, indeed, that he is to parade his defects. There is

often as much ostentation in this as in the display of excellencies, and a great deal more viciousness. Men seldom bring forth their own failings for condemnation. They refer to them with seeming candour, but with the real design that they may be denied, or extenuated; or, which is frequently the case, met by a counterbalancing ascription of abundant good. Of all this I saw nothing in Mr. Roberts. He was a fine example of open-hearted honesty. I had every opportunity of seeing him just as he was; and as I saw him, so I believe he was. I most willingly add my testimony to those which are given in the following Memoir. The writers had known him much longer than I had, but they could scarcely esteem him more. But they knew him well, and they have described him accurately. Indeed, after these descriptions, and especially after the beautiful, correct, and instructive one drawn up by my esteemed friend Mr. Lessey, any additions from myself would be worse than superfluous. There are one or two observations, however, which I may be allowed to subjoin. They will have a far higher object than either eulogy or description, and may be useful to the reader, while he is perusing the varied events of the life of Mr. Roberts, in assisting him to derive from them their proper and intended moral.

The lines of Dr. Young,—

“ Heaven gives us friends to bless the present scene,  
Removes them to prepare us for the next : ”

are often quoted, and perhaps admired whenever read; but, however true the last line may be, the former expresses only a part, a very small part of the design of Providence in those various gifts which constitute what is generally considered as temporal

prosperity. It may be doubted whether these gifts are ever bestowed for the sole (or even the principal) purpose of "blessing the present scene,"—taking the words in the sense which ninety-nine readers out of every hundred will give to them; that is, for the purpose of promoting our personal comfort and enjoyment. All the dispensations of Divine Providence, in reference to "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," have one great object; and though, ordinarily, that object is best promoted by those chastenings which we have called "ADVERSITY,"—in the same spirit of querulous unbelief that led the Patriarch Jacob to exclaim, "All these things are AGAINST me,"—yet is it sometimes promoted by a series of events whose external character is very different, though their ultimate design is the same; namely, "that we may be partakers of his holiness." If the word, "bliss," be thus taken,—and properly speaking, thus it always ought to be taken, for we are never blessed except when our growth in grace is promoted,—then is it delightfully true that

"God gives us friends to bless the present scene:"—

that all which makes our temporal condition prosperous is given in reference to that higher prosperity of which the holy apostle speaks in the verse which so strikingly exemplifies both the kindness and the holiness of Christian character: "Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH." Such gifts will generally be found connected with freedom from the ordinary engagements of life; and large intervals of leisure will be the result, which, if industriously occupied, will be the means of an extensive improvement, both intellectually and spiritually con-

sidered. Nor are extended opportunities of usefulness to be overlooked. Access is afforded to those who dwell in the more elevated ranges of society, and who might not permit the approaches of truth,—not at least in the first instance,—unless introduced by one who dwelt among themselves. But, chiefly, a state of flourishing prosperity is calculated to develop with great power all the latent energies of the soul, the minuter principles of character; just as the mighty heat of a tropical climate gives an expansiveness and strength to vegetable organization and life, utterly unknown in colder regions. And when the whole man has been, and still is, placed under the direction and control of Divine truth, considered as the expression of Divine will, then will the developement of latent energy be, to a very large extent, the developement of personal virtue. Mental improvement, pursued under these circumstances, and referred to the more powerful defence and exposition of truth, is virtuous. Sympathy, cherished for the sake of the great High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; generosity, cultivated and exercised according to the example of Him who was rich, and for our sake became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich;—these, and all the kindly emotions of the soul for the exercise of which a state of high prosperity gives the opportunity, may in this manner become Christian virtues, and the character in which they are found one in which their additional lustre shall be made an additional recommendation of personal piety. The diamond is not less “the gem of purest ray serene,” when resting in “the dark unfathomed caves of ocean;” but, when placed in the sun-beam, its own transparent beauty becomes

obvious, while it reflects the light that has made it visible.

Were man an unfallen creature, these dispensations of prosperity, with all their agencies for powerful developement, might be both more frequent, and more lasting. But the power operates upon the whole man ; and there may be a large undergrowth of weeds, requiring for their extirpation some “killing frost.” It is in tropical climates, where every thing seems almost gigantically beautiful, that the very storms partake of the universal character ; and thunder and lightning, wind and rain, come with a severity and destructiveness unknown in more temperate climates.

The sum of the whole is, that “all things,” whether apparently prosperous or adverse, “work together for good to them that love God ;” and they do so because they are under the guidance of Him whose dispensations towards his children are all explained by that most significant expression of Scripture,—“IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY.” They who trust in God at all times, will find that all circumstances contribute to their spiritual growth, and are parts of that plan, which, when from the heights of glory we remember all the way that God led us many years in the wilderness, will appear replete with wisdom and love, and shall awaken a rapture which only a glorified spirit could sustain. The narrative of each life, reviewed in the light of eternity, will lead to the same conclusion,—“HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.”

GEORGE CUBITT.

LONDON, *January 22d*, 1838.

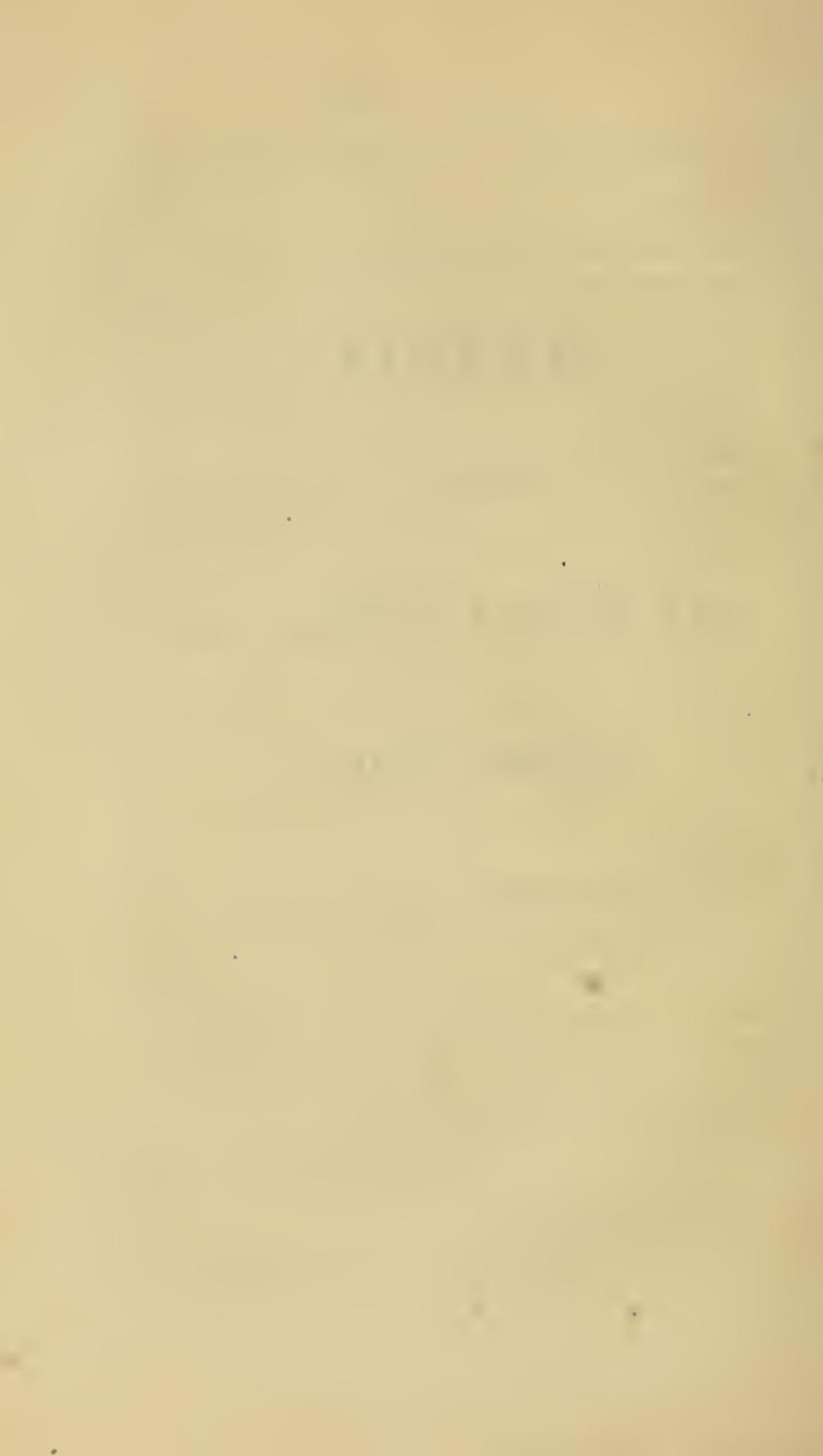
MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. THOMAS ROBERTS, M.A.

BY JAMES BUCKLEY

“THE righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.”



TO

THE BEREFT WIDOW AND FAMILY,

AND HIS

HIGHLY ESTEEMED BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY,

*This Memoir*

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR SINCERELY ATTACHED FRIEND AND  
FELLOW-LABOURER IN THE LORD,

JAMES BUCKLEY.

*Cilvége House,  
May 5th, 1837.*



## PREFACE TO THE MEMOIR.

---



WHEN requested to write the following memoir, I only purposed it to be a supplement to that published in the first numbers of the Wesleyan Magazine for this year; but after considerable deliberation I concluded it would be more interesting, and better calculated for general usefulness, to make that already published the outline of what might be written; as it would embody and place the whole in the form of one connected narrative, and avoid the inconvenience of further reference.

It is much to be lamented that the subject of this memoir had several years before his death, for reasons which he never appears to have disclosed, destroyed his diary, leaving little more than a brief chronological sketch up to the year 1814; evidently intending it to be filled up by his biographer, in case a memoir should be written. This rendered the task difficult, as the necessary materials could only be supplied by one intimately acquainted with his private and public life. Probably aware of this, he had confidentially assigned it to his particular friend, Dr. Clarke; which was not known till after

I was applied to by his widow and family, and had made some arrangements for the purpose; this information, however, was received with great pleasure, and the work immediately and most cheerfully confided to the hands of that most excellent man, who, had his valuable life been prolonged, from his early and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Roberts, and that through succeeding years, would have produced a memoir honourable to himself and his deceased friend. But before he could enter upon this much desired labour, and pay this tribute of justly deserved esteem, death cut short his literary and ministerial labours; and, instead of recording those events which, at best, can only in the present state be seen in "a glass darkly," he was called to join his triumphant and glorified brother, to contemplate, in the unclouded light of eternity, the mysteries of Providence and grace unfolded, by which their useful lives had been distinguished; and to celebrate in blissful harmony the wonders of redeeming love, which had so long been the subject of their successful ministry.

In consequence of this mournful event, the friendly task again devolved upon me; but by this time my health had much declined, and, being reduced to a state of great debility, I could engage to do no more than furnish a brief narrative for the excellent periodical referred to, and was indeed for a length of time held in great doubt, and had little prospect or hope of ever accomplishing it; which accounts for the long

delay of its publication. This, however, being accomplished, a further service was pressed upon me, that of providing a memoir to accompany the selection from the manuscripts of my late friend, which is now presented to the public in this volume. This I have endeavoured to perform in the best manner circumstances would allow; but I must claim the candour and indulgence of the critical reader,—the whole having been written in circumstances of great physical infirmity and painful debility. It should also be remembered that considerable difficulty has attended collecting, selecting, and arranging the scattered papers; this I could only do correctly by my own recollections, memorandums, and correspondence; and it may be satisfactory to state, that the more material events recorded either passed under my own observation, or were received from my friend in verbal or written communications. To near relatives and friends I am under great obligations for copies and extracts of valuable letters; for which they will please to accept my most grateful acknowledgments. I would also present my sincere thanks to my much-esteemed friend, a lady whose name I am not permitted to mention, and to my much-valued friend, the Rev. Theophilus Lessey; also to my kind friend, the writer in the Cheltenham Gazette, for their interesting communications appended to the close of the Memoir.

I deem it but proper, in reference to myself, to observe, that, on reviewing what I have writ-

ten, I have the satisfaction of stating, I am not conscious in any instance of having given too strong a colouring either to personal excellence, character, talents, or labours ; but of one thing I am deeply sensible,—my inadequacy to do justice to so much real worth. Of the deep things of God, and of his own experience, he speaks for himself in the extracts from his papers and letters.

However high the opinion I might previously have indulged, that opinion has been greatly enhanced while retracing his life, particularly from the year 1790, when I first had the pleasure of seeing him ; soon after which, a friendship was formed, that knew no diminution. Many circumstances of great interest, which were comparatively forgotten, have risen into view ; and, when collected, form an aggregate of excellence which I had never fully appreciated.

I have written as a dying man at the foot of the Divine throne, where motives, words, and works, appear in their real quality, and are weighed in a just balance ; and as one viewing his friend in glory, with other kindred and much-endear'd spirits, and looking with humble hope and joyous expectation of shortly joining their glorified society. My heart's desire and fervent prayer to God is, that this record of one who was called to glorify God in such diversified dispensations of joy and sorrow, of enjoyment and bereavement, of official usefulness and complicated afflictions, and in whom the all-sufficient and

abounding grace of God in Christ Jesus was so eminently manifested, may be made a blessing to its various readers. Though dead, he may yet speak in these pages, to the conversion of the unregenerate, by the converting grace manifested in him: To the young, by his early piety, and that of his sons', that they also may seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: To parents, that they may imitate his pious paternal solicitude in the instruction of their children in the fear of the Lord: To Christian believers of every class, by that sanctifying grace which was progressively manifest in him, and the support and consolation he received in diversified affliction, and final peaceful admittance into the kingdom and glory of God: To ministers, especially the young, by his early active zeal, assiduous attention to the improvement of his mind and talents; and when, by infirmity and physical debility, his labours were partially paralyzed, and he might have reposed upon the couch of ease and affluence, and of social and domestic enjoyment, was ever ready to fulfil the duties of his office at the call of his brethren and the church, not sparing himself, nor counting his life dear to him, so that he might win Christ and the souls of men to salvation; ever breathing the sentiment of our poet,—

“ Happy, if with my latest breath  
I may but gasp his name;  
Preach him to all, and cry in death,  
Behold, behold the Lamb!”

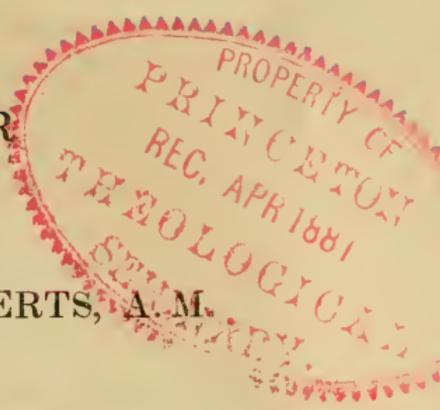
Should it graciously be accompanied with the Divine influence, and favoured with any or all these much-desired effects and blessings; unto the one ineffable and eternal Jehovah, the Divine Father, Eternal Son, and Holy Ghost, be the glory! Amen.

JAMES BUCKLEY.

*Cilrêge-House, Llanelly,*

*April 26th, 1837.*

MEMOIR  
OF THE LATE  
REV. THOMAS ROBERTS, A.M.



---

CHAPTER I.

BIOGRAPHY is confessedly of all historical records the most interesting, pleasing, and instructive, as well as excitve. It presents to the mind the various delineations of light and shade, with the prominent peculiarities which exist in the characters of men of talented attraction. It brings to view their physical and mental, natural and acquired qualities, moving in the varied spheres of domestic, professional, civil, and religious life. In some of them, that which had before been considered merely theoretical and visionary, is seen in practical operation, and becomes a powerful incentive to emulation; and however high the attainments may be, there is an almost involuntary desire created to tread in the same path, to imitate and attain the distinguished endowments contemplated; and the possibility of their being acquired, inspires hope to realize at least some portion of them; while, on the other hand, the shades of moral delinquency, indiscretion, or of misapplication of talent, by which such enterprise has been rendered a failure, becomes cautionary and admonitory.

On this subject the Sacred Scriptures are pre-eminent in the impartiality and faithful history of the holy

worthies, whose cardinal virtues and works of pious zeal are recorded as imperishable monuments, and as models of excellence for the devout imitation of all succeeding generations. "Ye have us," says an apostle, "for an ensample." But in contrast their defects are faithfully marked, not to serve as an apology for our moral imperfections, but, as the same apostle states, "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The diversified and abounding grace of God in the Old and New-Testament saints, is the system of Divine revelation seen in experimental operation, and it is emphatically said, "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Of these, and not of these only, but of all the distinguished faithful, the voice from heaven is heard, saying, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours. and their works do follow them."

The lives of Christians distinguished for eminent piety and usefulness, and more especially ministers of Christ, have been the subjects of record through every succeeding period of the history of the church; and perhaps no age ever presented a larger portion of holy, honourable witnesses, than the present, to which all the different denominations and tribes of our spiritual Israel contribute, and none more than that section of the church with which the subject of this memoir was connected from early youth. At that period, and for many years, this sect was every where spoken against. However the offence of the cross may now have ceased, then persecution awaited all, and particularly the minister who bore the name of "Methodist." Their sufferings and privations were in many instances severe, and their labours most extensive and arduous. It was a day of great spiritual apathy: a cloud of moral darkness rested on the hemisphere of the Christian

church ; but he whose labours are here recorded, and his coadjutors, had not only the happiness of seeing the “day-spring from on high” visit with its benign beams tens of thousands of those who sat in darkness, but of witnessing an unparalleled extension of the kingdom of Christ.

It is worthy of observation, that whoever takes an impartial retrospect of the intellectual and moral state of Great Britain, and the world at large, at the period of the commencement of the ministry of those great reformers,—the Wesleys and Whitefield, and of the favourable change which has been progressively effected by the faithful ministry of the Word ; the unexampled missionary enterprise, with the formation and powerful agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Sunday-school instruction, and their appendages, which continue to bear an imposing aspect in their rapidly extending influence, cannot but acknowledge that, among the instruments employed, Methodism has been a most powerful agent in the hands of God, by which the light of his glory and grace has been diffused, not only through our native land, but even through the “dark places of the earth.” During the progress of its operation, it has been supplied out of the ordinary course with faithful ministers of various gifts, peculiarly adapted to their great work ; some of whom, by the efforts of native genius, unwearied diligence, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, acquired literary and ministerial eminence, and joyously testified in the hour of dissolution the immutable truth and strong consolation of the Gospel of Christ, which they had so faithfully preached. Those of them who took an early part in this great work, must be deemed worthy of double honour and faithful record.

Of the truth of these observations, the subject of the following memoir is no ordinary illustration, in the bright assemblage of talents and qualifications which

were so peculiarly adapted to the sphere assigned him, and in which he moved for nearly half a century, with much honour to himself, maintaining through the vicissitudes of life an unshaken attachment to the doctrine, discipline, and institutions of the people of his choice. Though often placed in very delicate and extremely trying circumstances, few men have, during so long a period of time, presented to the religious world so much to commend and so little to blame. His chief joy was in the prosperity of the Christian church, and in the eternal salvation of men for whom Christ died.

The REV. THOMAS ROBERTS was a native of Bodmin, in the county of Cornwall, and was born May 19th, 1765. His father, Thomas Roberts, was a native of the same place; he married Elizabeth Best, of a respectable family in that county, and had three children, of whom Thomas was the youngest. It is not generally known, but is worthy of remark, that his father was a descendant of the late noble family that possessed the title of Earl of Radnor. John Robarts, as the name was then written, was elevated by James I. to the peerage, by the title of Baron of Bodmin, Viscount Truro, and Earl of Radnor. Thomas was maternally descended from a pious family of Nonconformists, who suffered under the persecution of Charles II. though they had been most firmly attached to the royal cause during the parliamentary wars. Mr. Roberts's great uncle, by his zealous adherence to his sovereign, often exposed himself to imminent peril, in attending that monarch while in the west of England. The persecution of the Puritans continuing very severe, several of the family, for conscience' sake, emigrated to the transatlantic continent, to enjoy, in the wildernesses of New-England, the divine light and spiritual privileges denied them in their native land. Of this branch of the family there is no further record. The movements of the mysterious wheel of Providence sometimes retro-

grade ; and the descendants of the great and noble are placed in a more humble station, for the accomplishment of wise purposes, that they may receive the more permanent and unfading honours which come from above, and that their names may rise in a different hemisphere, in imperishable glory and eternal honour. This was the case with the father's house of my deceased friend, some of whom have received the honourable title of "kings and priests" to God in the kingdom of heaven. The pride of ancestry was not, however, the subject of vain-glory in him ; but with adoring reverence he recognised the hand of the Lord which had brought him low, that in due time he might be exalted among the "princes of his people."

He was bereaved of his excellent mother when he was as yet young ; and for her memory he ever indulged the most tender affection. He writes of her : "She was endowed with many amiable qualities, and was much esteemed for the beauty of her person, but more for the excellencies of her mind. She possessed a remarkably strong understanding, which was richly adorned by divine grace, after she was brought to the foot of the cross of Christ, and long and deeply instructed in the school of affliction. A little before the birth of her youngest son, she was induced, through the entreaty of her sister, to hear the Methodist preachers ; when, through the influence of the Spirit of truth, she was convinced of sin, and brought to the enjoyment of that salvation which is by faith in Christ Jesus. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." It pleased him to place her in the furnace of affliction, in which she lingered for several years, at times enduring the most poignant pain, which she bore with unshaken faith, unwearied patience, and cheerful resignation to the will of her heavenly Father. Sometimes her joy and anticipations of glory were inexpressible. June 16th, 1773, her heart and flesh failed, the power of

articulation ceased. Her children being brought to her bed-side, she lifted up her hands, and, raising her expressive eyes to heaven, silently blessed each of them, solemnly committing them to the protection and blessing of God. On the following day her happy spirit escaped to paradise. She left a good name, more precious and fragrant than ointment. She was admired and beloved by all who knew her in the neighbouring societies. Her respected friend, Mr. Slade, of St. Austle, improved the mournful event, by preaching her funeral sermon to a deeply affected congregation from Hebrews xii. 12."

His father long survived the wife of his youth, and was made a happy partaker of that sanctifying grace which proved the support of his declining years. He died in a good old age, and peacefully entered into the joy of his Lord, September 13th, 1809. A funeral sermon was preached on the occasion of his death to a large congregation of mournful hearers, by the Rev. Edward Milward, from Heb. ix. 27.

Mr. Roberts, young as he was, (being then only eight years of age,) was deeply affected at the loss of his affectionate and valuable mother. He would frequently retire to meditate on the sorrowful event, and long to be with her. By her pious tuition "he feared the Lord from his youth."

It is remarked of him, "he had a great and tender affection for his mother, and bore in mind through life the anniversary of her death; that he never recollected but once materially offending her, which he would scarcely ever mention but with tears. An anecdote is related of him deserving of notice, and which shows the gracious effects of inculcating religious principles on the infant mind. When about three years of age he was taken to church; on taking the place assigned him there, he knelt down, shut his eyes, joined his little hands, and repeated a short prayer. An old gray-

headed man, who stood near, observing it, was so much affected at seeing so young a child in the devout attitude of prayer, that he fell on his knees, and, for the first time in his life, prayed with fervent sincerity, and would ever afterwards say, 'By the blessing of God, the praying of a child of three years old was the means of my conversion to God.'

Though juvenile vanities for a season captivated his heart, the principles of piety which she inculcated had a strong hold upon him, and their restraining influence kept his conscience tenderly alive. He was educated in a school in his native town, where, owing to the severity of the master, and his culpable inattention to his pupils, his learning and morals were exposed to shipwreck. When his mind became more fully awakened to the importance of heart-felt religion, which was in his seventeenth year, he states that he gave himself "no credit for employing his time in eliciting scintillations of genius, instead of acquiring solid intellectual culture," though it is evident he bestowed great pains on the improvement of his mind; and to promote this, to him, much-desired object, he selected for his companions the most intelligent persons in the circle of his acquaintance, with whom he spent some hours every week for the purpose of study and discussion of philosophical and literary subjects. He was a constant and enthusiastic correspondent, under various assumed appellations, in the annual diaries, and other periodical works. To a few pieces his name appeared. Some of these were coruscations of a hopeful genius, which was subsequently to become a sanctified and steady flame, and shine with lustre in a more elevated sphere. These pursuits were altogether abandoned, after hearing the venerable Founder of Methodism preach at the celebrated pit of Gwennap, in the year 1782; when the gracious impressions which, from his earliest recollection, had kept his heart tender were

deepened and confirmed. He was prevailed upon, after surmounting some painful difficulties, to join the society, by which he incurred the displeasure of several of his relatives; but his whole soul being now graciously excited, he resolved, by the grace of God, to be decided. He had before made many vows, and even entered into written engagements, to devote himself to the Lord; but these were as often broken, for the carnal mind had the dominion. He now, however, saw where his strength lay, that in the Lord alone he could have righteousness and strength. Sometimes, impelled by the terrors of the Lord, with godly sorrow he drew nigh to the mercy-seat; but more frequently, drawn by the love of Christ, he followed on to know the Lord as a sin-pardoning God and reconciled Father. He thus reasoned: "If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, then I am included in the covenant of mercy." The Lord, whom he sought with many prayers and tears, gave him this consolation, that if he had given his Son for him, he would not withhold pardon, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This consolation he received by faith in Christ, which justifieth the ungodly. His evidence was bright, his joy was great, and the Spirit of adoption sent into his heart cried, "Abba, Father." He was thus prepared to sustain with patience and Christian fortitude those trials and persecutions which awaited him, and was qualified for future usefulness by those clear views with which he was favoured of Christian experience, and of the great doctrines of the Gospel,—repentance towards God, justification by faith, entire sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and that practical holiness which he impressively and eloquently preached through the course of his ministry to the edification of thousands. He felt the force and enjoyed the blessedness of that command of the Saviour, "Have salt in yourselves."

Having obtained mercy of the Lord, he soon became active in his cause, forming and conducting prayer-meetings, and occasionally giving an exhortation. By these things he greatly offended his uncle, a respectable manufacturer residing at Gwennap, with whom he had lived from the time he left school. The opposition which he met with became so violent that he was under the necessity of leaving his uncle's house; for he was not to be moved, either by threats or worldly considerations, from the hope of the Gospel, or the good work of prayer and active exertion for the conversion of sinners. This event appears to have been over-ruled for the furtherance of the Gospel, laying a train for his future usefulness. On returning to Bodmin, his native place, the Lord gave him favour in the sight of the people. He soon collected and formed a class, in which he had great delight; and he entered on a sphere of general usefulness, visiting the country round, endeavouring to reclaim and convert sinners from the error of their ways, and to build up the scattered flock of Christ.

The preachers and people, observing his fervent piety and active zeal, entreated him to devote himself to the work of the ministry, believing him to be called of God to the sacred office. After much persuasion, and feeling that the Spirit of the Lord God was upon him, he commenced his career as a local preacher, but not without much fear and trembling; for he says, "I was but a child and a babe in Christ." However, believing that a dispensation of the Gospel was given him, he "conferred not with flesh and blood, knowing that the excellency of the power was of God." A great and effectual door being opened to him, he zealously entered into it, and was greatly assisted by the counsel and prayers of his pious friends, and particularly encouraged by the blessing of the Lord on his labours. He was not without opposition from the adversaries of reli-

gion, being in persecutions often, and several times to the hazard of his life. But the Lord remarkably interposed in his favour, and, in some instances, to the fear of his adversaries; one of whom was removed by premature death; and another, a profligate young man, who had tried every means to harass and annoy him, was reduced to such a complete and melancholy state of wretchedness, that he declared he had "no peace of mind, since Mr. Roberts's solemn denunciations had continually followed him." He begged one of the pious friends to give him a corner in her house where he might lie down and die; she, recollecting the words of her Lord, "Do good to them that persecute you," provided a bed for him. The friends uniting in prayer in his behalf, it pleased God graciously to answer; and this wretched man obtained an assurance of pardoning mercy in Christ, and died. Such was the effectual operation of the Divine word and Spirit in the conversion of sinners, the unity of Christian affection that subsisted in the little flock, and the spiritual refreshment with which they were favoured from the presence of the Lord, that he counted not his life dear to him, but could cheerfully have laid it down for the love he had to Christ and the people with whom he was associated.

He ever indulged a strong partiality for his native town, concerning which he remarks,—“September, 1814, I went to Bodmin to open a new chapel. The good work has gloriously prospered; the solitary place has obtained the excellence of Carmel. I preached from Isaiah lx. 7: ‘I will glorify the house of my glory.’ The preceding Lord’s day I preached in the Town-Hall, which was politely offered to me by the mayor, from Rom. iii. 22—25.” It is more easy to conceive than express the feelings of his mind on this occasion, visiting after a lapse of years the scenes of his youth. His sensations were not unlike those of Jacob

when he returned to Bethel : it was indeed a season of joy.

This rising light could not be "hid under a bushel." Being recommended to the notice of Mr. Wesley by that amiable servant of the Lord,—who combined such a pleasing simplicity of manners with so much theological and practical wisdom,—the Rev. William Myles, who was at that time the assistant\* preacher of the St. Austle circuit, which included Bodmin, he was immediately called to the itinerant work; and at the Conference held in Bristol, July, 1786, was appointed to the Londonderry circuit, Ireland. This circumstance was quite unexpected by him, and became a subject of such distressing reasoning and perplexity, as nearly to overwhelm both body and mind. From the Rev. John and Charles Wesley he received the kindest expressions of affection and encouragement; but he still doubted his call to the itinerant life. He says, he much feared his own insufficiency, and he dreaded putting an unhallowed hand to the sacred office. Circumstances, however, seasonably occurred to abate his scruples, he began to think he was like Gideon, seeking from the Lord a sign, rather than walking by faith in the all-sufficiency of Him who said, "Go and preach the Gospel. Lo, I am with you always even unto the end." His fears subsided, and his heart with adoring submission said, "Here I am, send me." Previous to his departure for his circuit, he visited his friends in the western part of the county, where the Lord had given him seals to his mission. His spiritual children with streaming eyes "commended him to the Lord;" and the numerous congregations united in affectionate fervent prayer that "the Lord would bless him with the holy anointing of his Spirit;" that "he would be

\* As the Preachers were then denominated who had the charge of the Circuits,—ASSISTANTS in the work to Mr. Wesley,—now called Superintendents.

with him in the way he should go ;” and that the “ word of the Lord might run and be glorified ” by his instrumentality. At St. Ives, where he was to embark, he spent some days, during which the humble and devout effusions of his mind were beautifully expressed in the following lines, which he then composed :—

LORD, if thou a worm employ,  
 This poor heart divinely raise,  
 And my tongue, elate with joy,  
 Shall proclaim my Master's praise.

O ! by living faith unite  
 All my passive powers to thee ;  
 In my weakness prove thy might,  
 Manifest thy strength in me.

If thy Spirit, Lord, have moved  
 On my dark, chaotic mind,  
 Let its further power be proved,  
 Leaving not a shade behind.

In thy pure unerring light,  
 Give me sacred truth to see ;  
 Be my wisdom, be my might,  
 All my works be wrought in thee.

Fain would I myself resign  
 Into thy almighty hand,  
 Tread thy providential line,  
 Subject to thy high command.

Let me every moment feel  
 Present, all-sufficient grace,  
 And my raptured soul shall dwell  
 On thy never-ending praise.

O my Master, hear my cry,  
 Let my prayer acceptance gain,  
 Guard me ever with thine eye  
 And my feeble steps sustain.

Bear me as on eagles' wings,  
 While terrestrial good I scorn,  
 Spurning sublunary things,  
 To celestial regions borne.

Soon will life's brief day be past—  
 Solemn, but delightful thought!  
 With my fruitful sheaves at last  
 May I to thy feet be brought!

At this place he was joined by the Rev. Benjamin Pearce, who had laboured the preceding year in the above circuit with Mr. Myles, and was now appointed to Lisburn in Ireland. This was highly gratifying to both of them, as a friendly intimacy had been already formed, and not a little consoling to Mr. Roberts, who had never yet travelled beyond the precincts of his native county. On the morning of his departure he wrote in his text-book:—"August 18th.—Farewell all my friends! I am no longer of the world; I now leave my friends and my country. I give up all and live in eternity!—Farewell to England! By ten o'clock to-morrow we shall set sail for Swansea." "August 19th.—In the evening a storm came on, but the Lord brought us through, and we arrived at Swansea the next day. On the 24th we set sail for Ireland, and landed at Dunleary on the 27th, after a prosperous voyage." Here they were received by preachers and people with great kindness and Christian cordiality. He writes: "Here we tarried five days with this happy people, and were much comforted among them. Thoughts of home were stripped of that afflicting power they had before; and methought it was worth my while

to take a voyage to Ireland to see the manners of the Methodists in Dublin, and remain a week with them. The Lord was pleased to administer comfort by owning my poor labours, and thereby answering the request of his dust before I left England. Blessed be God! he has hitherto manifested himself to be the Lord God merciful and gracious, keeping me on the great deep, and not forsaking me in a strange land. Here is a fine society of Methodists, all truly alive to God. I would gladly have spent all my days with them."

Being furnished with a horse, and such equipments as were necessary for his itinerant labours, he entered upon his journey to Londonderry, accompanied by his friend as far as Drogheda, where they parted. This appears to have produced a very painful effect upon Mr. Roberts's mind, and the agitation of his spirit returned. He was now alone, surrounded by a people to whose manners and habits he was unaccustomed, having bad roads and a dreary prospect of mountains before him. His horse failing at this trying time, his heart began to sink; his reasoning relative to his call to the ministry returned with redoubled force; the ardour of his zeal was chilled; his faith became weak, and his spirit faint; but being admonished by his Divine Master, that "he who setteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom," he resolved, though faint and weary, to pursue his course. Leaving his crippled horse at Manorhamilton, he proceeded on foot to Armagh, where he was met by that man of God, the Rev. Gustavus Armstrong, "a kind friend and a man of high moral worth." The meeting of the brethren with St. Paul at Appii Forum could not be more seasonable than this interview. "He thanked God and took courage." The acquaintance which was then formed ripened into indissoluble friendship; their souls were knit together as those of David and Jonathan.

Mrs. Richardson, of Charlemount, to whom he gives

the honourable title of a "mother in Israel," showed him great hospitality, and received him as an "angel of God." Being again supplied with a horse, he cheerfully journeyed on to Dungannon and Cookstown, where he preached, and was favoured with the gracious presence of the Lord. On the 14th, he arrived at the place of his destination, where he was courteously entertained by Mrs. Knox, a lady of great piety and intelligence, who appeared at once to recognise the tenderness of his heart. She cordially adopted him as her son, and her continued sympathizing attentions were a source of much comfort to him in this season of painful conflict. At this period commenced his acquaintance with her son, Alexander Knox, Esq., who had been educated at the Dublin University, and was richly endowed with a powerful genius of the highest order. He was the personal friend of Mr. Wesley, and the influential patron of the evangelical clergy, whose interests he was enabled greatly to promote from his official connexion with the Government, and the high estimation in which he was held. His biographer states, "that his life had been a bright pattern of Christian excellence; his conversation one perennial flower of evangelical wisdom and goodness. His end was peace." This acquaintance was to Mr. Roberts no small acquisition; Mr. Knox having been favoured with so liberal an education, and possessing, in addition to his various reading and extensive knowledge, a fine taste and brilliant fancy, sanctified by devotion. It may indeed be said, that it was an important era in his life, as he was fitted with a mind and genius capable of great culture, and thirsted after the attainment of knowledge, particularly those branches which, under Divine influence, might tend to promote his acceptance and usefulness in the ministry. He therefore thankfully, and with avidity, accepted the guidance of so accomplished a preceptor, by whom he was directed to that course of reading and study

which greatly added to his theological store, and refined his style of composition and speaking ; and, by attention to the most approved classical authors, he acquired that acumen and elegance for which he was afterwards so remarkable. He ever appreciated the favours he had received from his highly-respected friend ; and, however they might subsequently have differed in certain points, which he much lamented, their esteem continued to be reciprocal to the end of life.

On his arrival in Derry, he found that the Rev. Mr. Leech, his superintendent, had entered on the labours of the circuit soon after the Irish Conference. He received, with a hearty welcome, his young colleague ; and gave him such advice relative to his future labours as was needful ; he prayed for him, and exhorted him to be strong in the Lord, and of good courage.

Mr. Roberts entered upon his new sphere by preaching from 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. This text was in accordance with the feeling of his heart, and solemn covenant engagements ; and from this source he appears to have received a reviving influence : "The Lord satisfied his mouth with good things, so that his youth was renewed like the eagle's." The preaching of the regularly appointed minister had, till now, been principally confined to the city and its vicinity. But at the previous Conference, it had been proposed to send a missionary to visit a large tract of country which had not as yet been occupied. Nothing could be more appropriate than the appointment of Mr. Leech, who was favoured with a vigorous constitution, and active, persevering zeal. This was a good example for a young disciple ; the nature of his work was calculated to inure him to hardships, that he might bear them as a good soldier of Christ. Seeing thousands sitting in the thick darkness of superstition, and the shadow of death, perishing for lack of knowledge, his compassion was kindled, and he endeavoured faithfully to follow the example of his

superintendent, though his plans were extensive and arduous. He says, "We travelled through a large extent of country, from Derry across the Swilly to Rathmelton, Ballynagoliclough, Rathmullon, and round through Donegal county, preaching in hired houses or rooms wherever we could obtain them; at other times in the market-places, streets, or highways. We thus struck out a circuit through Lottonbury, Raphoe, Strabane, Dungwin, Newtownlimavady, and many intermediate places." It is natural to suppose, that the rough and unfrequented tracts through which he had to pass, the constant toil, privation, and even hardship, he had to endure, should cause his physical and mental energies sometimes to assume a plaintive tone. He observes, that, in his lonely walks, when with weeping eyes he beheld the vessels passing down the river for "good old England," he could not but imagine he heard his friends addressing him, in the language of Thompson to his friend, when residing near the same spot:—

"Lend me the plaint, which to the lonely main,  
 With memory conversing, you will pour,  
 As on the pebbled shore you pensive stray,  
 Where Derry's mountains a black crescent form,  
 And 'mid their ample rounds receive the waves,  
 Which from the frozen pole, resounding, rush  
 Tempestuous,—though from native sunshine far,  
 Far from your friends, the sunshine of the soul."

Occasionally, in the season of depression and painful discouragement, he thought of leaving the ministry, and indeed twice took the road to Belfast with the design of returning to England. His purpose was broken off in the first instance by unexpectedly meeting a female unknown to him, who rebuking him for fleeing from the work of God, in which he had been made the instrument of so much good, disappeared as unaccountably as she came. On the other occasion, when he arrived at Belfast, by a strange providence as he con-

ceived it to be, there was not one English vessel in the harbour. His heart smote him. He felt, that should he, Jonah-like, attempt to flee from the work of the Lord, the winds and waves were in hands which could easily convert them into instruments of correction; and he felt more than ever persuaded, that "woe would be unto him if he preached not the Gospel." A better feeling then returning, he relied on the sure word of promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee: As thy days, so shall thy strength be." This will appear from the following extract from a letter to his aunt, Mrs. Best:— "The people of this city and the circuit in general are free and open-hearted. They are more so than even my own country people. My God has given me favour in their eyes, for which I desire to be thankful. We have great hopes of seeing bright days in this northern region of Ireland. The cause of God meets with prosperity in almost every place. In this city we have a new chapel, which will be opened for public worship in a few weeks. There seems to be an universal stir in all Ireland; and though opposed by the Romanists, Presbyterians, and Calvinists, the good cause widens its way, and will, it is hoped, universally prevail in the kingdom. Our society is increasing, and our congregations are very large, and altogether very respectable. I experience a father in dear Mr. Leech, who does everything he possibly can to encourage me; he is a free, affable man, and respected by all the city." To a friend he writes: "My not writing to you before now was not occasioned by any disregard to you, or any of my dear friends in Bodmin, whom I love as my own soul; I judged it unnecessary, as I have recently had nothing very particular to acquaint you with. The winter season has been the mildest I ever saw, though I dreaded the appearance of it. Glory be to the name of the Lord! who is good, and does good unto all the needy children of men. He continues to do great

things for me, the unworthiest of all his creatures. I have at present the enjoyment of a sound body and the spirit of health, of love, and a sound mind. Not long ago I was drooping in despondency; but now, blessed be God, I rejoice in the midst of my multiplied mercies. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' I find my heart truly athirst for those streams which gladden the city of God. Glory be to his name! 'He gives me to drink of the brook by the way, and lifts up the head.' I find my soul, and desire to find it, more and more abstracted from the world. O, to love Jesus with all the heart! nothing less will do."

He had no reason to regret at the end of the year what he had suffered for the Gospel's sake. Sinners had been "brought from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God." Societies had been formed, and the moral wilderness and solitary places had begun to sing for joy. Many of these societies not only continue to the present day, but are become honourable branches of the church of God. Notwithstanding Mr. Roberts's attachment to his Londonderry friends, for special reasons he could not be prevailed upon to remain with them another year, although they petitioned Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke for his continuance, who felt rather inclined to support their wishes, but he could not be persuaded to yield to them. His inventive faculty and store of theological knowledge had been well tried this first year of his itinerancy; it appears from his text-book that he preached four hundred and eighty-six sermons, one hundred and fifty-six of which were delivered to the same congregation, distinguished, it seems, "more for its respectability and intelligence, than the fervour of pious zeal." Mr. Wesley remarks of it in his journal: "The society here has never been so well established as it is now; what is principally wanting, is zeal for God, and entire self-devotion to him." On

account of these and his future labours in Ireland, he deemed himself a missionary; and in after years, when advocating the cause of missions by eloquent appeals to the sympathy and benevolence of his fellow-Christians, he would refer to them with feelings of much pleasure. He had been proposed by Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke as a missionary to the West Indies, and had once offered himself for the Sierra Leone mission, but in both instances was prevented by circumstances over which he had no control; in consequence, he always considered himself a debtor to the Heathen, and thanked God that it was still permitted him to do a little, by advocating their cause at home.

His growing talents, piety, and fervent zeal, had attracted attention so as to recommend him to the particular favour of Mr. Wesley; who well knew how to form a correct judgment of character, and who was ever ready to encourage and call into useful exercise talents of promise.

At the Dublin Conference, 1787, Mr. Roberts was appointed superintendent of the Colerain circuit. Though he viewed this as indicative of the high esteem of Mr. Wesley, being an office very rarely conferred on so young a man, he felt tremblingly alive to the responsibility which was laid upon him, and earnestly entreated to be excused; but Mr. Wesley insisting upon it, he submitted. One thing greatly tended to lessen the cross, for such he felt it, which was, that his friend, the Rev. G. Armstrong, was appointed his fellow-labourer, and cheerfully bore the burden with him. The field of their labour was extensive; they had almost incessant travelling and preaching; beside the formation of societies, and the especial nurture of those which had been recently formed by his indefatigable predecessor, the Rev. Walter Griffith, who was a burning and a shining light in many dark regions of his native land. About this time com-

menced Mr. Roberts's acquaintance with him, which ripened into friendship the most sincere and ardent, and continued to the close of life.

Mr. Roberts continued steadily to pursue his holy calling, and to fulfil the duties of his office. Though not without much anxious solicitude and occasional discouragement, he had a mixture of consolation; as will be seen in the following letter to his brother, in which he gives a brief view of his extensive sphere of action. :—

“ I BLESS God, I have a good state of health, and my soul much alive to God. I seem to be given up to the great work more than ever; and though I meet with difficulties not a few, I bless God I have them beneath my feet. . . . Our hearers in Cole-rain are very sensible, even to a proverb; indeed they are the most sensible people I ever met with: but they are good, as their wisdom is tempered with love. . . .

“ We have great opposition from Socinians, Arians, and Calvinists, of whom this country is full. We have to guard our doctrine in the most careful manner while preaching; and we hold private arguments with some of them almost every day. I believe more good might be done among the Romanists than any other sect, were it not for the influence of the clergy, who make them do public penance, if they are known to have been at a Methodist's preaching, and anathematize them whenever they join our society.

“ Our circuit for the most part is in a pleasant country: a small part in the county of Tyrone, but mostly in Londonderry. We are bounded on the west by a ridge of lofty mountains, which look very formidable and romantic; on the south, by Lough Neagh, a beautiful fresh-water lake, which is so wide in some parts that the land cannot be distinguished on the opposite

side : it washes the feet of five different counties, and is one of the finest water-pieces in Europe. The north of our circuit is bounded by the sea, over which, at a small distance, the islands of Scotland are seen. Coleraine is a small but handsome town in the county of Derry. The Bawn, a fine large navigable river, which flows from Lough Neagh, runs directly through it."

Though his spirit was willing and active, his extensive and arduous labours, the privations and sufferings he endured in travelling so large a range of country, subject often to very unfavourable accommodation, proved too much for his physical strength: he was seized with an affection of the chest, and became so debilitated, that, though very reluctantly, he was compelled to suspend preaching for a short season; consumption indeed was apprehended, but by timely medical aid and good nursing he so far recovered as to resume his ministerial labours, though still suffering much from weakness. Concerning this affliction, he writes,—“I do not know that I shall ever be what I was before; but that is nothing to me: ‘Father, thy will be done!’ Blessed be God, I am tolerable, though far from being what I was. What a mercy that I found myself resigned to his will throughout the whole! ‘For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’ If I had been taken away, the church might have done without my feeble aid. God can work his own work. At present I feel as though I had not the least desire to live longer than my life is useful to the flock which God hath purchased with his own blood.” He had the satisfaction of the cordial approbation of his brethren, the approving testimony of his own conscience, and the comforting assurance that many were added to the societies. Notwithstanding his affliction, he preached three hundred and thirty sermons during the year, and one hundred and sixty of them in Colerain.

## CHAPTER II.

MR. ROBERTS'S indisposition rendering a removal from the north indispensably necessary, he was stationed in the city of Cork, July, 1788, where he spent the two ensuing years. Soon after his arrival he wrote to his brother as follows :—

“I ACQUAINTED you, in my last, that I supposed I should be taken out of the north; thanks to kind Providence, that happy season has commenced, and after two years' apprenticeship, I am removed from the almost insupportable trial of travelling in those parts.

“After all the trials I met with in the north, I found it hard, very hard, to part with the dear people; they are the most affectionate in the world, especially those whose hearts are opened by the grace of God, and warmed by his love. We had a very comfortable Conference, at which all the preachers in the kingdom were present. It rejoiced my soul to see such a company of preachers called together by the word of the Lord. O what can they not do through the strength of their Master! There are thirteen new champions enlisted on trial, and we have more in reserve. The Lord is doing great things for Ireland. We expect this year to see the bulwarks of the devil like ‘a bowing wall and a tottering fence.’ It seems impossible that any Jericho in this kingdom should be able to stand while so many horns are sounding through the land. O my God, cast down the walls of Babylon! Down with them! down with them, even to the ground!

“The Lord has been pleased to appoint me to labour with the dear Rev. Mr. Rogers, in this city. O! it is an awful work wherein I am now engaged. We have five hundred and fifty members in society, five

different places in the city for preaching in, and sufficient labour for us both, and five or six local preachers. We expect to have a glorious work this ensuing year; the fields are already white unto the harvest. This city was never in so fair a way for prospering as it is at present. . . .

“I have reason to believe this part of the kingdom will agree with my health very well, though my constitution is materially hurt. I think I shall never again have the strength I once had. Be that as it may, not my will but the Lord’s be done. I have found the Lord to be good, ‘a stronghold in the day of trouble.’ His goodness and mercy have been following me, soul and body. He has given me favour in the eyes of strangers, so that I may truly say, ‘They would have plucked out their eyes, and given them to me.’ At present I have much weakness and trembling. A sense of the great work in this large and populous city lies heavily upon me, and I have only one remedy, but, blessed be God! it is nigh at hand: he enables me to look unto him: I am kept from being confounded. What God has for me to do I know not now, nor will I desire to know. To live my life by moments, is all I have to do.”

The sphere in which he now moved was, in some respects, less laborious and trying; but he had to preach frequently to the same people, who were more cultivated and intelligent than those he had hitherto been accustomed to address. This called forth his mental energies, that, as a “wise householder, he might bring out of his treasury things new and things old.” His situation being more favourable for reading and study, and affording greater facilities for the acquisition of knowledge, his thirst for it became more intense; but he made all his attainments subservient to his theological pursuits and preparations for the pulpit; fervently praying that

all might be sanctified by the Holy Spirit to the increase of his spirituality and ministerial usefulness.

In this circuit he appears to have enjoyed much nearness to God, and increasing fellowship with the Father and the Son. He had the high satisfaction of living in the affections of the people; the Lord working by him in the awakening of sinners, and the building up of believers in their most holy faith. To a friend he writes:—

“ I AM now like a sailor anchored in a safe port after a storm. But, thanks be to God, I now find it a blessing to me, and I would not have been without it. My situation at present is very comfortable both for soul and body. My colleague and his good wife are precious people; and I can truly say, that we have one heart and spirit; and, blessed be the God of mercy, we find that the pleasure of the Lord prospers in our hands.

“ The Lord has carried on the work of conversion, and that very remarkably, in some who had heard the word for a long season without experiencing the power thereof. Several have been brought into perfect liberty, and now have an inheritance among them which are sanctified. Our watch-night, when we watched-in the new year, was one of the most solemn and happy seasons I can remember. I have experienced much of the Divine presence, much comfort in my own soul, and the good-will of Him who dwelt in the bush. My Lord deals bountifully with me, and verifies his promise to my soul's happiness: ‘ They that water others shall be watered themselves.’ I feel my soul engaged in the great work more than ever, for my coming to this city has been the means of stirring up all my powers. O what did I feel when I first came in sight of the spires of Cork! But God brings me through, and the dear people bear with me most astonishingly. Surely I of all creatures have reason to

bless and adore that God who opened the dumb ass's mouth, and used the ram's horn to throw down the walls of Jericho. 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, forget not all his benefits!' I am happy, and Christ is my portion." . . . , .

During this period, in correspondence with Mr. Wesley, he appears to have disclosed all the feelings of his heart, especially respecting some difficulties of great delicacy and interest in which he was placed. A mutual attachment had been formed between him and a highly respectable and accomplished young lady, which her friends were not disposed to countenance but on one condition,—that he should quit the itinerancy, and enter the established church, her father having in his gift a living which he wished him to accept. It is natural to suppose that this produced no small effect on Mr. Roberts's very sensitive mind. As he had no insurmountable objection to the church, the proposal presented a honourable station in the ministry, with the acquisition of an object which had obtained a powerful ascendancy. He could not, however, overcome the difficulty that presented itself in the obligation under which he felt himself placed to the good cause in which he was so usefully engaged. The duty of continuance in the more extensive field in which Divine Providence had placed, him was forcibly impressed upon his mind; a severe conflict ensued between affection and paramount duty; he devoutly placed the subject at the foot of the throne of Divine Wisdom, fervently soliciting direction, and, under God, finally determined to refer the matter to the wise decision of Mr. Wesley, on whose paternal counsel he could with confidence rely. After the exchange of several letters, and the subject having been well weighed in the balance of reason and religion, he came to the noble conclusion of sacrificing personal gratification and emo-

lument to his better, high, and heavenly calling. This he communicated to Mr. Wesley, and received from him the following gratifying reply:—

“DEAR TOMMY,

“YOU send me good news; I congratulate you upon your deliverance; it is not a little one. Only he who is almighty was able to burst those bonds in sunder. Many years ago I was exactly in the same case; and just then, when I came to those words in the lesson for the day, ‘Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes at a stroke;’ I was quite stunned, and could not just then read a word more; but afterwards I saw God was wiser than me.

“It seems to me, that you draw the right conclusion from this remarkable providence. Surely God does now give a loud call to devote your whole self to the Lord. Commending you to God,

“I am, dear Tommy,

“Your affectionate friend and brother,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

The question which agitated his mind being now at rest, he appears to have recovered the tone of his feeling, and the fervour of his zeal, which is very cogently expressed in a letter to his aunt, Mrs. Best:—

“BLESSED be my indulgent Father, I enjoy peace of soul and health of body. I have lately proved the faithfulness and benignity of the Lord in a most singular way; after the most subtle assaults from the power of darkness, I have the Spirit of the Lord like a standard lifted up in my defence. O my dear aunt, when I look back upon these last more than three years, what has the God of Abraham called me unto, and what has the God of Joshua brought me through! Moses’s description of God’s gracious dealings with Israel may

be truly applied to my case: 'He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.' And now, blessed be his name, 'He makes me ride upon the high places of the earth.' I am permitted to sit with Christ in heavenly places. Preserve me, O thou Preserver of men, from acting Jeshurun's perfidious part! At present I feel my soul sweetly hanging on the arm of God. Thou art my Lord, my life, my all! I had a precious season to my soul this morning, while enlarging on 1 John ii. 28. Father, I am but a little child, a mere babe in Christ; let thine arms of mercy hold me up to my Saviour's heart, that I may grow up to a father in God's family, and stand with cheerful confidence at last before the judgment-seat.

"The Lord is carrying on his work in this city. In visiting the classes last Lady-day we found a considerable increase, not only in number, but in grace. Some of the dear people are growing up 'like willows by the water-courses.' Many have been added to the number of the faithful, and some have obtained an inheritance among them that are sanctified; and a few have died happy in the Lord, and have exchanged this state of mourning for a blissful immortality. The week which is now just past has been a blessed season to many souls, who have proved the resurrection's power of Christ. I think I was never in livelier assemblies than our general and band love-feasts. O may the Keeper of Israel keep these precious souls of his flock, and suffer nothing to poison their simplicity! Mr. Wesley will be in Cork shortly, God willing; he is very well, and is now making his tour through this kingdom.

"It gives me great pleasure to hear that the Lord has stirred up the people of Launceston once more.  
 . . . . . I am not without hope of being with you yet. . . . . I need not request an interest

in your prayers, as you have always shown so great a regard for my spiritual welfare ; you will still continue your much-respected admonitions, which will ever be esteemed and acknowledged by me. And while you pray for, and help on, the feeblest follower of the despised Jesus, may the same precious Saviour water your soul with the dew of his blessing ! May he grant you on earth a hundred-fold reward, and in the world to come life everlasting ! This is the prayer of, dear aunt,

“ Your most dutiful and affectionate nephew,

“ THOMAS ROBERTS.”

The preceding letters present an undisguised and unadorned view of the purity and simplicity of his mind ; and though confidential in their original communication, and without intention of their appearing before the public eye, their publication cannot but be justified, as they present to us the “ Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile ;” having a pleasing tendency to edify the Christian churches, and furnishing a glow of heavenly piety especially worthy the attention and imitation of young ministers.

The pious society in Cork, with whom he had been favoured with so many blessings in heavenly places in Christ, were greatly endeared to him, and ever lived in his affectionate remembrance. He often related, with much interest, a visit which he paid them in the year 1814, when he received a good report of some of them who had died in the Lord, and entered into glory, while the survivors welcomed him as the messenger of the Lord, who had been to them the instrument of salvation. It seems that some desire had been expressed for his appointment to Dublin, on which Dr. Coke, Mr. Wesley’s representative to the Irish Conference, wrote to him :—

“COLERAIN, *June 8th, 1790.*”

“MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

“I FEEL some desire of appointing you for Dublin at the next Conference. I think, at present, it may be for the glory of God. Will you give me the choice of the alternative, of appointing you for Dublin or taking you to England?”

“Your faithful friend,

“THOMAS COKE.”

Mr. Roberts bowed to the decision of Mr. Wesley, on which he received the following reply:—

“DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN, *June 19th, 1790.*”

“MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

“I HAVE just received a letter from Mr. Wesley, informing me, that he intends to station you next year in London; and observes, ‘I shall then have him under my eye.’ I shall let Mr. Wesley know what you wrote to me in your last. I think it is the best way to leave the whole to God. If you stay in Ireland, you will probably be appointed for Dublin.

“Your most faithful friend,

“THOMAS COKE.”

It was finally determined that Mr. Roberts should return to England. He felt exquisitely at leaving his Cork friends, to whom his spirit was so closely united, and with whom he had enjoyed so many blessings. He had been abundant in his labours; as his text-book shows, that during the two years he had preached six hundred and thirty-three sermons, four hundred and thirty-five of which had been delivered in the city of Cork; and he could not review his extensive labours in Ireland but with thanksgiving to God, that, notwithstanding the affliction he had laboured under, he had been enabled to pass through so large a range of

country, travelling so many hundred miles, and preaching not less than one thousand four hundred and forty-nine sermons during the four years.

To the first of the appointments named by Dr. Coke, Mr. Roberts had a strong objection, though he felt great delicacy in opposing the kind wishes of a man to whose judgment he paid so much deference, yet he urged his youth and inexperience as a sufficient reason for declining so prominent a station. Mr. Wesley, therefore, very kindly admitted his objections, and appointed him to Bristol, at the same time, with great solemnity, receiving him into full connexion. This was to him as the ordination of God; he renewed his covenant-engagements, and “resolved more fully to devote his heart, his life, his talents, his all, to the Lord, and the work of the ministry.” His stay in Bristol was but of short continuance. Mr. Wesley, in his tour through South Wales, finding some societies in Pembrokeshire in a very unpleasant state, and which required “the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove” to set them in order, fixed on Mr. Roberts to accomplish this difficult work, and wrote to him as follows:—

“HAYERFORDWEST, *August 13th, 1790.*

“DEAR TOMMY,

“Now I shall make a trial of you, whether I can confide in you or no. Since I came hither I have been much concerned. This is the most important circuit in all Wales; but it has been vilely neglected by the assistant, whom, therefore, I can trust no more. I can trust you, even in so critical a case. I desire therefore that, whoever opposes, you will set out immediately, and come hither as soon as ever you can. I wish you could meet me at Cardiff or Cowbridge. You will see by the printed plan when I shall be at either of those places. If you have not notice soon enough to do this, try to

meet me to-morrow se'nnight at the New-Passage, unless you can get a passage by the weekly boat to Swansea. If it be possible do not fail. It may be this may be the beginning of a lasting friendship between you, and,

“ Dear Tommy,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

“ N. B. You are to act as assistant.”

This letter is expressive of the care of Mr. Wesley for the welfare of the societies, and shows the motive by which he was induced to exercise an affectionate command over the preachers. Mr. Roberts felt himself placed in a painful dilemma: from the affection of the people of Bristol, and the gratifying prospect of usefulness presented to him there, he could not but feel some reluctance to acquiesce in this unexpected proposal. However, obedience was a paramount duty, and he hastened to meet Mr. Wesley, received his direction and advice, and immediately entered upon his new charge, believing the power which ordained it to be of God; and so it proved, for on this very incident turned all the events of his future earthly pilgrimage. A tide of popularity flowed in upon him; all ranks of people flocked to hear him, and gladly received the word of life from his lips.

Having made such arrangements as gave peace and harmony to the societies, he obtained leave of Mr. Wesley to visit his friends in Cornwall. On arriving in his native county, he states that his feelings were inexpressible; he involuntarily threw himself on the ground, kissed it, then rose upon his knees, and, in the spirit of devout thanksgiving, praised God, who had led him in the way which he had gone, kept him from evil, and crowned him with his goodness and tender mercy. He rose, and hastened to his father's house, where he was

received with the joy of paternal affection, and soon encircled by his relations and Christian friends, who gave him a hearty welcome, and thanked God on his behalf. His first text was expressive of the sentiments of his heart: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm cxvi. 12.) After this most agreeable and profitable visit, he returned to Haverfordwest, where the preachers resided; the Circuit embracing the county of Pembroke and town of Carmarthen. He renewed his labours under favourable circumstances. "The power of the Lord was present to save," and Zion prospered. He was much assisted in his pastoral care by the wise and seasonable advice which he received in his correspondence with Mr. Wesley. It is worthy of note, that, when that great man could no longer write through physical decay, his intellect was still clear, and his spirit alive to the best interests of the people of his care. He dictated the following letter, which was written by the Rev. Joseph Bradford, and signed it with his own hand the day before the seizure which finally terminated his glorious career. This was one of the last, if not the very last, that hand which had written so much, and to so good purpose, ever signed.

" LONDON, *February 18th, 1791.*

" MY DEAR BROTHER,

" WHO was it that opposed your reducing the preachers in the circuit to two? and on what pretence? We must needs reduce all our expenses every where, as far as possible. You must never leave off till you carry this point. Form bands in every large society. I am glad to hear that your journey home has not been in vain. My best wishes attend my friends.

" I am, Dear Tommy,

" Your affectionate friend and brother,

" JOHN WESLEY."

This letter was soon followed by the sorrowful tidings of the death of this great man, Mr. Roberts's beloved and revered father and friend. The feelings of his mind were powerfully excited by this event, and were expressed in a sermon which he preached on the occasion, to a deeply affected congregation, at Carmarthen, from 2 Samuel iii. 36: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" This sermon, and the hymns which he composed for the service, made an impression which is still remembered, and spoken of with interest by a few survivors. He also wrote an elegy on the death of Mr. Wesley, which was published in the December Magazine of that year: a brief quotation will convey some idea of the deep emotions of his heart.

WHAT ardour now my trembling heart inspires !  
 How glows my bosom with superior fires !  
 I hear, I hear, the flaming chariot roll ;  
 The clouds drop sadness on my fainting soul.  
 See ! see, the blazing portals wide extend ;  
 He mounts ! he flies ! my father and my friend !  
 The rapid coursers gain the crystal walls ;  
 He disappears, and lo ! the mantle falls.

To thee, blest sire, shall every breast be moved,  
 And all thy children sing the saint they loved ;  
 For thee shall Science drop the filial tear,  
 And sacred Virtue shall thy name revere.  
 For thee, the Muse shall pour the sorrowing lay,  
 And pure Devotion languish o'er thy clay ;  
 Remotest generations yet unborn  
 Shall breathe the deep-felt sigh o'er Wesley's urn !

His continued labours in this circuit were not only attended with more than ordinary acceptance, but extensive usefulness ; so that he states this to be one of the most agreeable and happy years of his life. Several

persons of great respectability became his regular hearers, one of whom was Miss Wogan, of Weston, near Haverfordwest, the eldest daughter of John Wogan, Esq., a descendant of one of the most ancient and respectable families in that part of the principality. Mr. Roberts and this excellent lady, who was one of the seals of his ministry, commenced a correspondence which afterwards ripened into more than ordinary friendship. It was in the summer of this year, on the arrival of Mr. Roberts from Ireland to attend the Conference, that the writer of this memoir first saw him; and he well recollects the admiration excited at his fine personal appearance, and the elegance of his manners; but, above all, at the impressive strains of eloquence which flowed from his lips, and the holy unction that accompanied his preaching.

As the ensuing Conference was to be held at Manchester, Mr. Roberts, with two of his brethren, to save expense, agreed to go by sea to Liverpool. This nearly proved fatal to them. They sailed from Fishguard, in a small Welsh trader; and when off the Isle of Bury, were in imminent danger of shipwreck, from a tremendous storm that arose. Their lives were in the greatest jeopardy. Prayer was made, and the Lord remarkably answered. He rebuked the winds and the waves, and gave them a favourable passage to their destined port; for which they praised their great Deliverer. On his arrival at Manchester, Mr. Roberts found gloom and anxiety depicted in the countenances of many of the brethren. Their great Elijah was no more; he had finished his labours, mounted the triumphal chariot, and entered into the joy of his Lord. Deprived of the wise counsels and commanding influence of him who had so long presided over them with unparalleled wisdom, there was great searching of heart relative to the best line of conduct to be pursued, and mode of government to be adopted. After a day of humiliation and prayer,

upon consulting the posthumous advice of their removed militant head, it was resolved "to submit to each other in the Lord," and to adopt that system of discipline, of the efficiency and utility of which, the history of the Connexion since that period records ample proof. Mr. Roberts expresses himself to have been "tremblingly alive" during the discussion, the result of which received his cordial approbation, and undeviating concurrence through life.

At the Conference of 1791 he was re-appointed to the Bristol circuit, his name having stood there the preceding year. As the society in this city had been, from its formation, under the special care of Mr. Wesley, Mr. Roberts was led to hope for many advantages and spiritual blessings. He, however, soon found that the late arrangements did not accord with the sentiments of several of the influential persons. This placed him in circumstances of a trying nature, as he was firm in his purpose of carrying those arrangements into effect. Not having realized that usefulness and those consolations in Christ which he had anticipated, and being importuned by his friends in South Wales to return to them, he resolved to comply with their affectionate wishes, and at the Conference of 1792 was again appointed to Pembrokeshire. After remaining in Bristol, by particular request, to assist in opening Portland chapel, he hastened once more to enjoy his beloved circle of friends in Haverfordwest and the Circuit. They heard him gladly, as one that played on a well-tuned instrument. His natural talent was rather that of a "son of consolation," than of a Boanerges; yet he did not fail to lead sinners to the foot of Sinai, and present to their view the majesty and glory of the divine Lawgiver, with the sound of the trumpet, denouncing woe, tribulation, and eternal death upon every soul of man that doeth evil; calling sinners to awake from the sleep of spiritual death, that they might have light, life, and salvation in

Jesus Christ. The Lord opened the hearts of many to receive the engrafted word, some of whom have long since fallen asleep in Christ, while others are standing on the banks of Jordan, waiting to pass into the land of promise.

It has already been stated, that Miss Wogan was among the seals of Mr. Roberts's ministry; and that a correspondence had taken place between them. She had now for some time given proof of the sincerity and fervour of her piety; and the amiable qualities she possessed were rendered yet more amiable by the garment of righteousness with which she was clothed. Believing it to be the will of God that they should be united in marriage, their happy union (for such it was, though it proved but of short continuance) took place at Clifton church, near Bristol, July 11th, 1793. This was an union of affection, formed in the fear of the Lord, and in reference to his glory, and not of worldly policy or sordid lucre. Miss Wogan's fortune, at the time of her marriage, being very limited, it was not until the death of her only brother, that she became co-heiress to the Weston estates. But had it been otherwise, she would have thought nothing too great to sacrifice for one who to her had been the minister of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Though her superior education and accomplishments had prepared her to move in the higher circles, she resolutely broke from the gay world, to participate with her husband in his holy labours, and in the honours of the cross of Christ, which she esteemed greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

The Conference being again at hand, Mr. Roberts repaired to meet his brethren at Leeds. In these yearly meetings, few felt a deeper sympathy with the joys and sorrows of the ministers with whom he was associated than he did, or was more affectionate and judicious in counsel. The general business being concluded, he returned to Haverfordwest, to which circuit he was

re-appointed. June 16th, 1794, he was favoured with the birth of a son, whom the Rev. Dr. Coke baptized by the name of John Wogan; but this lovely first-born was soon and suddenly snatched away. While playfully encircled in his father's arms, he was seized with convulsions, and almost instantly expired, March 13th, 1795. Thus the heart glowing with paternal affection was, in a moment, agonized with sorrow, which is affectively portrayed in a letter written to his brother a few days after.

“Vain, vain, and delusive are the best of earth's enjoyments! In the short space of a few moments is one of the greatest of my comforts destroyed! O, my brother, what have I felt, and how has its tender mother bled, since the shaft entered into and pierced through her soul also! But shall I not have my Isaac restored? I shall receive him from the dead! The consideration of the advantages he has obtained by the exchange, alleviates in a great degree the poignancy of our sorrow. He knew nothing of the world's delusions; he cared nothing for its best enjoyments. He had no sacrifice to make; had nothing to sell ere he could enter into life, but by a sweet apotheosis entered at once into the vision of his Redeemer, his most eminently ‘all in all.’ I have had a return of the hectic fever; the cause of this I apprehend to be the late affliction, which I have felt very severely, and which affects my spirits to a very great degree. Nothing but time and Divine grace can relieve my mind. I have not as yet been able to exert fortitude enough to go within the door of the nursery, and my dear little fellow seems every moment present with me, by night and by day. I am ashamed to acknowledge the weakness of my nature; but, though distressed, I do not wish to part with my affliction. However, I now begin to see more clearly the gracious hand that dealt the blow. Perhaps God, to spare the father, took the child. I bow to the

Divine will, and hope, at least in eternity, if not in time, to be able to rejoice in the all-wise dispensation."

This painful bereavement was shortly followed by one yet more afflictive. His beloved wife was seized with fever, and, notwithstanding the best medical aid, after giving birth to an infant, which also died, in a few days closed her valuable life. The affecting account of this agonizing dispensation is best given in his own words, in a letter to his sister:—

"For several months past she had a presentiment of a speedy dissolution, and would not be persuaded to the contrary. On the morning of the 19th of May, my birth-day, to which I had looked forward with far other sentiments than the fatal day presented, she was taken violently ill in a moment, and shivered in such a manner as to cause the bed to shake under her. She immediately said to me, 'My dear, I shall die.' Of this I did not then think much, supposing it to be merely the impression and language of the moment. The cold fit was succeeded by a high and inflammatory fever. Medical assistance was immediately called in; but the fever increasing, it brought on labour, and at a quarter before twelve at noon the following day, she gave birth to a little girl. As it was deemed probable the babe would not live, I had it baptized by the name of Elizabeth, at my dear Ellen's request, as a token of remembrance for my mother. The fever growing more violent, further assistance was called in; but the patient creature, though she submitted to every thing the Faculty prescribed, yet looked forward for the happy hour that should set her free from the house of clay. With all the composure and calmness imaginable, she desired her physician to inform her of her real situation, and I insisted the truth should be told her. She loved me much, her heart was strongly united to me; but on the Friday morning her triumph over nature was complete.

While I was at prayer with her, she burst out into a rapturous strain of praise and adoration; and when I arose from my knees she said, ‘Now I see my passage clear to the skies! Jesus is mine, and I am his! Jesus is mine, and I am his!’ This she frequently repeated, and then with perfect composure said she could cheerfully give me up with every earthly concern. She said she had two babes in paradise, and should soon join them. She exhorted me to cleave to God, and to look to him for support and comfort; for that though we were now parted, we should soon meet in a better world. She then quoted this stanza out of the last hymn in the large collection:—

‘Live till the Lord in glory come,  
And wait his heaven to share;  
He now is fitting up our home,  
Go on, I’ll meet you there!’

She then looked at me with ineffable sweetness, and related all the feelings of her mind, and briefly suggested all she wished me to do. The doctor, who was in the next room, being called in, she expressed her hope respecting heaven, and witnessed how happily we had lived. In this blessed frame she continued, till the fever rose to that degree as to deprive her of the exercise of her reason, and on Monday, the 25th, resigned her spirit into the hands of her Saviour, and entered into the life and glory she so triumphantly anticipated.”

The death of this amiable woman was universally lamented; and, as an expression of mournful respect, her funeral was attended by most of the noblemen’s and gentlemen’s families in the surrounding country. Her remains were interred with those of her ancestors and of her two children, in the family vault in the chancel of Weston church, where a monument was erected with the following inscription:—

O ! IF the first embellishments of mind,  
 Sense highly-polish'd, judgment most refined ;  
 If all the powers to social feelings dear,  
 That prompt the transport, or impel the tear ;  
 If all the graces of the holy dove,  
 Firm faith, bright hope, and never-failing love ;  
 If all the ravish'd eye delighted sees,  
 The charms that angels or their God can please ;  
 If Virtue's self could have disarm'd the dart,  
 It had not pierced my Eleanora's heart !  
 Yet greatly fell his potent arm beneath  
 The heaven-wing'd saint, and dying conquer'd death,  
 Snatch'd victory from the grave ; the infernal sting  
 By faith reverted on the grisly king ;  
 Then raised the palm, bedipp'd in Jesu's blood,  
 And fled to wave it on the mount of God !

---

### CHAPTER III.

It is scarcely possible to conceive the poignant grief to which the very acute feelings of Mr. Roberts were now subjected, as a bereft husband and father. In less than three months deprived of all he held dear on earth, hurled from the highest pinnacle of domestic felicity and hopeful enjoyment into an abyss of agonizing sorrow, his fainting soul looked up and said, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me; yet the Lord will remember his loving-kindness." Here faith reposed its confidence in the all-sufficiency and never-failing love of Him who had given and taken away.

But, notwithstanding the devout efforts of his mind to resolve all into the loving, wise, and sovereign will of his heavenly Father, and to believe "whom he loveth he chasteneth," and that for their profit, that

they may be partakers of his holiness, he suffered much depression of mind; and the re-iterated shocks so greatly affected his physical frame as to render him ever after incapable of fulfilling the whole of the arduous duties of the itinerant ministry. This was kindly considered by his brethren, and his future appointments were generally as an extra or supernumerary preacher. Some persons, for want of better information, attributed such appointments to other causes, supposing he might have undertaken the full labours of his station: of this, perhaps, no one could be a more competent judge than the writer of this memoir, which he feels it his duty to state for the satisfaction of those who might have thought otherwise. It was in this day of sore trouble that his more particular intimacy with Mr. Roberts commenced; and this grew into a friendship that knew no diminution during the following thirty-eight years, eight of which, at different times, they were fellow-labourers together, and, during intervals, in the habit of correspondence and mutual visits. His spirit was always willing; the work of the ministry was the delight of his soul; and he was often deeply humbled that he should so far have given way to excessive grief as in any degree to paralyze his ministerial efforts: in this he thought he had offended his Divine Master, and was justly corrected. He made many attempts to rally and regain his strength, and, what he called, his "post of honour," but was always unsuccessful. It is but just to bear this testimony to this rather prominent circumstance in his life and labours. It might justly be said of him, that, in diffusing the sacred and fragrant ointment of the Saviour's name, he "did what he could;" and his brethren acted well in their indulgence towards him, and were amply repaid by the sincerity and constancy of his affection, and the unremitting zeal and liberality he manifested to promote the interests of the Connexion.

In proof of his anxious desire to retain his place among his brethren, he attended the ensuing Conference at Manchester, in hope the sorrows of his mind would be alleviated and his strength renewed; but in this he was disappointed by severe and continued affliction, so that he was scarcely able to attend a sitting, or enjoy any intercourse with his brethren. He was appointed to Bristol as Supernumerary, and his labours were divided between that city and South Wales.

On leaving Manchester, he was prevailed upon to take a tour through North Wales, by which his health and spirits appeared to be considerably improved; but on his return to Haverfordwest, every thing tending to remind him of his great bereavement, he sunk, as he expresses it, "into the luxury of mournful solitude and woe," till visited by his faithful and confidential friend, the Rev. Dr. Coke, who hastened to his aid, and by the fervour of his devout piety, the cheerfulness of his manners, and spiritual and literary conversation, roused him from the deep gloom of sorrow into which he had fallen; and, once more convinced of his error, he saw and felt the offence against Heaven, was laid in the dust before the sovereign Arbiter of life and death, and his soul said, "Arise, hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him." Complying with the earnest wishes of the doctor, he accompanied him to Bristol, where, on a change of scene, and association with his old friends, he resumed his ministry, and the joy of the Lord became once more his strength. On his return to Haverfordwest, it required no small degree of fortitude to resist the recurrence of his former depression. Being solicited to preach, after some struggle with his acute feelings, he consented; and, in expatiating on the consolatory words of St. Paul, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," his word dis-

tilled as the dew on an overwhelming and deeply affected congregation. While exhibiting in a vivid light the scale of contrast between transitory, probationary suffering, and the eternal duration and great weight of glory, his mind appeared largely to participate of the heavenly gift, and to feel the powers of the world to come. This was a season to be remembered by many, and can never be forgotten by him who records it.

Few persons were less formed for abstraction, or were more susceptible of social enjoyment, than Mr. Roberts; what he designated "the dreadful vacuity of widowhood" induced him again to form a connexion, and enter into a union, which proved to him a great blessing from the Lord. His late much-beloved wife, a little before her departure, pressing his hand with great tenderness, said, "I leave you: I entreat you to think of our dear Mary: the Lord will graciously comfort you:" meaning her particular friend, Miss Randolph, the eldest daughter of William Randolph, Esq., of Bristol, between whom and herself a spiritual union had subsisted from the commencement of their religious course. What is very remarkable, they were both enlightened by the Spirit of truth, and convinced of the necessity of a change of heart, and enjoyment of a present salvation in Christ Jesus, at the same time, under the same sermon, preached by Mr. Roberts, from, "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare I will render double to you." The above was not only the recommendation of strong affectionate friendship, but of wisdom; for no person could have been selected more suitable as a successor or as a helpmate. To this excellent lady he was happily united July 7th, 1796. The mildness of her disposition, the accomplishments of her mind, the elegance of her manners, the fervour of her piety, and the tender sympathizing interest with which she entered into the recent afflictions of her friend, were to him a healing

restorative, and he again, with renewed covenant engagements, pursued his beloved ministerial labours; and when his physical strength was inadequate to the public labours of earlier life, he employed his pen, and through the medium of the press diffused the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ.

From this period to the year 1811 he was appointed as an extra preacher to Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Banwell, Downend, and Carmarthen. This sort of station was not only adapted to the precarious state of his health, relieving him from the responsibility and anxiety of the regular labours of the circuit, but enabled him to visit the neighbouring circuits, and to make extensive excursions to preach occasional sermons in opening chapels, and to attend meetings for public institutions, for which he was favoured with a special adaptation of talent. He was often solicited to plead in behalf of Kingswood School,—“the school of the sons of the prophets,” as he designated it,—of which he was the warm and liberal advocate. A sermon which he preached in aid of that excellent institution in King-street chapel, Bristol, was published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1804, and was the means of affording it pecuniary assistance. He was also the powerful and not unfrequent pleader in behalf of the rising and rapidly extending influence of Sunday-schools, of which his affectionate and eloquent address to the members and friends of the Bath Sunday-school Union, delivered in Walcot chapel, and published at their request, is a standing record. And how much his heart was engaged in works of charity relative to the education of the children of the poor, will be seen in an anonymous pamphlet, published on the Blagdon controversy. The applications to him were numerous; and he refused none with which he could possibly comply, but frequently, considering his infirmities and debility, ran great risks, often subjecting

himself to temporary confinement, and sometimes to severe illness, as will appear in subsequent parts of this narrative. But none of these things discouraged him : he thought this to be his special providential calling ; and as soon as a little recovered, and not unfrequently before, he would resume his ministerial labours of charity, in which he felt peculiar pleasure, often proving that Divine strength was made perfect in human weakness, and favoured with many tokens that his mission was from above, and accompanied by gracious effusions of the Holy Spirit. In the cities of Bath and Bristol he was often associated with respectable ministers of different denominations on public occasions, by whom he was held in high estimation ; and with a liberality of sentiment by which he was ever distinguished, but without compromise, he rendered them his valuable services, not unfrequently filling their pulpits with much acceptance.

Though Mr. Roberts did not appear as the author of any volumes or elaborate work, he rendered his aid to several respectable authors, and contributed from an early period to many periodical publications : most of his numerous writings, both prose and verse, were introduced to the public in the form of pamphlets of various sizes. As many of these are not generally known, and possess considerable merit, it may be gratifying to his friends to have some reference to the chief of them, also to such particular occurrences, during the following years, as this memoir will allow.

At the Conference held in Bristol in the year 1798, he had the high gratification of being a principal instrument in the formation of what is denominated "the Itinerant Methodist Preachers' Annuitant Sociey, or Legalized Fund." This institution not having been placed on a legal form, the annual subscriptions of the preachers and their friends had been applied to various contingencies in the Connexion. However laudable

this might be in promoting so great and good a work, it left the worn-out preachers and their widows in painful doubt as to the permanency of their future support. This excited the serious attention of some of the junior preachers; and after several private conversations, one of them mentioned the subject to Mr. Roberts; his views and feelings corresponding with theirs,—that, considering the growing state of the Connexion, and the probable increase of annuitants, something should be done to form and legally establish a permanent fund. Such was the cordial feeling of his mind for his aged brethren and their widows placed in less favourable circumstances than himself, that he spontaneously offered a donation of fifty pounds to commence with, and any other support he might be able to give. This being mentioned to several of the brethren, a meeting was convened, at which himself, Dr. Clarke, and several other influential preachers attended. After much deliberation, in which he bore a principal part, resolutions were entered into, rules formed, and himself and Dr. Clarke appointed treasurers. These rules were registered as the law required, by his application to the Quarter Sessions, held for the city and county of Bristol, July 15th, 1799. To the accuracy of this statement the writer can bear witness, as he received and carried Mr. Roberts's benevolent proposal to his brethren, with his warm and ardent wishes, that efficient measures might be adopted to accomplish the much-desired object. How much he appreciated this institution, for his brethren's sake, was evinced by his watchful care over it, and the faithful discharge of the duties of treasurer, till, through his growing infirmities, he found it necessary to resign the office. His reflections on the part he took were to him always gratifying and consolatory.

A circumstance which occurred but a short time before his death, and which was not fully understood at

the time, excited a little temporary painful feeling ; but, however he might err in judgment, he evinced his constant and ardent affection. Having sustained the loss of the principal part of his property, which will be more particularly mentioned in its place, he suggested to a friend the idea of receiving a portion of the arrears which might be considered due to him from this fund ; but, as he afterwards privately stated to his friend who records it, not for his own personal appropriation, but, it not being in his power to leave any thing to the fund, which he had long purposed to do, he thought by this he might have the honour of expressing his regard for the institution and his brethren by a bequest in his last will to the amount he might receive ; but concluded, with great meekness of spirit, by saying, “ Perhaps the desire arose from something not in accordance with humility, therefore the gratification was not permitted.” The sincerity and goodness of his motive cannot be doubted, and he drew even from this disappointment a profitable conclusion.

In the year 1801–2, he published several anonymous pamphlets, in reply to some aggressive and slanderous misrepresentations of Methodism, by persons of literary celebrity in his native county and that of Somerset, in which he wielded the polemical sword with judgment and ability. His opponents, feeling the keenness of the edge, and sharpness of the point, retired from the field with no achievement of honour to their sacred office or literary character. Few things would more completely rouse his mind to action than slanderous misrepresentations of Methodism and its venerable Founder. They ever lay near his heart, and were deeply entwined in his tenderest affections ; believing, as he did, that Mr. Wesley was specially commissioned by the Lord, as one of the greatest reformers the world ever knew ; and that the doctrines preached, and system of discipline in operation, if maintained in their Divine simplicity and

purity, were ordained by the special providence of God to be important instruments in the evangelization of the world.

He hailed the triumph of truth in any and every form. About this time he wrote a congratulatory poem to his friend, the Rev. Robert Hall, then of Cambridge. He greatly admired the dignified godly simplicity and exalted talents of that learned and good man. The insertion of an extract from the poem cannot but be acceptable :—

For thee, whose genius can each muse inspire,  
 The bard, the friend, assumes the hallow'd lyre ;  
 Again obedient to the call divine,  
 Suspends the votive lay at friendship's shrine.  
 With living splendour, like the lucid ray  
 Which from the star of morn directs its way,  
 Thee we behold, refulgent sun of light,  
 Put the foul fiend of atheism to flight,  
 While virtue crown'd thee, while religion shed  
 Her brightest beams upon thy honour'd head.  
 Again, by duty led, the foe to meet,  
 In truth's impervious armour clad complete,  
 We see thy hand the lifted bolt sustain,  
 And hail thee, HALL, heaven's advocate again.  
 'T is thine whom wisdom's brilliant beam directs,  
 Thine to portray those infidel effects,  
 Direful effects, that with infernal force  
 Impel the impetuous passions' onward course,  
 At once exciting all the ills that flow,  
 And deluge Europe with a world of woe.

Then will not He, the jealous God, arise,  
 And pour his indignation from the skies,  
 Give Gallic pride and Gallic power the rein,  
 And heaven's own righteous honours thus maintain ?  
 No,—if thy counsel wisely we revere ;  
 Britain's endanger'd,—not in France, but here.

That cause (our crimes) removed, the foreign foe  
But seals her glory in his overthrow.

He also wrote a poem to his particular friend, Dr. Clarke, on the translation of Sturm's "Reflections on the Works of God in Nature and Providence," which was attached to the first volume of that edifying and useful work.

He also published a poem, entitled "*Carmen Seculare*," which does no small credit to the poetic powers of his mind, and the devout feelings of his heart; and a sermon preached in King-street chapel, Bristol, on the day of thanksgiving for the general peace. The sentiments of this excellent sermon are expressive of his political and loyal principles. The text, "God save the king," whether considered as the announcement of the joyous congratulations of loyalty, or fervent effusions of prayer to the almighty King of kings for every blessing of salvation, civil and religious, he hesitated not to pronounce with cheerful and devout accent. This he considered in accordance with, and enjoined by, the Christianity of the New Testament. He not only approved of the great principles of the civil constitution of his country, but enjoined Christian submission to "the powers that be." And for the ecclesiastical establishment he indulged a respectful regard, most cordially approving of her liturgy, which he preferred as part of the morning service, and which, wherever introduced, he read with great devotional solemnity. These principles being early inculcated on his mind by him whom he deemed it his honour to call "father in the Gospel," he steadily adhered to them.

Mr. Roberts, from the period of his second marriage, entered upon a scene the most gratifying; living in the enjoyment of temporal affluence, surrounded by an intelligent, pious, and harmonious domestic circle; moving in a

sphere adapted to, and which gave full scope to, the increase of ministerial talents; held in high estimation by the most respectable of all denominations, and sincerely loved and blessed among the people of his choice. While of his abundance he devised liberal things, and cheerfully rendered his gratuitous aid to the societies and congregations, he received a rich reward into his own bosom, and many instances of the efficacy of his labours.

The only interruption he appeared to have to the full tide of enjoyment and happiness, was the loss of his children, who, in succession, as they entered into life, were conveyed by guardian angels to the arms of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." Mr. Roberts had learned obedience and resignation by the things he had suffered; and though, as an affectionate father, he was anxiously desirous of a family, yet he bowed in submission to the Divine will.

On the 15th of April, 1804, the wheel of kind Providence, which had moved onward so smoothly, retrograded, and he was once more plunged into sorrow by the sudden and unexpected removal of his beloved partner. The writer of this had, a day or two before, spent a considerable time in conversation with her, when she appeared unusually communicative, cheerful, and quite as well as might be expected, being near her confinement. The conversation was principally on the subject of Christian experience, living by faith in Christ, its influence in relation to communion with God, the fulfilment of divine promises, increasing holiness, spiritual consolation, and encouraging anticipations of a blissful immortality. He heard no more of Mrs. Roberts till the mournful event had occurred. On the sabbath day, while reading prayers in Portland chapel, he was abruptly informed that she was no more. Being deeply affected at the afflictive tidings, he was, for the

moment, incapable of articulation; the congregation arose from their knees, every countenance expressive of solicitude to know the cause. After a short pause it was intimated that information of the decease of a much-loved friend had just been received. All the family being absent, it was immediately conjectured who that friend was. Every heart appeared to melt, and every eye was suffused with tears. As soon as he could conclude the solemn service, for such it was, (and what was remarkable, he had fixed upon those words, being part of the first lesson, for his text, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,") he hastened to his friend. The scene of sorrow was overwhelming: Mr. Roberts was laid prostrate in agonizing grief; only convulsive groans and deep sighs could be heard, though there was evidently, in the midst of this anguish of spirit, a holy struggling of soul to get to the foot of the throne of the God of help. All was in solemn silence, except the responding sighs of deep sympathy. When he was able to articulate, he exclaimed, "O my friend! what have I done?" He fervently prayed for divine support and resignation to the mysterious and afflictive dispensation.

What added to the poignancy of his grief was, on his beloved wife being taken ill, he hastened for assistance, but before he could return, the kindred spirit had fled to rest and glory; so that he had not even one valedictory expression from the lips which had so often consoled and even instructed him. But he had this consolation, that, in this affliction, he was not, as before, bereft of all; the Lord had graciously left him a lovely boy. The funeral was attended by numerous ministers and friends. Her remains were deposited with her six children in the family vault at Portland chapel, where a monument is placed to her memory. Funeral sermons were preached by the Rev. J. Pawson and others; and a memoir of

her was published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1809.

Though much is said of her, much more might have been recorded. Her natural disposition was sweet and amiable. She was warm and faithful in her friendship, cheerful and pleasing in her conversation. She lived habitually in the exercise of that faith in Christ which works by love, and purifies the heart; was assiduous in the means of grace, and ever ready to do good. Her piety, devotion, benevolence, and profiting, appeared to all; and few persons ever shared more largely in the esteem of those who had the pleasure of her acquaintance, or were more sincerely lamented. Such a loss was deeply felt by the bereft husband; though he remained for a season almost inconsolable, he stood admonished by the recollection of former circumstances, and endeavoured by devout restraint to keep in subjection his strong and more than ordinarily sensitive feelings; looking by faith to Jesus, that he might, out of his fulness, receive sanctifying grace, and, like the Captain of his salvation, be made perfect through consecrated sufferings.

The domestic harmony and felicity they had enjoyed, is expressed in a pathetic poem in his manuscripts; from which the succeeding extracts are given:—

COME, dearest Mary, gentle fawn!  
Let us together walk the lawn;  
Let us beneath the solar ray  
Imbibe the vital breath of day,  
The distant hills and plains explore,  
And view the varied landscape o'er;  
Where ivy-clad yon tower is seen  
Aspiring from the enamell'd green,  
With the ranged temple-turrets near,  
That through the ashen foliage peer,

The grassy mead, the glowing field,  
 Where golden harvests plenty yield :  
 Mark where the northern mountains rise,  
 And lift their pines to meet the skies ;  
 Where heaven and earth unite as friends,  
 Afar " where the bow'd welkin ends :"  
 All blooming nature seems to say,  
 " Come, dearest Mary, come away !"

O come, sweet soother of my care !  
 So often call'd my griefs to share,  
 So faithful to thy nuptial vow,  
 Participate my pleasure now.  
 Blest is the alchymy of love,  
 That can our ecstasies improve ;  
 Mysterious Power, dividing joy,  
 But never mixing base alloy.

Dear Mary, come, in converse sweet  
 Let our harmonious spirits meet ;  
 At virtue's shrine together bow,  
 No false, no feign'd adorer thou.  
 Let us the love of wisdom seek,  
 Of innocence and goodness speak.  
 Or let our minds, by heaven illumed,  
 On angel-wing with glory plumed,  
 The vault ethereal mounting o'er,  
 Things hid from common view explore ;  
 Enraptured range the ample sky,  
 Converse of matters deep and high ;  
 Celestial Salem's towers behold,  
 And tread her streets of shining gold ;  
 Drink pleasure at the primal fount,  
 And e'en ascend the holy mount :  
 With ardent eye the living blaze  
 Behold, where trembling angels gaze,

The crown of life, the radiant throne,  
 By sovereign mercy made our own ;  
 See glittering, glorious saints among,  
 And join the sweet cherubic song.  
 From heaven fresh vigour will we bring,  
 From seraphs learn to live and sing ;  
 With emulation will we rise,  
 And walk with angels in the skies.

Another extract from his elegy on the death of this amiable lady is deserving of record, as expressive of his mingled feelings of sorrowful bereavement and adoring submission to the sovereign will of heaven.

DEATH'S gloomy vale again I darkly tread,  
 Again attempt, with trembling tongue,  
 Some plaintive lay, some elegiac song,  
 To balm with holy verse my Mary dead !  
     My weeping woes may still inspire,  
     Attune to sorrowing sounds the lyre,  
     Such as, might heavenly minds complain,  
 The blest ethereal powers would disdain.  
     Hark ! from my Mary's recent tomb,  
     Breaking o'er the midnight gloom,  
     An angel-voice demands the votive strain !  
 And (all a husband's kindred soul can pay)  
     Affections fervid lay  
     Shall yield the tributary theme,  
 With mild respect attemper'd, and with due esteem

Heaven's portraiture was my dear Mary's heart,  
 Replete with tenderness, with truth, with love,  
 The touch of skill divine did grace exert,  
 And drew the adornings of the holy dove.  
 Distinguish'd mark of heaven's peculiar care,  
 His forming hand her ductile powers express'd ;  
 Kindness angelic gave her pleasing air,  
 And goodness loved to dwell within her breast.

No cloud enveloped her illumined mind,  
 There blank inanity was never seen ;  
 The free researches of a soul refined,  
 Enlighten'd God-like Reason's placid mien.

Ah me ! where now death's dismal glooms extend,  
 What living thought, what bright expression shone !  
 There spoke the wife, the mother, daughter, friend,—  
 For all the duteous feelings were her own.  
 But what avails the animated form ?  
 The sentimental smile ? the speaking eye ?  
 " Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal storm,  
 Lovely in death the beauteous ruins lie ! "

\* \* \* \* \*

I gaze,—but rolls unblest'd mine aching eye,—  
 No Mary glads my sight !  
 Which sick'ning turns away,  
 Loathing the tinsell'd glare of day,  
 For these congenial glooms, and kindred shades of night.

My soul shall emulate the grace I sing.  
 The grace I sing ! To share his grace was thine—  
 Yon bleeding Lamb, that fills the throne divine !  
 He view'd, complacent, on thy faithful breast  
 His holy image perfectly impress'd ;  
 In all thine intercourse with God and men,  
 Beheld his own resplendent walk again.

Hence all beheld, harmoniously combined,  
 Whate'er adorns and dignifies the mind,  
 Which vice might envy, virtue must admire,  
 Concentred, brighten'd, perfected, entire.  
 Meek, humble, lowly, she was ever seen,  
 Yet how magnanimous her equal mien !  
 That Calumny's envenom'd lip defied,  
 Alike remote from meanness and from pride.

Admiring saints beheld, with pure applause,  
Sublime accession to Immanuel's cause ;  
Bade angels bear the heaven-born saint on high,  
To add new glories to her native sky.

Awhile, by heaven transmitted, some sweet rays  
Were pour'd upon my life's uneven ways ;  
Sweet emanations from the seat supreme,  
This bosom visited with lovely beam.

But when these glances may no more illumine,  
When his own gifts God's righteous hands resume,  
To his almighty mandate will I bow,  
And, humbly bending, will his right allow ;  
His patent paths are pure "unsullied light,"  
Whate'er he does, essential Love, is right.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

MR. ROBERTS, ever finding a solace in the affectionate sympathy, counsel, and devout supplications of his brethren at the throne of grace, attended the ensuing Conference in London, and received those expressions of tender cordiality which soothed the anguish of his soul. He preached one of the Conference sermons : the subject was, "According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought !" A review of the work of God, and especially as displayed in the history of Methodism, which to him, by the love he bore it, was very familiar, he considered a subject of grateful admiration, and a stimulus to future exertion and hopeful prosperity. An unction from above accompanied the word spoken ; the sermon was highly approved by his brethren, and published by the request of the Conference. His spirit being graciously refreshed,

he once more took unto himself the sword of the Spirit and the armour of God with renewed courage. He was appointed to Bath, where, for the two succeeding years we were fellow-labourers together in the word and doctrine of Christ. Of his solicitous attention to that portion of the work allotted to him, of his anxiety to avoid all unnecessary inconvenience, and his readiness to assist, and brotherly sympathy in the season of trial and affliction, the following extracts from some of his letters, addressed from Bristol and elsewhere, will afford ample proof:—

“ THIS morning I was exceedingly distressed about helping you to-morrow. I had three weeks ago engaged to preach in the evening for the Rev. Mr. Page, the Doctor and himself being from home; from this embarrassment Mr. Pritchard has relieved me. He will inform you that the preachers press me to preach in Bristol for the Kingswood school to-morrow week. To this I have strong objections, as I think you expect me to make the collection that day in Bath. If you are not fixed on that point, I beg the favour of a line from you. I hope your mind will be perfectly easy, and your body recruit its usual energies. I feel sensibly for you; but I believe it is all of God, and sooner or later we shall be made acquainted with these dispensations.”

“ You wished to hear from me immediately. First, let me thank our gracious Lord, who has in infinite compassion enabled you once more to take up the pen, and who does, by his grace made perfect in your weakness, enable you to shout in the furnace, ‘ Salvation, and glory, and blessing to his precious name.’ Yes, thy mighty salvation is a present, pleasing, perfect salvation from grief, from repining, from every thing that hath torment, and can keep the happy soul above, even then when the mortal body sinks under the pressure of pain and numberless infirmities. What a Saviour! I bless

him that his fatherly chastisements have not been long or heavy upon my flesh. Yesterday I was able to come down to the drawing-room, and to-day I have walked in the garden; I gather a little strength, and it seems I shall be restored. For, what a poor blind child! I am pleased that the teaching Spirit, whose object is the same in all whom he baptizes with his baptism, is unfolding to you that most delightful of mysteries,—the godlike salvation of God. (This will be best perceived when the soul is dumb, standing still, and lost in its own conscious nothingness.) Bodily pains, as in your case, are not lost when they wean us from self and creature good; and, wrapt as it were in the mantle, we hear the ‘still small voice!’ O, my friend, human nature, without these teachings of the Divine Spirit, would betray us into many acts of pusillanimity, and into a maze of doubts and fears; as in the instance of Elijah, when Providence passes by in the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, but grace is not in either. Here, here is the point. We expect the Lord’s voice in the noises and displays which affect the outward senses: they are but the precursors. Our outward man is all sense: to the inward man, the spirit, does the Lord the Spirit, the ‘still small voice,’ speak audibly and forcibly, and reveal such comfort as the outward eye hath not seen or the ear heard. ) To this end does Providence contribute by disposing us to attend to grace. I beg pardon for running to such a length, but have been involuntarily led to it, my mind being particularly impressed with this train of thought.”

“ You must not, you ought not to preach on Friday; no, nor on Sunday either. Yet I cannot help you, being very weak indeed. Mr. Pawson, who was with me when your letter came, says he will speak to Mr. C——, and something shall be done as soon as possible. What God wills is best, because it is his will.”

“I WRITE you a few lines to say, I entertain the hope of being with you in Bath on Tuesday, to divide with you the labours of the sanctuary on Christmas-day. Never more, I fear and believe, must I do as I did on Sunday week. The labour of the evening injured me much, from which I have not recovered; though I have preached several times since, thank God. If I preach again twice I must accept the help of a friend, though I was self-sufficient enough to decline your kind offer of assistance. The fact is, I do not like stepping up into the pulpit merely to preach. I love to pray first, to whet my own axe, but I must submit in future to infirmity's necessities.”

During his continuance in London the preceding Conference, he attended a meeting with several ministers of different denominations, and literary gentlemen convened for the purpose of consulting on the necessity and practicability of commencing a periodical Review of books on theology, science, and literature in general, on religious principles. It was to be denominated the “Eclectic Review,” and to be conducted and supported by the “genuine friends of Christianity,” writers of piety and genius. Into this laudable project he entered with his usual liberality, and with sanguine and ardent expectation of much good resulting from it in favour of religion and of advantage to the religious public. The estimate formed of the value of his services appears from letters he received from the parties, especially from that man of piety, literature, and holy philanthropy, the Rev. Samuel Greatheed, who was for some time the principal conductor of the work.

“NEWPORT-PAGNELL, *October 24th*, 1804.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I HAVE longed for intercourse with you, especially on the subject of the Eclectic Review, ever since I had pleasure of meeting you on that business in London.

On my return hither I should have written to you ; but as Mr. Butterworth was setting out for Bristol, I hoped for every information respecting it from him, and have only learned within a few days past that he had scarcely the opportunity of an interview with you. The task of engaging reviewers, which has been wholly committed to me, has proved very arduous ; but it has pleased God so far to succeed my endeavours. Some eminent hands, and several which I hope will prove useful, have promised to assist. More, however, are necessary ; and I hope that you, dear Sir, who have so zealously set your hand to the plough, will not look back, when I request the assistance of your pen to be added to that of your advice and your property. The man that had five talents would certainly have received our Lord's censure, had he not employed them all. Several friends who are friendly to the Review, and qualified to render important assistance, have, from one or another motive, rejected my solicitations and weakened my hands. Let not difficulties, nor any other obstacle, induce you to add to the discouragement, but favour me with information of the subjects to which you will choose to pay attention.

“I exceedingly regret that Mr. Butterworth's influence failed to procure the invaluable assistance of Mr. Knox. If, before he leaves Bristol, you can have any conversation with him on the subject, I shall be obliged to you for information what his objections precisely are, should you not be able to obviate them. We are greatly at a loss for an efficient correspondent in Ireland. Can you point out to us a person, whose talents, zeal, and prudence might be depended on? Is there no hope of your being soon in London? Your counsel is greatly wanted. I should rejoice to meet you there in December, when I expect, God willing, to enter upon a residence of several months, perhaps for a longer period.

“ You will oblige me by applying to Dr. Ryland, and requesting to know if he would give us at least occasional assistance in the Review, and in what branches of literature. His help would be very desirable ; but I fear his avocations preclude the hope of it.

“ I had lately a kind letter from our friend Mr. Brackenbury, whom I apprehend to be now at Stamford, and hope to see him before I visit London. Assist me, dear Sir, with your intercessions at the throne of grace. I never was more sensible of the privilege of approaching it than since a charge of so great responsibility has devolved upon me. I bless God that he has hitherto carried me through it without injury to my health. To Him and to the word of his grace I commit you, and remain

“ Respectfully yours in the Lord,

“ SAMUEL GREATHEED.”

Some time afterwards his friend Dr. Clarke writes to him :—

“ THE work is certainly rising, and rising in merit. Will you make some observations on F——’s ‘ Letters?’ The editor will most cheerfully receive them. He has spoken to me two or three times about it. How is your health? The God of heaven bless you.

“ Yours truly,

“ A. CLARKE.”

Though Mr. Roberts very highly approved and very warmly patronized the original and liberal principles of this publication, indulging a sanguine hope of its extensive patronage by the religious public, and most cordially contributed to its aid, he found in process of time some difficulty attendant on maintaining the liberal principle of the prospectus, and plan of its commence-

ment, and for reasons sufficiently satisfactory to his own mind, deemed it expedient to withdraw himself from it, though he still entertained the best wishes for its success, so far as the first great principles were recognised and practically regarded.

On his return to Bath, his never-failing friend, Dr. Coke, visited him; and, early in the year 1805, they made a tour together into Devonshire and Cornwall. This brought many juvenile scenes into review, especially in his native town and the neighbourhood. He was favoured with overflowing congregations; and the fervent piety of his Cornish friends had a happy tendency in restoring his former tone of feeling and ministerial energies. The following letters, written at this time, may be interesting:—

“ST. IVES, *February 7th, 1805.*

“THROUGH the good providence of God, we are got on thus far. Every where we are received as the angels of God; and so worked are we by the super-solicitations of the dear people in these parts, who throng about us, and spare us not a whit, that I have been absolutely apprehensive that I should soon be made an angel in reality. But I have taken the resolution to be less engaged after the present week, and this resolution I feel to be indispensably necessary.

“‘After the present week!’ you say, ‘ay, after this week, and the next, and the next,’ &c., &c., &c., for when we shall get away I know not. Our full time originally laid out for this county is nearly elapsed, and there is full work for three weeks more, if we only give those who are most clamorous a sample. So when you will see me I cannot determine, or, indeed, conjecture. You may expect it as soon as can be.

“In this delightful region, where Methodism is beheld in its meridian lustre, we have immense congre-

gations, who drink in the word, and strengthen our hands by their fervent prayers. In the pulpit and out of it we are alike engaged ; and, except we would give unpardonable offence, must yield up ourselves to the solicitude and government of friendship, and all but lay down our life for the brethren. We meet with the greatest respect and kindness from all classes : we are to dine to-day with the mayor, from whom we have received a most polite invitation. From hence we go to Penzance, Redruth, Helstone, Falmouth, Penryn," &c., &c., &c.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"SINCE I had the pleasure of writing to you the other day, I have received the address from the governess of the Female Charity School, to which I have replied in language of humble acquiescence. I now write to apprise you, that it is not at all probable I shall be able to take my station in Bath next Lord's day, though I want very much to leave the Doctor, and be with you ; he having resumed his plan of visiting Plymouth, &c. I mean, if possible, to get home by Saturday night. My place perhaps can be supplied. I am not quite—yet all but—dead. Preach, preach, preach, loud ! long !"

Soon after their return, he had the gratification of bestowing the hand of "the pious Miss Smith," for so she was justly called, on the Doctor. The happiness of this union led the Doctor, who saw the liability of his friend to fall into paralyzing dejection, earnestly to advise him once more to enter into the marriage state. Mr. Roberts, believing it would contribute, not only to his domestic comfort, which greatly required it, but also to his usefulness in the church, acceded, especially as a kind Providence had directed him to a lady, loved and approved of all, whose piety and amiable disposi-

tion were particularly adapted to his present circumstances. The parties having sought the Lord by solemn prayer on the momentous subject, and having just reason to believe that their intended union was in accordance with the Divine will, this much-desired and afterwards happy event took place between him and Miss Jane Lee, the second daughter of the late Benjamin Lee, Esq., of Merrion, near Dublin, in Queen-square chapel, Bath, on the 1st of October following. She also was the intimate friend of the late Mrs. Roberts; and in proof that this union received the affectionate approval of her family, her brother, the Rev. Mr. Randolph, performed the marriage ceremony.

Though Mr. Roberts's sufferings had been great in the privations and bereavements to which he had been subjected, he felt that he had great cause for gratitude to God for these invaluable gifts; for no one was ever more favoured, or more specially blessed of the Lord, in the varied and successive partners of life, and few men ever more fully exemplified the Apostle's precept:—"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church; so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies."

Mr. Roberts's attention and interest were much excited in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society; the rules and regulations of which, with the first Annual Report, were published about this time, and presented the appearance of an attractive twinkling star, which many bigoted opponents sought to obscure, or pluck from its orbit. He was among those who united their best energies, pecuniary aid, and influential talents in promoting it; and was generally found on the platforms in forming auxiliary and branch societies, or at the succeeding anniversaries, in almost every place through the range of the sphere of his labours. None felt greater interest in seeing this magnificent institu-

tion rise in splendour, extending its beneficent influence to the various nations of the earth, speaking in their varied languages, and proclaiming the wonderful works of God. He beheld with hallowed joy that twinkling star rise into the splendour of a sun, as the centre of conciliation and Christian union, shedding a heavenly influence on its multiplied satellites, and, by the instrumentality of the holy Bible, the book of God, and its extensive distribution, shining on the dark parts of the earth. Only those who were intimately acquainted with him could know the admiration and heartfelt joy with which he beheld the rapidly extending influence of this institution.

Mr. Roberts's mind being deeply impressed with the manifold mercies of God, he preached at the watch-night which closed the year 1805, in King-street chapel, Bath, from, "He thanked God, and took courage." He reviewed, with profitable interest, the all-sufficiency of grace, administered in the season of affliction, and the abounding goodness and mercy which had crowned the year, as a ground of humble affiance in God, in relation to the future; which was responded to by the congregation in the spirit of praise and thanksgiving.

On the 13th of April following he preached a funeral sermon in the same chapel, on the triumphant death of the venerable John Pawson, which was published in the Magazine for that year, and also in a separate pamphlet. On this occasion he remarks:—"To this kind father in Christ I am deeply indebted for his unwearied and tender sympathies in the afflictive bereavement of 1804." In making this affectionate acknowledgment to one he loved and venerated, he refers to the venerable primitive fathers of Methodism, whom he ever held in the highest estimation. He would often speak of their athletic powers of body and mind, their natural and acquired qualifications, unquenchable zeal, Herculean labours, and extensive usefulness, and of their spe-

cial adaptation to the times in which the great Head of the church had raised them up. Many of them he personally knew, of whom he would relate interesting anecdotes in a manner which gave them yet greater interest. He never was more at home in his social circle than on those subjects. Indeed, "good old Methodism," in its godly simplicity, was his home; under God, his heart and treasure were there.

In the month of September he was made the happy father of a son, which he announced in a letter as follows:—

"BATH, *September 6th*, 1806.

"I HAVE the happiness of informing Mrs. Buckley and you, that, through the blessing of God, Mrs. Roberts has been safely put to bed of a fine boy, and both mother and child are likely to do well. She has had a high fever, which, thank God, has owned his touch, and fled. This latter circumstance prevented me writing you immediately: I wished to see how it might go with me. The Lord has had pity on me, lest I should have sorrow on sorrow.

"We are anxious to hear how you and family arrived at Plymouth-dock; shall be happy to hear all about it at your earliest convenience."

In the latter end of this year he was visited with a severe affliction; his life was in great jeopardy; but he states that he was kept in perfect peace, and humbly resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. He was reduced so low that he was for some time incapable of any public exercise, or even of writing; but his mind was engaged in active and profitable meditation,—composing several pieces both in prose and verse, which he dictated to Mrs. Roberts, who acted as his amanuensis, intending them only for his own perusal and spiritual benefit.

The hallowing influence this dispensation had upon his mind is beautifully expressed in one of his manuscript sermons on Psalm cxix. 107 :—“ I am afflicted very much : quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word.’ Christians who have not passed under the dark shadow of a cloud, have never been enraptured beholders of a rainbow : ‘ very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof ; it compasseth the heavens about with a circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it.’ It has been the sign of the covenant of peace and salvation in the result of sanctified affliction. The sufferer had previously felt the pelting of the pitiless storm ; and trembled at the voice of the thunder uttered from the cloud, and seen the lightning’s arrowy fires shooting around him. But the storm is over, the sky begins to display its azure ; soon will the last faint cloud disappear, and the Sun of Righteousness shine forth with healing in his wings.”

Having resumed his ministry on the first day of 1807, in acknowledgment of the tender mercy of God in his restoration, and for the multiplied blessings of the past year, he preached from, “ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” In reference to past changes, this was an appropriate expression of the effusions of his own heart for the protracted goodness and mercy of God, and which he was desirous his people should unite with him in recording in the house of the Lord ; and in reference to the future, goodness and mercy did follow him in copious streams through the succeeding year in his labours in the Downend circuit, and other places too numerous to mention, the streams of refreshing by the Spirit flowing into his own soul ; for he often drank of “ the brook by the way, and lifted up the head.”

At the Conference of 1808 he was appointed to Carmarthen, but was prevented, by circumstances he could

not control, from attending his station till the latter end of March following. His friends, however, who were anxious, and thought it long ere they could once more give him a joyous welcome to South Wales, were abundantly recompensed by his remaining with them the principal part of the four following years. In the autumn of this year he engaged to visit Ireland. Mrs. Roberts accompanying him, they took Madeley in their way, and were delighted, as he expresses it, to spend a short though profitable season with that most intelligent, pious "mother in Israel," Mrs. Fletcher, whose praise is in all the churches. From thence he visited several parts of North Wales, in company with the Rev. Owen Davies, sowing the incorruptible seed of life in every place as he passed. On his arrival in Dublin, a return of his former indisposition rendered him unable to preach more than a few times, which he greatly regretted, but bowed to the Divine will, endeavouring to render himself useful in the domestic circle of Mrs. Roberts's kind relatives.

On his return to Bristol, the place where his family now resided, he opened a new chapel at Blagdon, where, with others, he had fought a good fight in defence and support of the doctrines of faith, and the institutions by which they were promoted. He received this as a trophy of holy victory. The plain, useful sermon he preached on the occasion was published for gratuitous distribution. In it he made honourable mention of that greatly-distinguished, philanthropic, and literary female, Mrs. Hannah More, whom he knew; by whose benevolent exertions a charity-school had been formed, supported, and usefully carried on, in this neighbourhood. He also soon after, in union with the Rev. Joseph Benson, opened the Southwark chapel, London.

During this year (1808) he published a pamphlet; which he entitled "Hymnology," the object of which

was to call attention to, and show the necessity of, a supplement to the large hymn-book generally used in the Connexion. This interesting and well-written pamphlet may be read with great interest by all who wish for information on the special design and excellency of that collection, and of the obligation and profitable exercise of that department of Divine worship. No person indulged a higher opinion of this collection for its genuine poetry, sound divinity, depth of experience, and devotional sublimity. He thought Mr. Charles Wesley to be the best writer of hymns of the eighteenth century. "None," says he, "ever drank deeper from the fountain of poetic inspiration;" and though no collection of hymns ever presented to the public was so well adapted to devotional purposes, or contained so clear a view of Christian experience, he thought that a considerable number of them were more adapted to private and select devotion, than for promiscuous congregational worship. Under the influence of these impressions he entered on the formation and compilation of a supplementary hymn-book, and for this purpose obtained by contract the manuscripts of the late Charles Wesley from his venerable widow, and was in correspondence with Mr. Samuel Wesley to revise the collection of sacred music which the venerable Founder of Methodism used, and emphatically called "the good old tunes." Mr. Roberts, who had some taste for music, was a great admirer of them, as in strict harmony with the solemnity of the services of the house of God, and was jealous lest they should be superseded by light and frivolous airs. He was anxious to accomplish the above, which he conceived to be of great importance; and for this purpose collected from the before-named manuscripts and other approved poets a considerable number of hymns, adding several of his own composition. The particular reasons of his not carrying his laudable design into effect have passed away from the recollection

of the writer, though he might be in possession of them at the time. This must be regarded as an effort of his unwearied solicitude as far as in him lay to promote, according to his judgment, any and every department of usefulness in the religious Connexion to which he belonged.

---

## CHAPTER V.

THAT Mr. Roberts was possessed of poetic genius and talent, no one can doubt ; but in what class of poets he ranged must be left for impartial criticism to determine. Many of his published pieces, and also those in manuscript, display great refinement of taste and elevation of thought, beauty of figure and harmony of numbers ; as his “Carmen Seculare ;” “The Inquiry,” inscribed to W. S. Guinness, A.B. ; several of his Odes, published in the Methodist Magazines ; and the “Elegy and paternal Tribute to the Memory of the late Mrs. Guinness.” Though he wrote numerous hymns and pieces, it was rather as a matter of relaxation than close study. The hymns which proceeded from his pen, mostly by the request of friends, for charity and Sunday schools, missionary meetings, festivals, watch-nights, funeral solemnities, &c. ; and those in the selection published for the use of the intercession prayer-meetings, held in Bristol in behalf of the nation during the war, show considerable poetic powers. They embody lofty sentiments of adoration and praise ; for they were the glowing effusions of piety. Yet the critique of a judicious friend must be allowed to apply to some of his pieces : “There was much of the enthusiasm of poetry in his nature ; but it was so curbed and reined, by a certain precision in the manner of his composition, that it sometimes failed to produce that

interest which the sentiment it contained so justly merited."

February 5th, 1809, Mr. Roberts observes that he took a solemn leave of his dear Bristol friends at the public union prayer-meeting, in an address from, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen!" He had felt great interest in this union of ministers and congregations of different denominations, and also in the friendly breakfast-meetings of the ministers, held at each other's houses in rotation once a month, as he conceived they were calculated to break down the partition-wall of sectarian prejudices, and to promote conciliation among Christians in general, and brotherly love among ministers of Christ. He had the great satisfaction of seeing their object attained in an almost unexampled degree in that city. The prayer-meetings were popular, and numerous, and not unfrequently, by the united prayers of ministers, accompanied by a heavenly unction. The breakfast-meetings brought the stated and other ministers visiting Bristol, into friendly contact, which often led to mutual counsel and edifying conversation, exemplifying the truth of the inspired declaration, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

On his journey to, and arrival in, Carmarthen, he says, a thousand pleasing and painful recollections presented themselves of scenes of former enjoyments and sufferings, and nothing supported him but the conviction of his being in the will of his heavenly Master. He opened his Divine commission by preaching from, "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and with you be refreshed." Indeed here, and with his beloved friends in other parts of South Wales, he was truly loved and respected. Among a more interesting and desirable circle of friends,—ever affec-

tionately solicitous to promote his comfort and that of his endeared family,—kind Providence could not have placed him. Reciprocal Christian love never failed with them; he was happy, believing he had come to them by the will of God. But even here affliction awaited him. Soon after his arrival he visited Tenby, having been desirous some years before that the numerous English and Irish visiters, with the English part of the inhabitants, should be accommodated with the ministry of the word: he had built a chapel, and for a time contributed to the principal support of a preacher, and had long been desirous of imparting to them the word of life in person. He afterwards spent some time there with much satisfaction, sowing the good seed of divine truth, in hope it would bring forth fruit after many days, and appear to his joy in the day of harvest. He also visited his old friends at Haverfordwest and other places, with mingled feelings and excitements, such as it is natural to suppose would arise on being reminded, by the sight of persons and places, of past joys and sorrows. These appear, however, to have been sanctified to himself and his ministry.

What gave great additional pleasure to Mr. Roberts during his residence and visits in Wales, was the great revival of religion which had taken place both in the north and south. The Lord had raised up a number of young men as missionaries, with gifts and qualifications for the work, burning with Christian zeal for the glory of God and the conversion of their countrymen; and preaching with great power and success in their vernacular tongue the unsearchable riches of Christ. Of this he could not be a passive observer, but must participate in their labour and joy. He accordingly took a missionary tour late in the autumn, through several counties, with his friend, the Rev. Owen Davies, the general superintendent of this mission, having double lectures, in Welsh and English, in all the principal places.

This incessant labour, with crowded congregations and great excitement, was too much for his feeble frame. He was carried home very ill, in which illness he lingered for a considerable time, and was not able to preach again, till he, in union with the Rev. Messrs. Treffry and Davies, held the watchnight at the close of the year, and that by a special effort, as he was then so weak as to be obliged to be assisted into the chapel; but the "spirit was willing." He took his part; and, as he says, was most graciously assisted. They had mutually agreed to take the same text, "My times are in thy hands," and each to take their part. This excited great interest; a holy solemnity attended the service, such as will be remembered in the day of the Lord Jesus. The discourses were afterwards published, and concluded with a hymn, penned by Mr. Roberts for the occasion. His indisposition continuing, he was earnestly recommended by his physician to spend some time in Bath, as he had generally found the waters beneficial.

During these seasons of physical insufficiency for public labour, he indulged in pious and devout contemplations, which he wrote on loose papers; the following will give an idea of their profitable tenour:—

"O Thou who art being itself, who always wast, and wilt never cease to be; who wast always what thou art, and wilt abide the same for ever; possessing essentially, enjoying ineffably thy own infinite self, in a manner as inconceivable by the most eminent seraph, as by the limited understanding of the meanest among the mortal race! O how can I, who am but of yesterday and know nothing, conceive aright of thee, the Omniscient, the Eternal, the Great Unknown! But thou, the perfection of beauty, hast shined forth. Thy resplendent beams, the universal emanations of wisdom, power, and goodness, are glorious characters which declare thy being. Thou art apprehended with astonished ravish-

ment, not only by the purer, brighter, and nobler intelligences of the celestial world, but even by spirits weak, impotent, sinful, degraded, immersed in matter, imbued with sin, and dwelling in houses whose foundation is in the dust.

“O hast thou not been graciously pleased to unfold the wonderful and unimagined beauties of thy nature? And has not love been manifested in all the mild resplendence of newly-awakened perfections? God of all grace, for whom is now exhibited this novel display of thy brightest attributes? The heavenly hierarchy stand in awe, or with feelings of sympathetic pleasure bow down their heads, crowned with amaranthine beauties, desiring to look into those things which only sinful but redeemed mortals participate. Not to angels is pity, is compassion, is mercy communicated. They cannot taste that the Lord is gracious and merciful. Enough for angelic minds that they are favoured to have made known unto them, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom and mercy of God in the mighty mystery of man’s redemption, which they see and hear in the assemblies of the ransomed sinners on earth. The celestial hosts worshipped the Only-begotten, when, passing by their order in the scale of being, he took not on him the nature of angels, but was found in fashion as a man. And their joys, even now in the presence of God, are enhanced by the triumphs of Divine grace among mortals. They rejoice over the repenting sinner, they minister to the heirs of salvation, they carry the emancipated and sanctified soul, when escaped from the prison of the flesh, into the blooming regions of paradise.

“The most insignificant and the most unworthy of human kind are invited, entreated, and all but compelled to taste that the Lord is gracious: ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’ These are

the encouraging invitations which in thy blessed name, God of my praise, thy righteous prophets, thy holy apostles, the Spirit and the Bride are commissioned to offer, to recommend, to reiterate, and to impress upon poor guilty criminals, upon polluted sinners, the wretched slaves of satan, and the miserable heirs of perdition. O, how has thy condescending love stooped to regard the lowest degree of human wretchedness! Has not thy pity regarded me, even me, in my lowest estate? And am not I permitted to sing in strains of thankful joy?—‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour.’

“Yet more,—at thy bidding, as I humbly presume, my tongue, even mine, has feebly echoed, in the ears of my fellow-sinners, ‘the good tidings of great joy;’ even I have ‘preached the unsearchable riches of Christ!’ Was not this by thy authority? And is it not thy pleasure, O my heavenly Master, that after thus ‘serving my generation by the will of God,’ I should be content to lie down in silence before I ‘fall asleep?’ So be it. Thy will be done. Amen, amen.”

Being considerably recovered in his health, he attended the Conference held in London in 1810, and, by the appointment of the president, gave the address to the young men who had passed their probation and examination, and were received into full connexion. His mind was deeply affected in the discharge of this important duty. He chose for his text, “Hold fast the form of sound words;” and observes, he felt much impressed with the utility of the object he recommended,—a firm adherence to the good old cause, as it was in the beginning. By the request of Conference the address was published in the Magazine. He says of this Conference in a letter to a friend, “It has been a laborious, but a delightful and profitable, season; love and unity have prevailed; the Head of the church has favoured us with his special presence; accounts from

every quarter are pleasing; we have had a good increase, and the prospects are fair throughout the Connexion."

Whenever Mr. Roberts recovered a little he was ready for work, and sometimes rather too precipitant. The little strength he had gained at Bath, he lost by a hasty journey with his friends Dr. Clarke and J. Butterworth, Esq., into Cornwall. He had a severe relapse, and was again reduced to extreme debility. Of this affliction he writes: "I am now forbidden preaching; and when it comes to this, it seems scarcely desirable to have my useless life prolonged; yet I have ties, not only those that are founded on consanguinity, but I love whom our Divine Master deigned to call his brother, sister, mother. Well, if awhile separated from them, it will not be for ever,—we shall meet in the abode of the blessed, and more enjoy them there." His recovery was so slow that he was not able to reach Carmarthen till Christmas eve. He could not, however, pass the joyous advent of his Divine Lord's nativity in silence. He preached the next day from "IMMANUEL."

In connexion with this sermon, the outline of which is contained in his manuscripts, he appears to have written what he denominates "Annotations on the first of Matthew." The pious and devout spirit that is breathed in them is worthy of notice.

"The ancient prophecies spoke of the Messiah as being God as well as man, therefore it was expedient that his claims to Divinity should be sound and valid. Hence St. Matthew relates likewise the adorable mystery of the Divine Incarnation, its revelation by the ministry of an angel, and the introduction into the world of Jesus, the Divine Saviour, as that name signifies, who is the glorious Immanuel, 'God with us.' He came to save his people from their sins, and he is, throughout all ages, God with us, dwelling by his Spirit in the hearts of all true believers. Thus he maintains

the virtue of his names, Jesus and Immanuel, being that in reality and virtual influence, which is indicated by the names by which he is called.

“Thus, by the mysterious union of the Divine and human natures in one person, there is exhibited to the admiring view of angels and men, a proper medium between heaven and earth, a Mediator between God and man,—one, who lays his hands on both parties, in whom God is propitious to sinful mortals, and through whom they may be reconciled to him. Hence, while the Mediator is sensibly touched with our infirmities, as being man; he, as God, is alive to the dignity and honour of the divine character and properties, and equally guards and maintains the interests of God and man. Such an high priest becomes both God and us.”

#### IMPROVEMENT.

“WHEN I look at the whole sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, I conceive them to be a holy magnificent temple, the perpetual residence of the Divine Majesty, the great Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, where he is high and lifted up, and his train filling every apartment. I gaze with reverential awe, not unlike that of the evangelical prophet, (Isaiah vi.,) viewing himself in contrast with the Lord of hosts, when he saw his glory, and felt his own vileness. Yet I am permitted to approach where neither Isaiah nor any of the prophets could have access. In the New Testament the Holy of holies is laid open to my view, through the veil which is now rent asunder. The prophets could only worship in the common sanctuary, the patriarchs were only permitted to come into the porch, as it were, of this sublime temple. Thus God hath reserved the better things for us. No sooner do I look into the New Testament, than I behold the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Shechinah, the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person; in the very

first verse he makes his welcome appearance ; and presently I hear an angel announce him, in that very character which is most delightful to my soul. O, let my knees bow at the name of Jesus ! and may I be willing to be saved by him, not in but from my sins, from all their guilt, power and pollution ! and may my heart experimentally enjoy his presence as God with me !

“The record of Christ’s human genealogy reminds me of God’s faithfulness. Many generations passed away ; but the promise made to the fathers was not forgotten. In due time, the seed of the woman came to crush the head of the infernal serpent ; the hope of Israel, the desire of all nations, appeared. Thus, all the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to those who believe. ‘Lord, I believe : help thou my unbelief !’

“Let others boast of the dignity and splendour of their ancestry : O let me learn humility of him, who, though sprung from a long line of kings, yet made no pretensions to royal grandeur. He appeared as a mean, humble shoot, growing out of the stem of Jesse ; yet, if he had pleased, he might have made an august appearance, and been brighter than Solomon in all his glory. Greater still was his condescension, for ‘though he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and was found in fashion as a man.’ But in this genealogy, ennobled by the names of holy patriarchs and powerful princes, there are likewise the names of heathen aliens, and of very heinous sinners ; from which I may learn, that the condescending Redeemer will not despise those who have been alienated from the life of God through blindness and hardness ; nor any sinners, who penitently apply to him for mercy and salvation ; being unfeignedly desirous to renounce the vile bondage of satan, and to serve God in newness of life. Indeed, so far is Christ from despising them, that he will graciously adopt them into his family ; for he has condescendingly declared,

‘Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.’

“Nor let me forget, while I behold how, like the leaves of a tree, one generation passeth away after another, that human life is but a vapour, and that I myself must soon go the way of all the earth. O, when I am no longer numbered among the living, and perhaps have no place in a family pedigree, may I be a partaker of the greatest happiness and honour, my name being found written in the book of life! And let me not deprive myself of the pleasure arising from this reflection: though the generations of men fleet away, like shadows, in rapid succession, God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, is immutably the same. He who was the God of my fathers, is now my God, and will be the God of my children:—I will therefore commit myself and them into his faithful hands; for the goodness of God is from generation to generation, and his faithfulness unto children’s children.

“While in every part of the Scriptures, moral excellencies are powerfully inculcated, there are likewise to be met with the fairest and brightest examples, who illustrate those excellencies in their exemplary conduct. May I, like Joseph, the husband of the blessed virgin, be just and conscientious in my general deportment, both before God who sees my heart, and before men who view my life. May I be prudent towards my immediate family connexions. And may I promptly perform every action as if an angel of the Lord had bidden me, in ready obedience to the will of God, and desiring nothing but to glorify him. Chiefly, blessed Saviour, may I always set thy perfect example before me. When thou wast pleased to assume human nature, thou didst become a little babe, the offspring of a poor village maiden, betrothed to a mean mechanic, though thou wast heir, not only of David’s throne, but of all things.

O may I be converted, and become as a little child ; and may thy humble birth ever teach me the lesson of condescension and humility ! while, at the same time, I cannot but be elevated to the highest degree of wonder and adoration, when I contemplate the astonishing mystery of thy being made flesh, and dwelling among us !”

The attempt which was made the ensuing spring, by Lord Sidmouth’s bill, to abridge religious liberty, but which, as overruled by the providence of God, only tended to enlarge it, occasioned a sermon by him on the subject, from Isaiah lxvi. 5, preached at the South Wales District-Meeting, and published by the request of the brethren, As the warm friend of loyalty, he was equally the ardent, generous friend of liberty, civil and religious.

Mr. Roberts notices, in his memorandums, an event which occurred about this time, which appears to have had a strong effect upon him, and which may partly account for his protracted affliction. “In the month of September, in the year 1811, he was summoned to Bristol to witness a scene which distressed him exceedingly—the last illness of his greatly beloved mother-in-law, Mrs. Randolph.”

To this amiable relative he was very tenderly attached, and very justly so. She had many and strong claims upon his high esteem and love ; in connexion with the very kind, undeviating affection, her personal accomplishments, her fervent piety, and the fruits of the Spirit which abounded in her, her constant motherly affection and tender sympathy, especially when they were called to drink the bitter cup of mutual bereavement, the wisdom of her counsels was deeply imprinted on his social heart, and interwoven in its tenderest feelings.

Attending a person so endeared, in the last scene of mortal suffering, and in the solemn moments of dissolution, could not but revive many keen recollections of

past endearments, and make a deep impression. Though much alleviated by the consolation of seeing the dying bed attended with the gracious presence of God, and to witness her patient endurance of suffering, with her peaceful hope and assurance, that, through the blood of the covenant, she had a title to, and meetness for, the kingdom of glory; she had long known by faith, and evinced by a holy walk with God, that her Redeemer lived, and that to die was life eternal;—notwithstanding these consolatory considerations, the event produced a considerable effect on both body and mind; and though, on his return to Wales, he made several attempts to rally, by short excursions, his health continued to suffer, and his spirits were bowed down by the long continuation of affliction; so much so, that his physician assured him and his friends that a residence in Bath was absolutely necessary; that he could not enjoy even moderate health elsewhere for any long continuance. He therefore yielded to necessity, and with no small reluctance prepared to leave his Carmarthen friends, who greatly regretted his removal from them. He commended them to God by preaching from 1 Samuel xii. 23: “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.” Such was his great weakness when he commenced his journey, that it was with some difficulty he was taken to the carriage. He, however, commended himself and family to the care and protection of Divine Providence; and in the course of a few days arrived in Bath.

Some weeks after, in a letter to his friend, Mrs. Morgan, of Carmarthen, referring to his affliction, he says, “What shall I say of myself? Alas, I am the prisoner of Providence. My lungs, my head, in short, my whole frame, have been heavily afflicted. For the last two days I have imagined myself a little better; but bad is the best: yet, it is not for me to murmur at the wise, and, I doubt not, kind dispensation of Him whose I am, unless my heart deceives me; nor do I wish my

sufferings less, till he shall be pleased to say, 'It is enough.'" In another letter shortly afterwards, he expresses the humble views he indulged of himself, and his confidence alone in the efficacious atonement of his great Redeemer: "Ten thousand thanks for the tender interest we have in your prayers. May the God of all grace grant your interceding cries to be heard for us, and may your prayers return in tenfold blessings into your own bosom. You wish to know particulars. When the pain of my last seizure subsided, it left me exceedingly debilitated. I am again able to drink the waters: how far I may be justified in expecting benefit, I know not; however, all is well. The infinitely wise One cannot err, nor can a living man be justly permitted to complain. Alas! what am I? It is only because his compassions fail not, that I am not consumed; because, I hope in his mercy, it is therefore, and therefore only, I expect to escape everlasting burnings. O, what a mercy that the unsearchable wisdom of God, glorifying equally both his justice and his grace, should exhibit in his glorious Gospel the new and living way! And O, what a way! Through the veil of the flesh of the incarnate Immanuel! O, may I incessantly press by it to the mercy-seat, and obtain a satisfying sense of mercy, and a rich supply of grace, to help my manifold infirmities in time of need! For the last two days I have had a warm interest in the prayers of Dr. and Mrs. Coke, and Mr. and Mrs. Brackenbury, who have been with us." His excessive debility precluded him in a great measure from public labours or preaching, except occasionally in the school-room, and in the Penitentiary; but it was reviving and consolatory to his mind that he could still do a little for the Lord, especially among the degraded and unhappy inmates of the "Asylum of Mercy," whose moral degradation he so much commiserated. Notwithstanding his great weakness, he preached to them not less than twelve

sermons; and often had the pleasure of seeing them, like Mary Magdalen, at the feet of the Saviour, weeping under the ministry of the word, and of some he had the gratifying hope that they were sinners saved by grace.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

IN the following May, 1812, Mr. Roberts's health being a little improved, he joined Dr. Coke in opening the new chapel at Frome, in which he felt his heart, from a consciousness of the divine presence, in accordance with the sentiment of his text,—“This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Soon after this he visited and preached in Weymouth and the island of Portland, and assisted Mr. Brackenbury in opening a new chapel at Wyehampton. At the Conference, 1812, his name was put down as Supernumerary for Bath, where it was continued the succeeding years. In writing to a friend, he observes, in reference to this: “I have been indisposed; but am at present very tolerable, and able to do a little now and then in the labours of the ministry. I am admitted into society,” (meaning, he had received his quarterly ticket as a member, which before had not been required, his previous appointments having been pastoral,) “and made the leader of a class. This has been, I will assure you, a subject of exceeding great exercise to me: I shrink from its importance; but hitherto my flock bear with me. May I be enabled to imitate the ‘good Shepherd!’” The resolution he now formed was, that, so far as the Lord should give him health and strength, he would be at any and every call to enter into any open doors of usefulness which might present themselves; for this he considered his providential calling, to be the

servant of all for Christ's sake. In the ensuing spring, 1813, he accompanied his friend, the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, to Bridport, Exeter, and Honiton, to open new chapels. He also attended the anniversary meeting of the Bristol British and Foreign Bible Society, as the representative of the Bath Auxiliary; and in London, those of the Sunday-school Union, and the Dissenters' Meeting "for the Protection of religious Liberty;" in each of which he took part, and was received with great affection and Christian courtesy.

The principal occasion of his visit to London at this time was the liberal and laudable effort made by Christians of all denominations, by petitions to both Houses of Parliament, for the removal of impediments to the introduction of Christianity into India. He was honoured by being the bearer of a petition from the city of Bath, one from the Methodists in Bristol, and several from other parishes in Somersetshire. This business, which engaged his ardent and assiduous attention, occupied him much time and labour in obtaining the interest and effective influence of members of both Houses in favour of the petitions, which he accomplished much to his satisfaction.

Mr. Roberts, having suffered for some time from increasing weakness of sight, availed himself of this opportunity of consulting an eminent oculist; and the disease was pronounced a confirmed cataract. Here he met his constant friend Dr. Coke; and he states, that, for the several weeks they spent together, he witnessed the Doctor's burning zeal and ardent wish to establish a mission in Asia.

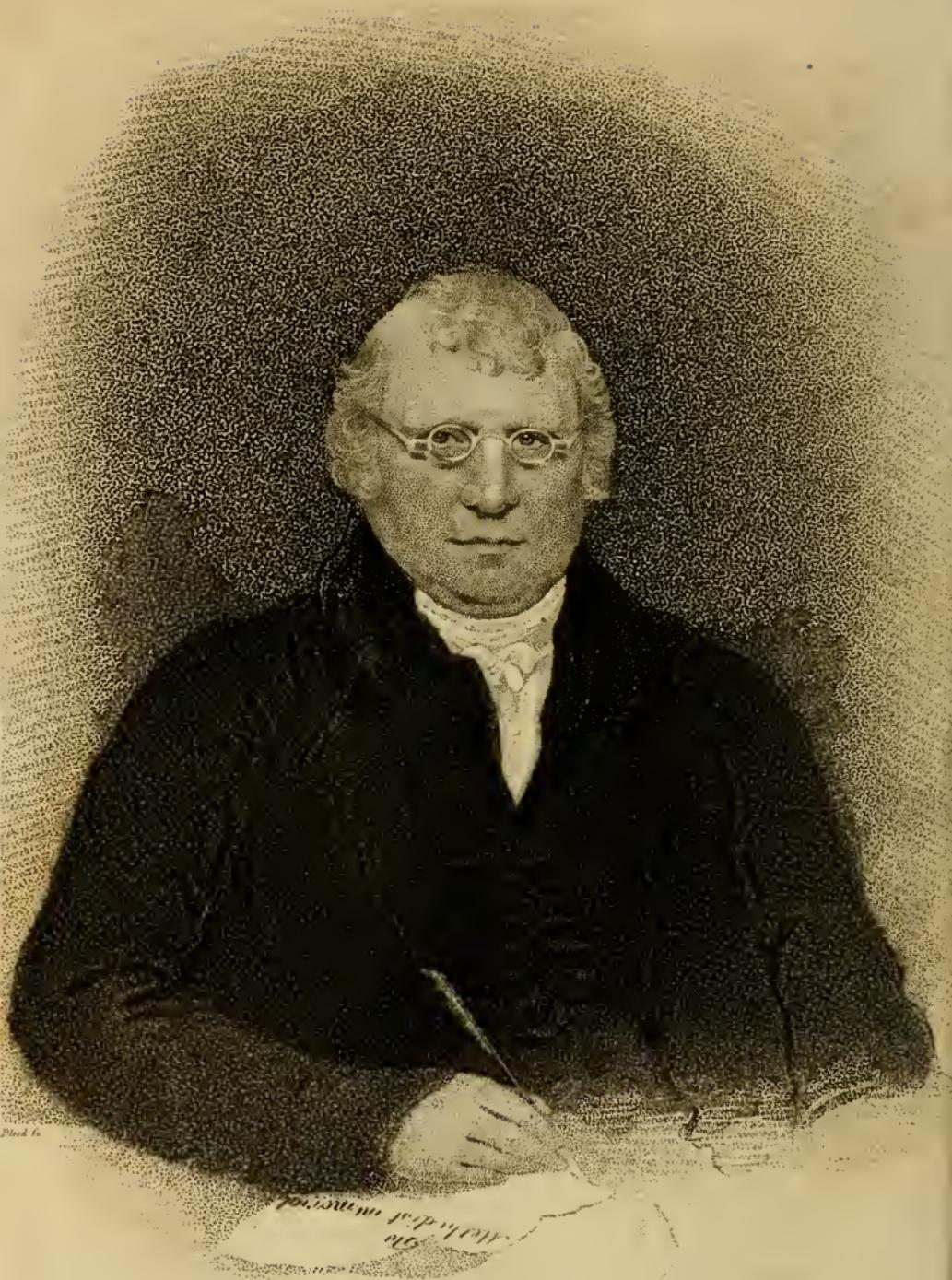
Though reluctant to part with his friend, and the more so on account of his importance to the Missions already established in various parts, he was so convinced of the necessity of such a mission, that he promised the Doctor to render him all the assistance in his power, and also that he would attend the ensuing Conference,

and assist him in obtaining the consent and co-operation of his brethren. He accordingly attended the Conference at Liverpool. Finding that some difficulty was likely to attend the accomplishment of the Doctor's wishes, being appointed to preach on the Lord's day morning, he selected for his text, Psalm lxxvii. 17—19. He thus endeavoured to redeem his pledge, as well as by supporting the subject in the Conference when it was brought forward by the Doctor, in one of the noblest and most eloquent speeches he ever delivered. Many reasons, however, appeared to turn the scale against his wishes; such as the necessity of the continuance of his services at home, and the hazardous nature of the undertaking for one of such an advanced age.

Mr. Roberts observes, he felt exceedingly distressed at the course the Conference appeared likely to pursue, and he pleaded in behalf of the Doctor to the total exhaustion of his physical strength. The Rev. Messrs. Reece, Bunting, and Atmore were also nobly firm. The latter, the next morning, moved a revision; and the Conference at length agreed, on certain conditions, to which the good Doctor acceded, professing himself satisfied with the limited permission he had obtained.

Thus was a great and effectual door to the eastern world opened to Wesleyan Methodism, through which many (though very disproportionate to the extent of the field) have entered to successful labour. Mr. Roberts never reflected upon this, and on the part he had taken in procuring legal permission for the residence of Christian missionaries in India, without joyous satisfaction, and much gratitude to God; of which no language could be more appropriate or expressive than the sublime sentiments he had selected on the above occasion, and to which his heart ever responded: "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever,





Rev. Charles Sumner?

and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen !”

The following autumn he visited Ireland ; which he had been the more anxious to do because of the shortness of his former stay, and of his indisposition most of the time he was there. This visit he prolonged with great acceptance to the people, and much satisfaction and profit to himself. He observes, he commenced what might be called his year in the Dublin Circuit, September 19th, 1813, by preaching at Whitefriar-street chapel from John i. 3, and the following Lord's day at Wesley chapel, from Habakkuk iii. 2. Winter coming on with more than usual rigour, he was prevented from making those excursions into the country which he had intended ; but he had constant opportunities of preaching in Dublin, and of lecturing in Mr. Guinness's family.

In the spring he visited Drogheda and Tullamore, assisted in opening a new chapel in each place, and at the former held a missionary meeting. He also visited Moate, Portaferry, and Athlone, and assisted in forming a Missionary Society for the district at Tullamore. These visits brought into review the early part of his ministry, when it was the day of small things with them ; and he could not but devoutly exclaim, “ What hath God wrought !” He expresses the great pleasure he had in meeting his Irish brethren in the Conference, which was held in Dublin ; observing their fervent zeal and piety, and the improving position in which they were placed, with the hopeful prospects of extending usefulness, especially their missionary zeal, which he expressed in a public meeting held in the city for the purpose of forming a Missionary Society for that district, Arthur Keene, Esq., being in the chair :—

“ SIR, I rise to perform a duty not more pleasing than important, which has been assigned me on the present interesting occasion. But such an ample and luminous

discussion of the subject has been made by the respectable person who so ably opened the business ; such an ingenuous appeal has been made by the second speaker to this numerous assembly, on the Christian liberality by which the Society is actuated, recommending itself to all who have the same God and Father, the same Lord, the same faith and hope, and desirous to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ; and my respected friend who followed, entered into such a thorough investigation of the origin and state of religion in early times, and at the present period, tending to excite and justify our exertions, that I feel it unnecessary to offer many additional observations.

“ It may, however, be remarked, that Christianity is a missionary cause ; it was introduced and propagated by missionaries throughout the east. By missionaries, at a very early period, it was introduced into this country, which then justified its character as ‘ the island of saints.’ No, Sir, as my respected and learned friend, who is so well read in the remotest history of his native land, has clearly and satisfactorily stated, the Christianity of Ireland did not originate in the dark superstition of the later ages. Almost as soon as the glorious Sun of righteousness arose in the eastern horizon of the church, he poured forth speedily and directly his refulgent beams upon these western regions. Our religion is not a novelty ; our religion is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself over all, God blessed for ever, being the chief corner-stone.

“ To extend, even to the ends of the earth, the blessings of Christianity, is our important object ; and we, as a people, are peculiarly called to missionary exertions. Methodism is entirely a missionary work. The venerated Wesleys, the Whitefields, and their blessed associates, were missionaries. In this character they appeared in this country, proclaiming the glad

tidings of salvation through the blood of the cross. When, indeed, Mr. Wesley preached free salvation, when he declared we are justified by faith only, and not by the merit of works, he was charged on all hands with maintaining tenets which led to licentiousness; and when, with the consistency of the sacred Scriptures, he as strenuously insisted that we must be sanctified as well as justified, be holy as He who hath called us is holy, then he was gravely told, he was a legalist, and knew not the Gospel! But well did he know it; well did he know its gracious influence, and triumph in its divine support both in life and death. His expiring words were, 'The best of all is, God is with us!' Ah, Sir, the God of these illustrious missionaries did not forsake his faithful servants at the final hour: 'they ran their course of shame and glory;' they lived down reproach! Descending to the west, these brilliant luminaries burst forth through every cloud. Their orbs expanded, their splendour became more luminous, they set amidst resplendent glories to rise again in celestial regions, where their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw its shining.

"To the great missionary labours of these venerable servants of the Most High was this country early indebted. Yet, Sir, I have heard strange lamentation. I have, in another part of the united kingdom heard it affirmed in a public meeting similar to this, 'Ah, poor Ireland! No money has been raised for Ireland! No Missionary has been sent to Ireland!' Sir, full well you know otherwise. How did I feel at hearing this statement, who twenty-seven years before visited Ireland in that character; a child, indeed, unworthy of that sacred epithet. Yet let me magnify mine office; I speak as a man, as a fool. Does not that very pulpit confronting us, bear testimony that even by the weakest instrument something was attempted for Ireland? Many years previously, when I was a child, and spoke and

understood but as a child, you, Sir, who now present to our veneration 'a crown of righteousness,' not only knew by happy experience, but were actively engaged in maintaining the interests of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

"It is worthy of particular remark, that Methodism has an essential peculiarity which eminently fits it for prosecuting the immediate object of this meeting. All our members are brought into action, each has something to do; we cannot, therefore, suffer from a deficiency of instruments. We behold in Great Britain five hundred and eighty itinerant preachers, in Ireland one hundred and twenty,—on foreign missions fifty, all zealously engaged in missionary labours. In the United Kingdom there may probably be reckoned three thousand seven hundred \* local preachers, and in the United States an equal number of both of these descriptions. In the whole Connexion may be reckoned not less than twenty-one thousand persons sustaining the characters of leaders and exhorters. These are already in action, in zealous action. Their labours are wholly gratuitous; the itinerant alone has a pecuniary remuneration,—food and raiment; the others receive not a farthing, but perform their labour of love for the Lord's sake. Surely we shall never mourn the want of instruments. We see a vast machine, like that presented in a vision to the

\* It is pleasing to observe the increase since the above period. In 1836, the number of preachers in Great Britain, including 130 Supernumeraries, &c., 998. In Ireland, including 24 Missionaries, 158. In the Foreign Missionary Stations, including 74 in Upper Canada, 359. In the United States of America, 2,758, making a total of 4,273. The members in society in Great Britain, 293,132. In Ireland, 26,434. In the Foreign stations, including Upper Canada, 77,895. In the United States of America, 652,528.—Making a total of 1,049,989.

The number of Local Preachers and Class-Leaders must have increased in the same ratio.

"By this time it shall be said, What hath God wrought!"

prophet, with all its wheels in motion ; and, however various and seemingly retrograde, their movements are all united, all are full of eyes, all are animated and impelled by the innate instructive Spirit of God ; and without any deviations to the licentiousness of antinomianism on the one hand, or of the feignedness of legality on the other, the machine moves straight onward in its grand undeviating course.

“ We shall have means and instruments ; nor are we projecting an untried scheme with which we are unacquainted. Many years we have had our missions at home and abroad. Missionaries, it has already been mentioned, have preached in this country in the vernacular language. Our foreign Missions are established in Europe, Africa, and America. At this moment, our missionaries on the bosom of the great ocean are urging their way to the Cape of Good Hope, to Ceylon, and even to the remote island of Java and continental India. To raise pecuniary means for promoting this great work, and to administer to the immediate concerns of this society, it is necessary to appoint a committee, which is the object of the motion I have to make, and I would take the liberty of addressing, in cheerful confidence, to each member of the proposed committee, the generous encomium passed by the divine apostle on his beloved Gaius, not doubting they will each exemplify the propriety of its application : ‘ Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the Heathen and to strangers, which have borne witness of thy charity before the church ; whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well, because that for his namesake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles ; we therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.’ ”

After the Conference he visited the west of Ireland. He states that he was happy once more to behold the

nessed; but in few instances more strongly marked than in his constant friendship to the Doctor, and that in paying the last tribute of respect to this great and good man of God, to whose memory they were appointed by the Conference to place a monument, in connexion with those of his relatives, in the parish church of Brecon, his native town.

Mr. Roberts, notwithstanding his complicated afflictions, hazarded two or three journeys from Bath to that town, in order to co-operate in accomplishing the desired object; which being executed to the satisfaction of all parties, he expressed himself highly gratified at the completion of this last tribute of honourable respect to his greatly-beloved and much-lamented friend; and the more so, as it was raised by the special request of the brethren, and the expense defrayed by their private contributions, as an expression of their individual affection and veneration.

Mr. Roberts had been for many years placed by kind Providence in circumstances of considerable affluence, so that he had little care or anxiety about the things of this life. But in temporal ease, he was not unmindful of the poor, especially those of the household of faith. He was ever ready to administer to their necessities; and to contribute to those institutions of Christian charity which had for their object the amelioration of human suffering, or the mental and moral improvement of mankind, by the diffusion of Divine knowledge, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ in the conversion of sinners. And it will not be forgotten by many, that that humane institution which combines both of these benevolent objects, on the most impartial and extended scale of operation, the "Strangers' Friend Society," received his liberal patronage as well as commendation by several pathetic addresses to Christian sympathy. His heart and his house were ever open to hospitality; he delighted in the entertainment of those

who excelled in virtue, and of the ministers of Christ, especially those with whom he laboured in the Gospel.

With his colleagues he was always cheerful, communicative, and edifying in conversation. He would enter with feelings of interest into all the minutiae of pastoral care, was ever ready to every good word and work, and ever most solicitous to promote the comfort and happiness of his brethren. Where he found congeniality of mind he would often enter with great freedom into the subject, manner, and most useful mode of preaching, of which few were better qualified to judge. His general inquiry on the first meeting after the Sabbath would be, "What did you preach from? and what the plan of discussion?" On which he would give a most ready communication in reference to himself. Or, on the Saturday, in preparation for the Sabbath, "What is your intended text and subject? I have fixed upon —, if it does not interfere with yours." This was the more convenient, as he and some of his brethren adhered to the good old Wesleyan plan of selecting their text from one of the lessons, psalms, or epistle for the day. It was also profitable, their labours being so much intermixed, and applied to the same congregations. It need scarcely be added, he was a most agreeable companion and fellow-labourer.

Of his deeds of benevolence and Christian charity little comparatively will be known until that day when every man's work shall be revealed, and he that had sown plenteously shall reap plenteously. It was intimated, when speaking of the Preacher's Fund, that he had suffered great loss in his temporal circumstances, and that at a time when he could the least bear it, having a large family, and being himself a subject of great affliction. It was his failing,—and it must be acknowledged that most good men have their infirmities,—not to be sufficiently attentive to his own pecuniary affairs, but to place too much confidence in others.

He had for many years put the principal part of his property in the hands of one in whom he had unbounded confidence ; the companion of his early days, who appeared distinguished for piety and intelligence, and who possessed great influence in the church, and was admired and loved for his amiable manners by all who knew him. To the surprise of every one, and the great distress of many, he became a bankrupt, and so involved Mr. Roberts with himself, that he lost nearly all, besides being subjected to many painful difficulties and expenses. He might truly say, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which ate of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." This would, to many, have been overwhelming ; and that he felt it keenly for a short time, cannot be wondered at ; but he was soon borne above the flood, and maintained the cheerfulness of one who did not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from God. The feelings of his heart are most strikingly and ingenuously expressed in a letter to his friend, Mr. Brackenbury :—

"MY VERY DEAR SIR,

"So kind, so tender, so great is the interest you take in every thing concerning me, that I hasten to tell you, that, through the good hand of God upon me, I have been wonderfully upheld and comforted in my unremitting labours ; and I still long, if possible, more than ever for full employment. O, I have lived to no purpose ! Would I could retrieve the past years ! But there is an atoning Sacrifice ; this is all my salvation, and all my desire ; and here I rest my hopes and fears, my all. What I felt the morning you left us was an agony not unmixed with some feelings of the consoling kind. I was not so lost to all feeling of gratitude, as to forget that your kindness brought you to us, and you had given me such inexpressible ease in

permitting me to make your heart the repository of my sorrows. Let the days of darkness be ever so many, 'God is light,—God is love!' What glorious news from the four quarters of the globe! Now it begins to appear what an instrument our late friend, Dr. Coke, was in the hands of the Lord, as the great missionary leader; and now is fulfilled, 'But they shall see,' and now all acknowledge it. As to myself, what mercies are mingled with all my trials! I am all wonder; I can draw no conclusion; for, in truth, I am puzzled at every thing, and can see nothing but what blinds me the more; but soon I shall 'see out of obscurity;' after all, 'the Lord reigneth.' I shall add no more, only to beg earnestly an interest in your breathings before the throne, that my faith may not fail, that I may

'True in the fiery trial prove.'

With a thousand sentiments of faithful affection,

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Your ever devoted friend,

"THOMAS ROBERTS."

---

## CHAPTER VII.

THE thick clouds of providential darkness which totally eclipsed the objects of vision, led Mr. Roberts into a further trial of his faith, for which the premonitory admonition of his Divine Lord had prepared him: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," not as a mark of Divine displeasure, but of paternal wisdom and love, which will appear when God becomes his own interpreter in the light of eternity. This was the sure anchorage of his hope and patient endurance, while passing through the furnace of a more than ordi-

nary heat, knowing that the trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold, though tried in the fire, that it might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

It has been already intimated that he had for some time suffered from a diminution of sight: during his late visit to Ireland he entirely lost the sight of one eye, and the other was considerably affected. In the beginning of the following year (1816) it totally failed. Being encouraged by the gentlemen of the faculty to undergo an operation, he proceeded to London for that purpose, and engaged the skilful aid of J. Travers, Esq., an eminent oculist. The 7th of March was the day fixed upon, when public meetings for prayer were held in his behalf in Bristol, Bath, and Carmarthen; beside which he was remembered by many of his friends in their special approaches to the throne of grace. So true it is that "the fervent and effectual prayers of the righteous avail much," and that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." The support he received during the operation was most extraordinary, as he who records it can testify, being with his friend in this time of suffering and of need. He sat with calm placidity and amazing firmness during this painful trial, without so much as an expression of hesitance or suffering, and with an unshaken confidence in Him who gives sight to the blind, that he would bless the means employed to the restoration of his sight. It was done to him according to his faith; for in sixteen weeks he returned to Bath, to the joy of his friends, and appeared again in the pulpit of King-street chapel, where, with thanksgiving to God, he read, "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind. The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down. The Lord loveth the righteous;" from which he preached a most appropriate, affecting, and, it may be added, eloquent sermon, which was afterwards published.

In reference to this he records in his text-book :—  
 “ July 7th.—Bath, King-street chapel ! Psalm cxlvi. 8 ! !  
 Glory be to God ! Ebenezer.”

On this gracious manifestation of Divine Providence he wrote several pieces of poetry, part of which were dictated to Mrs. Roberts, while confined to his bed. An extract or two may be gratifying as expressive of the grateful feelings of the source from whence they flowed :—

My dear amanuensis,  
 Best gift of Heaven benign,  
 Whose soul's and body's senses  
 Are more than ever mine !  
 Thine eyes and hands are taken  
 Alone to serve my will,  
 For eyes and hands forsaken  
 Their knowledge and their skill.

Reluctantly pursuing  
 The dictates of my heart,  
 Thy tears the sheet bedewing,  
 Oblivion would impart ;  
 Yet think not, though I languish,  
 My suffering soul complains ;  
 Nor are these sighs of anguish,  
 Though wrung from penal pains.

Thy tender sympathizing,  
 Which oft my spirit hears,  
 Gives greater agonizing  
 Than aught besides it bears.  
 Forbid not, my beloved,  
 These beamless orbs to weep ;  
 When once my heart is proved,  
 These weary lids will sleep.

The season this of sadness ;  
 The harrow must move on ;

The seed of light and gladness  
 Is in the furrow sown.  
 The gloomy clouds, impending,  
 Shall fall in fertile showers ;  
 And genial sunbeams, blending,  
 Wake pleasure's vital powers.

And hark ! the certain presage—  
 The whispering drops—I hear ;  
 From Heaven they bear a message  
 Of copious blessings near.  
 And, lo ! bright beams, combining,  
 Their testimony bring :—  
 So April, showering, shining,  
 Leads on the blooming Spring.

---

HITHER come ! spectators, view  
 A miracle of grace !  
 Come, receive my record true,  
 And justify my case.  
 Jesus, pitiful and kind,  
 Perform'd the mighty deed in me :  
 “This I know,—I once was blind,  
 But now I clearly see.”

Knew ye not my doleful plight,  
 Unblest by beam benign ?  
 “Darkness,” like Egyptian night,  
 “Which might be felt,” was mine.  
 Now, were seen bright moons, combined,  
 They could not shine with like degree :  
 “This I know,—I once was blind,  
 But now I clearly see.”

What the things my sight perceives ?—  
 The great Invisible,  
 All the facts that faith believes,—  
 Death, judgment, heaven, and hell ;

Grace and truth in Jesus join'd  
 Pardon, peace, and purity :  
 "This I know,—I once was blind,  
 But now I clearly see."

O that all who hear me speak  
 Would judge upon my case,  
 Go themselves to Christ, and seek  
 The light and life of grace !  
 O that ye were now inclined !  
 And soon ye would exclaim with me,  
 "This we know,—we once were blind,  
 But now we clearly see."

In the commencement of the following year he had to mourn the loss of Mrs. Roberts's greatly beloved sister, Mrs. Guinness. He wrote an affectionate memorial of her, the first part of the elegy entitled "Fraternal Tributes," inscribed to her bereft and sorrowing husband, A. Guinness, Esq. In less than two years after, the second amiable sister died, the wife of B. Guinness, Esq., to whose memory he addressed the second part of the above elegy, and inscribed it to her mourning husband. How deeply he participated in their sorrows, and mingled his tears with theirs ; how solicitous he was to console and administer a healing cordial to the wounded heart ; and how highly he appreciated the eminent virtues, fervent piety, Christian benevolence, patient endurance of affliction, and believing submission to the will of the Lord, and finally, their triumphant exit into the glory and paradise of God ; will be sufficiently evinced in the above-named monumental record.

From these families Mr. Roberts had received expressions of more than relative kindness while on his visits to Ireland, and had enjoyed greatly their happy and harmonious circle, in which he had the pleasure

of exercising his talents of usefulness. He appears to have indulged a particular predilection in favour of the pleasant residence of the latter, which is expressed in a poetic effusion addressed to "Mrs. Guinness, Brookville, near Dublin."

SWEET the spot where wildly wanders  
 Culock's little limpid brook ;  
 Gently glide her mild meanders  
 Bordering friendship's fancy nook.

Ne'er Ambition's pining wishes  
 Moved her silvery trouts to mourn.  
 Live serene, ye happy fishes,  
 Sipping bliss from Culock's urn.

Wide the world's immense expansion,  
 Where the maddening many roam ;  
 Peace, preferring Brookville's mansion,  
 Makes that bless'd abode her home.

Noisy riot, frantic folly,  
 Never find admittance there ;  
 Pride and envy, guests unholy,  
 May not breathe that purer air.

Love and innocence perennial  
 Plant their ever-blooming flowers ;  
 By a fostering hand congenial  
 Nursed they are in Brookville's bowers.

She who trains her blushing roses,  
 Who her honeysuckle twines,  
 Who her floral suite disposes,  
 Frees the pink, the pea confines ;

She can touch the soul benignly,  
 She can twine around the heart :—  
 So an angel all divinely  
 Looks, and speaks, and acts his part.

Who, ye orphans, soothed your anguish,  
 House and home to you assign'd ?  
 Ye no more in misery languish,  
 Refuge in her arms ye find.

Who will pity thy affliction,  
 Meath's sick inmate, child of pain ?  
 Soon beneath her benediction  
 Health shall bloom on thee again.

I beheld in Brookville's bosom  
 Two fair fruit-trees twine their arms ;  
 Heaven allow'd them one sweet blossom,  
 Radiant in its opening charms.

Pure the dews of heaven distilling,  
 Fair the flower of Erin's fields,  
 Sweet the strain the bosom thrilling,  
 Bright the splendour morning yields :

Pure are dew-drops, fair is Flora,  
 Sweet is music's thrilling strain,  
 Bright the splendour of Aurora,  
 Gilding yon ethereal plain :

Purer, fairer, sweeter, brighter  
 May that lovely blossom be !  
 Hence, ye mildews ! dare not blight her,  
 Guarded by each parent-tree !

Lo, they fly, the mists malicious !  
 Heaven the darling embryo spares.  
 Hail, reviving boon auspicious,  
 Pledge of Brookville's future heirs !

I beheld,— but poet's vision  
 May not beam on other eyes ;  
 Time shall mark with due precision  
 Future glories as they rise.

The residence and labours of Mr. Roberts during the following years were in Bath and Bristol, as might be most agreeable to domestic convenience, or as he conceived he might be most useful in his public labours. Continuing his residence in the former place, we once more, and our mutual friend, the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, became fellow-labourers together during the three succeeding years: the happy seasons of reciprocal social enjoyment, mutual labours, and the gracious manifestations which accompanied them, must ever be a subject of pleasing and grateful recollection, the fruit of which will only fully appear in the great day of harvest.

A considerable part of the above period he was favoured with an improvement in health, a cheerfulness and vivacity of spirit, which enabled him to preach, according to his text-book, more frequently than he had done for many preceding, or did in any succeeding years. His health, he states to a friend, July 5th, 1817, speaking of himself and family, was greatly improved. "Though we have known sore and heavy affliction, we have much cause for gratitude to the Father of mercies, who, though he has cast us down, has not destroyed us. My health, during the past six months, has been better than for many preceding years, so that I am constantly employed in the good work of the Lord, which is prospering among us."

He had many calls, and sometimes made extensive excursions to preach occasional sermons, and to attend missionary anniversaries, in which his soul delighted. In connexion with these, a variety of incidents, both pleasing and edifying, might be recorded; but it ought not to be omitted, that, in proof of the estimation in which his talents were held, he was appointed by the committee of the parent missionary society to preach one of the preparatory sermons at the general anniversary meeting held in the City-road

chapel, May 4th, 1818. His text was from Nehemiah ii. 20: "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build." This sermon was published. It displays great ingenuity, and glowing, fervid missionary zeal. In its application it does credit to the inventive faculty of the mind that conceived it, to the piety of the heart from whence it flowed, and the ability of the pen which indited it. He most cordially entered into the plan of the formation of Missionary societies by public meetings. From the commencement he, and his friend who records it, travelled many hundred miles together in this delightful enterprise; and often did he witness the persuasive and impressive eloquence which flowed from his lips, both in the pulpit and on the platform, and that with pleasurable surprise, knowing his great physical debility. It must be admitted, however, and indeed could hardly be supposed to be otherwise, considering his great personal feebleness, that, in the latter part of life, notwithstanding his pulpit excellence, his slow delivery and low cadence sometimes rendered the pathetic part of his sermons less effective, especially when led to a protracted length. The latter he would lament, from a conviction, that long sermons not only exhaust the speaker, but tend to deteriorate the quality and paralyze the effect in the estimation of hearers in general; but with him habit had obtained too great an ascendancy always to counteract or correct what he disapproved.

As this is the last of his publications which will be mentioned, it is remarked with regret, that the limits of this memoir do not allow more especial notice of their particular merits, or of such extracts as might have been to the edification and spiritual profit of the reader. It is also much to be lamented, that the whole of his various publications, both in prose and in poetry, and his manuscripts, are not

collected and published, which would have been no small acquisition to the theological treasury of that section of the church of Christ of which he was so long an active member and zealous minister.

To give prominence and notoriety to passing domestic events, and to combine joyous congratulations with seasonable admonitions and pious instruction, he would draw their attention to them by poetic effusions and epistolary addresses, particularly on their returning and succeeding birth-days; a selection from which cannot but present to parents a worthy example of excellence, while it displays his tender paternal affection for his children in infancy, and his anxious solicitude for their personal, mental, spiritual, and eternal interests.

LINES ADDRESSED TO BENJAMIN ON HIS  
BIRTH-DAY.

LITTLE Ben, my lovely boy,  
Mother's darling, father's joy,  
Five short years are fled away  
Since you first beheld the day;  
When adorn'd in infant charms,  
First you fill'd your parents' arms.  
What more years may yet be given,  
That remains with righteous Heaven;  
Be they many, be they few,  
May they be enough for you;  
May I see your op'ning mind  
To the will of heaven inclined!  
May I see your generous breast  
With those sentiments imprest,  
Which the wise and good approve,  
Such as God and angels love!  
Wise your duty to discern,  
May you only live to learn,  
Learn what knowledge can bestow,  
Practising the good you know;

Ever keeping in your view  
 Him who loved and died for you!  
 So shall pleasure fill my breast,  
 While to heaven I leave the rest.

---

TO ELIZABETH.

TWICE has yon resplendent sun  
 Through the ethereal zodiac run,  
 Since to bless her parents' arms  
 Bess display'd her lovely charms;  
 May in each revolving year  
 Charms more beautiful appear;  
 And, with beauty's bloom combined,  
 All that beautifies her mind.

---

TO SUSAN JANE.

“ MY DEAREST SUSAN JANE,

“ I RISE from my knees to congratulate you on the return of this day. My soul has been imploring the God of all grace to bless you in soul and body, to keep you from evil, and to crown you with loving-kindness and tender mercy. With what emotions I now address you, none but God and myself can tell. Dear to me from your natal hour, still dearer this moment; so frequently given me back when my heart had bled at the apprehension of your being taken from my arms.

“ But my gratitude to that Divine Being who delivered you from death, is enhanced in proportion as I have the pleasing conviction of your devoting your life to Him. Through grace, you have, after the example of your excellent sister, been enabled to choose the good part. May it never be taken away from you;—nor can it be, if you be found faithful!

“ Next in order, or rather in connexion with your advancement in religious knowledge and piety, I hope my darling Susan Jane will attend to the cultivation of

her mind. Let not irresolution hinder your most ardent efforts to acquire and constantly seek an augmentation of intellectual treasures. Profit and pleasure will be the certain result: *Profit* beyond all that can be calculated by the value of gold,—*pleasure* only relished by the wise and virtuous. Those who early enter into the ways of wisdom, and steadily prosecute their object, shall in the pursuit certainly find their path to be strewn with roses, and they shall not fail to obtain possession of the splendid prize. My Susan Jane will try the subject, and be herself the proof of the fact.

“At the present time, on this auspicious day, I would not yield to a momentary shade of fear. No, no. My brightest hopes shall not be nipped by a blighting apprehension of the future. My eyes, already half closed, may not behold the maturity of excellencies yet in embryo. But they will bloom, they will beautify my Susan Jane. I too shall see it, but not nigh: when I have died the death (through the mercy of my Redeemer) of the righteous, the righteous in him, ‘the Lord our righteousness,’ shall I not see the blushing honours on the sainted spirit of my child, when it shall be my felicity to welcome her to Paradise? Meantime I cheer my heart with the consolatory persuasion, that God will be your guide and guardian through life, and unto death, and into glory.

“I meant not to fill this sheet with admonitions, but let me mention my warmest wishes, wishes in reference to you, prayers in reference to God. O may my beloved child be blessed with every blessing! May food and raiment be supplied,—every necessary for the present life be hers,—every spiritual blessing to qualify her for the enjoyment of everlasting happiness! While she lives, may it be to get good; and when she is translated to her higher sphere, may she transcend the seat of her most faithful friend, and most affectionate father,

“THOMAS ROBERTS.”

The following is selected, being one of the last poetic productions of his pen :—

TO ELLEN MARIA.

ELLEN!—From this world retiring,  
 Nature's last faint gleam expiring,  
 Let me, ere I hence depart,  
 Gently whisper to thy heart ;  
 But in weakness sunk, and pain,  
 How can I the theme sustain ?  
 Cease, O cease, thou tuneless tongue,  
 Venture not a birth-day song ;  
 Ellen will thine effort spare,  
 While God attends the silent prayer !

---

TO MARY ANNE.

“ MY DEAR MARY ANNE,

“ WITH affection known only to Him who has the prerogative of searching the heart, does your most loving father present congratulations on the return of your birth-day. As the holy Sabbath opens just now in its beautiful morning radiance, even so may your life's morning be cheered by the lustre of health, wisdom, innocence, and goodness, giving promise of a cloudless day, till it shall close in the serene evening of age,—old age ! Thus, too, may the Sun of righteousness arise upon your illuminated mind, and shed immortal healing and health from his celestial wings ! O Lord, graunt this mercy to my darling Mary Anne ! Amen.

“ How many an idea is awakened in my mind, how many an emotion is enkindled in my heart ! I look back to your first day. I run my eye along the time already elapsed, and I look towards the future and even the final. Why should I sink my spirit, and permit painful forebodings to agitate my mind ? Is not my child the child of her Father who is in heaven ? Has

not the blessed Saviour taken her up into his arms? Has he not laid his precious hands upon her, and have not his holy lips pronounced a blessing on her? Let me then fear no evil. God will be her sun to cheer, and her shield to defend. The Lord will give her grace here, and glory hereafter, nor withhold any good thing, while, through his sufficient aid, she shall be enabled to walk uprightly.

“All who know you and me, speak of our likeness to each other. If any lineament of intellectual, moral, or spiritual excellence be visible in me (alas, how imperfect!) my ardent wish is, that it may appear with higher lustre in you. This morning I have been reading in St. Luke’s Gospel. Somehow, perhaps, from the occasion of your possessing much of my thought and feeling, I was led to associate you with your two namesakes,—the blessed mother of our Saviour and pious Anna. I could fancy an angel, deputed from the heaven of glory, thus saluted my youngest daughter: ‘Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.’ And my imagination has shadowed forth an aged saint arrived to maturity of holiness,—my Anne ‘departing not from the temple, but serving God (with prayers and fastings, when expedient) night and day.’ May you be like them, and my soul shall magnify the Lord! I would, could the comparison hold, be like another personage described and associated with those pious females. I would embrace the Lord Jesus in the arms of faith, and say, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ But I must shut up, and away to the sanctuary.

“I am, my dear Mary Anne,

“Your most loving Father,

“THOMAS ROBERTS.”



## TO ARTHUR HENRY.

FONDLY smiling, for this day  
Arthur begged a votive lay;  
And, to favour his request,  
Kisses on my cheek imprest;  
Let me not his suit disdain,  
And bear a father's name in vain.

Welcome be the annual morn  
When my blooming boy was born;  
May my Arthur from this day  
Love to read, and love to pray,  
Love his parents, love the Lord,  
All that's naughty be abhorr'd;  
Shun the evil, seek the good,—  
That be hated, this pursued.  
Then, through every future year,  
When his birth-day shall appear,  
Growing virtues will arise,  
And speak him holy, good, and wise.  
Thus the youthful Jesus grew;  
So, my Arthur, so may you.  
Object of their anxious care,  
This your parents' daily prayer;  
And may Heaven, in mercy mild,  
Receive their prayer, and bless their child!

From their tender years he endeavoured, from an adaptation of instruction and the selection of suitable books, to facilitate the improvement of his children in knowledge, and to impress their minds with the restraining and hallowing influence of religious principles. That word of the Lord which he venerated, he assiduously inculcated on their minds, observing the Divine injunction, "These words which I command thee shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently

to thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

BUT Mr. Roberts was soon given to know that the stream of domestic enjoyment must be interrupted; that “all flesh is grass, and the beauty thereof as the flower of the grass;” that, though “their sons might be as plants grown up in their youth,” they should be cut down as a flower. Of this two mournful instances occurred, (the latter of which will be mentioned in its place,) which appear greatly to have affected Mr. Roberts’s health, and to have contributed to shorten his pilgrimage.

In his early domestic life he was very desirous of having a family, but the Lord saw it meet to take his children to himself. One only was left to console him, who was much endeared to him in increasing years, by the amiableness of his disposition and manners, as well as by his dutiful and affectionate deportment; and not only to him, but also to Mrs. Roberts, under whose maternal tender care he was early placed by a kind Providence, and in whom he found a mother who watched over him with all the affection which her own children received, and which he always gratefully acknowledged and repaid with filial duty and respect. This son, who bore his maternal family name, Randolph, after receiving a liberal education, was put to the medical profession, in which, a near relative states, he made considerable proficiency; but, in consequence of his close application to study, his lungs became affected, and this affection terminated in pulmonary consumption. Notwithstanding his amiableness, and the religious advan-

tages he enjoyed, he had never experienced that change of heart which is necessary to salvation, nor became decided in his religious character, till attending a watch-night, at the close of the year 1819, when he heard the Rev. Joseph Taylor preach a sermon particularly to young people, under which the Holy Spirit deeply convinced him of sin, and the necessity of an interest in Christ by faith. An affectionate letter, written to him by Mrs. Roberts, greatly tended to strengthen those convictions, and encourage him to look to Jesus, as the only Saviour of sinners, by whom he might be justified by faith, and have peace with God. Following the advice thus given him, he sought, and soon found, the blessing which he felt to be necessary both to his comfort and safety, and from which he derived consolation in affliction, and peaceful triumph in death. Previous to his departure, he addressed his weeping parents, and brothers and sisters, giving to each a token of remembrance, with suitable advice; and, looking affectionately at Mrs. Roberts, said, "You are my spiritual mother." His feeble strength was then quite exhausted; and, after lying for some time in great composure, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus, having attained the twenty-third year of his age.

In reference to this mournful event, a lady, a confidential friend of Mr. Roberts, states in a note:—

"OUR respected friend gave a solemn and affecting charge, that, in case his Life was written, his beloved son Randolph should not be passed over in silence. In conformity with that wish, I forward to you a few extracts from his own letters, written during his son's last illness; but I very much regret the want of that particular letter which describes the happy exit of his precious child: a letter of deep import, affording the consolatory assurance that death was swallowed up in victory."

“GROSVENOR-PLACE, BATH, *April 24th*, 1820.

“WE were thankful to that blessed Being who conducted us safely to our habitation, after a journey performed in circumstances, at the prospect of which my soul was ready to faint within me. What His design may be in this distressing case, is known to Himself only. I am involved in darkness; I see no foundation for human hope; but I believe in His love and power, to whom all things are possible. At some moments, when my mind can make a realization of his presence and tender sympathy, I seem to expect the accomplishment of my heart's desire; but, generally, fear preponderates against hope. In the midst of this gloomy night of sorrow, I have consolation derived from one cheering beam; the affliction, I believe, is sanctified to the sufferer. I trust it is a messenger of mercy to my dear Randolph. He is fully apprized of his perilous situation: may he be enabled to testify, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted.’ O! my dear friend, through what chequered scenes have I been led in this journey of life!

‘I hold by nothing here below.’

Yet my Lord is good; I have comforts. More than all, he is my portion; my portion for ever! Let me earnestly beg you will give me a continual interest in your most fervent addresses at the throne of your Father and my Father, your God and my God.”

“BATH, *May 1st*, 1820.

“HE who has dealt the blow is not unseen by my poor afflicted, emaciated, debilitated son. He affords me occasion for conversing in the freest manner, being candid and ingenuous. God has done great things for him. At first, he felt a strong attachment to life, from which he is now entirely set free, being only desirous to live, that he might evince his love to God, and to glorify him by a devotedness to his service. He is

panting and longing for the joys of salvation. His inquiries are frequent, open, and fervent. O my God! be pleased to reveal thyself to the full satisfaction of his soul! I cannot bear the retrospect of the past. What is become of the thousand sanguine hopes, the thousand trembling solitudes, once awakened in my soul, and in the soul of my sainted Mary? O pity my sorrows, and cease not to bear me on your heart!"

“BATH, *May 8th*, 1820.

“I SPEAK on no other subject to him, nor, if I can help it, do I permit any person visiting him to divert his mind from the immediate prospect of that eternity which is daily opening more and more before him. Indeed, blessed be God, the whole intensity of his soul is to its salvation. All in him is peace and comfort not fallacious. I really, impartially, undoubtingly believe, that he longs, and prays, and groans for the clear, full, and satisfactory manifestation of the Comforter. He has reasoned at every step in regard to the nature, operation, power, and effects of faith; but I have felt it my painful duty to keep him braced up to that distinct point.

“Saturday, the Lord gave him clear views of the necessity and adaptation of faith to the case of every guilty sinner—to his case particularly. A series of providential circumstances occurred in such a simultaneous manner as to strike him powerfully. The Rev. T. Lessey had been elucidating to him the nature of personal faith on the Son of God, and urging him to the act of faith in full expectation of now obtaining redemption in the blood of Christ. My reading to him some passages on the subject marked by his late blessed mother in her ‘*Saints’ Rest*,’ and the second and third chapters of Ephesians, and first and third of Philippians, were followed by a letter from a pious friend pressing the same point; and then came your pathetic

and fervent admonition. All together have removed, as I piously believe, every doubt, if any doubt did remain, as to the power and efficacy of faith; and O! how has he been longing for all the redemption which faith only brings into the soul of a sinner! This is now my comfort, my only comfort. He says, 'I have peace and comfort continually, but I am thoroughly convinced I may enjoy a full assurance. O Lord, bless me with it!'

"From what I have said, you may see, my dear friend, I have given up the last shade of hope as to his recovery."

*"May 12th.*

"I HAVE growing consolation arising from what I thankfully perceive the good Lord to be furthering in the mind of my beloved child. Weak as his poor emaciated body is, I see his inner man renewed daily. But my soul's impassioned desire and fervent prayer is, that his happy spirit may rejoice in God his Saviour. His pious and judicious observations please and gratify me; they are delivered in a whisper, for he has had no voice from the time we left London, and he still looks forward in hopes of pressing into glorious liberty. Lord! grant it him! Amen.

"After what I have before stated, you will begin to think my poor timid mind has somewhat acquired a measure of strength and tranquillity, and surely I would not willingly lessen the pleasurable emotions. But what, if this be the ominous stillness, the certain presage, of the tremendous tornado preparing to scatter with irresistible fury my remaining few fondly cherished hopes! But why should my soul shrink from the imagined howling of the coming storm? That awful God is mine,

'Who rides upon the stormy skies,  
And calms the roaring seas!'

And hath he not said, 'No evil shall befall thee?' O God, let my heart be fixed, let my heart be fixed!"

To another friend he writes:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I AM unprepared to give you a particular account of the character and death of my beloved Randolph, except a few mere hints. He was from infancy a sweet and amiable child, remarkable for the vigour and acuteness of his parts; always attached to the service and servants of God; was possessed of a sound, sober mind; remarkable for correctness of thinking, and was a good scholar; always amiable, and disposed to virtue and goodness; and, therefore, beloved by all.

"But with the commencement of this year his piety became decided. He enjoyed for a good while a calm sense of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were anxious he should aspire to his Christian privilege of holy personal triumph. We urged it on him; he saw it before him; we prayed incessantly for it, and the Lord granted the desire of our hearts. He frequently replied to our strictest inquiries, that he had no doubt, no fear. He said,

' I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.

'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.' He frequently admired the adaptation of the divine economy in our redemption to the circumstances of our fallen, helpless condition, &c. He was meek and patient throughout. He calmly breathed his last in his father's embrace."

A much-respected friend observes in a note accompanying various extracts of letters:—

“MANY a martyrdom did Mr. Roberts endure; for it is probable the rack but seldom called forth the pains and anguish which tortured his spirit. How he bore it, or, rather, how deep and lowly and reverently his submissions were, the accompanying letters will testify; being written to a confidential friend, to whom he was accustomed to disclose the feelings of his inmost soul in all their variety of joy and grief; often giving evidence that he bowed under the incumbent load; mortal firmness being incapable to sustain such heavy and reiterated strokes without physical depression and decay. Yet, when his health and strength failed, he witnessed a good confession, declaring that God was his strength and his salvation, to whom he unceasingly ascribed adoration and praise.”

“BATH, *February 17th*, 1821.

“I HAD longed to visit the courts of the Lord’s house; but have been convinced my duty is to sit in silence, and patiently endure his blessed will. Here then I am, the prisoner of Providence, a mourner, but not a complainer. Let my Divine Master do by me as he judges fit. Frequently it appears to me as if the die were cast: my debility is inconceivable by any person who has not witnessed it. Sometimes, (I might almost say, continually,) I feel as if I were wholly incapacitated for the resumption of my ministerial work. My last attempt was on the 7th ult., the first sabbath in the year. At the time, though I was suffering considerably, but not extraordinarily, from bodily indisposition, I experienced much liberty in preaching on, ‘Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’

“Even then it appeared to me God was preparing my mind for sustaining some severe trial; and this heavy affliction commenced as in the twinkling of an eye the

following morning. I hope its important and glorious design has not been wholly lost upon me, but in some degree accomplished ; though, alas ! I confess myself to be a dull scholar in that best of schools into which my truant heart has been so repeatedly driven, and where, under the rod of affliction, the most beneficial wisdom is generally obtained, by such as know how to acquire spiritual improvement. O, when shall those grievous afflictions yield all their fruits of righteousness ! My all-wise Master may perhaps deem it expedient to put new lessons into my hands ; if so, may his will, not mine, be done ! How dear that appellation, ‘The God of all grace !’ and O, how pregnant its connexion : ‘After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.’

“When all this is effected, the glorious Lord will justify the expedience and propriety, the wisdom and kindness, which employed and directed the means towards its accomplishment. If, through the mercy of heaven, we meet together, where in their bright result they rise, and where we shall behold him in the light of eternity, we shall be enabled to review them clearly, and speak of them in terms of certainty ; and, in strains of adoring gratitude, ‘praise him for all, but most for the severe.’”

“*March 24th.*”

“O ! this contaminated atmosphere of mortality is inflated, is filled, is loaded with the pestiferous influence of flattery and falsehood. It will not bear the communication of a mind that has been visited by and retains the light, love, and life of the celestial sphere. Follow me up to the heavenly abode of truth, simplicity, and purity, where all is lovely and of good report ; where soul is unveiled to soul ; where we know as we are known, and intuition shall tell all we know and all we feel. At the pearly gate I lately appeared ; my spirit, nearly disentangled from the mortal veil, seemed in a

struggle for entrance into the New Jerusalem, but it has been sent back for a short season; perhaps some defiling stain rendered it unfit for the inheritance of the saints in light. O precious blood of the Lamb! forbid it should be excluded among the unclean and the abominable. By whatever process infinite wisdom pleases, let every spot be purified; let me be taught by briars and thorns, only lead me to thy holy hill!

“Now, my good friend, you will say I have given enough of myself; but let me add, my body is strengthening, though far from being what it was previous to my recent illness. After some time despairing I should ever again be permitted to elevate the banner of the cross, I am not without hope of appearing in the militant ranks, and not ‘as a standard-bearer that fainteth.’ But I have been practising the duty of a soldier at his silent midnight post, where perhaps the Captain of our salvation may see it proper to detain me in passive service until the day of eternity dawns, and the shadows of time and mortality for ever flee away.

“But the future I leave to Him who holds all times at his disposal. Faintly, but I would fain hope not ineffectually, am I endeavouring to live free from all anticipations of every kind, good and evil, or I would say, pleasurable and painful, intent to improve the present moment; for, to me, life appears the merest vapour. Eternity is all; and whether acting or suffering, during a moment of existence, is really of no consequence. I cannot but review the past. My poor lacerated heart has dropped its sanguine life, staining every footstep in my flinty path.—

‘Many an hour, surcharged with woe,  
Has cost me many a groan.’

But what are all I have suffered, the stroke after stroke, the breach after breach? O shall not all detach my affections from the objects to which they have clung with too much if not too criminal tenacity? And shall

not I hasten away to the bosom of infinite felicity? O when shall I come and appear before God!"

"BATH, *May 1st*, 1821.

"WE are invited to launch away; but ah! stop my dear friend! If such indeed be the blessed invitation, why this repulse? Yet why do I require a solution which my own experience can supply? Did I not recently hear the heavenly call? A voice from the skies said to me, 'Come away.' In my feeble attempt to obey the summons, while struggling to free my pinions, I felt myself in the fleshly dungeon. But that was comparatively no captivity to me. I felt, it is true, I had a body, but I was susceptible of ties which, stronger than the evil that might easily be shuffled off, bound me close to this condition of my being. I felt myself a husband, a father, a friend. How strange, you exclaim, that I should be sensible of these entwining bonds! I who have bitterly known each of these to have been snapped asunder, and in the most afflictive manner, just at the moment I presumed on their strength, and fancied the shears of fate itself could scarcely touch one twine of my threefold cord!

"You speak sweetly of the nearness of our disembodied friends. It was in the season of my suffering, when life seemed ebbing from the vital fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern; it was then, with the mind's eye, filled with the light of eternity, I beheld those celestial friends as waiting around, as prepared to receive me in their fond embrace, and ready to introduce their kindred spirit, come up out of great tribulation, into the everlasting habitations. But my poor, dim, weeping orbs of flesh saw around me, and my friendly affections associated with objects of time. So that with one better than myself I could say, 'I am in a strait.' But, amid it all, my fluttering spirit obtained the ability, through the aid of omnipotent grace, to say,

with humble submission, though sometimes with trembling accents, 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt;' for, blessed be God, I knew whose soul had travailed for mine."

The above bereavement, the loss of a son of so much promise, was not only most acutely felt by Mr. Roberts at the time, but its effect was of long continuance, it was long before he could recover in a tolerable degree his mental and physical energies. Indeed, a relation observes: "He felt it so severely as never apparently to recover it." He, however, made a devout surrender of himself and his offspring to God, as will appear from an extract from his reflections on the anniversary of this mournful event:—

"THOU alone whose name is Jehovah art Most High in all the earth. Thou art God, and there is none besides thee. Thou who hast so many times corrected, chastened, scourged, and wounded my proud spirit, O teach me how to humble myself under thy mighty hand; let me find my level among the meanest of thy creatures; let me sink into the deepest degrees of self-annihilation, be nothing, less than nothing, before thee. Never let me arrogate the sovereignty; never, no, not for a moment, deem myself to be independent of thee. Yet permit me, thou high and lofty One, who inhabitest eternity, whose name is holy, permit me to present before mine eyes thy own most gracious and condescending declaration: 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'

"But how, in what manner, in what terms, shall I express the conflict of my feelings, when reflecting on the melancholy circumstance that presses upon my heart this returning day of grief and mourning? Surely it was my earnest desire, my fervent prayer, that the afflictive dispensation might not be lost upon me,

but that I might derive from it all the gracious benefit that was possible to be extracted by the most judicious and prudent exercise of my devotional feelings and faith. But how lamentably have I failed! My energies have sometimes seemed almost paralyzed, and my wounded, bleeding heart seemed to possess no sensation for any subject but one.

“O my son, my son! thou wast to have been the pride of my declining years, the nurse of my heart, the stay of my house, the guardian of my dear boys and girls; in thee every mental and moral excellence was anticipated. Thy morning orient glowed with beauty and glory, and presaged an auspicious day; delightful anticipations seemed to have beheld thy evening, after a long day of virtuous greatness, closing with an increase of celestial glories. But, alas! thy sun is gone down while it was yet day!

“My spirit has frequently failed when the recollection of this day’s sad occurrence has returned and impressed my memory with all its agonizing minutiae. But when I have mourned the loss of my first-born surviving son, in whom I had so many reasons to expect my most ardent parental wishes to be completely realized, in every object connected with human life, I have never felt my sorrows enhanced by any doubt of the safety and happiness of his precious soul. Viewing and reviewing his case in the light of the inspired Scriptures, and according to the most sober and correct experience I have had in the case of others, I have always felt my bosom glow with gratitude to the Lord, for the evident displays of the riches of his grace. I doubt not the redeemed spirit fled from my arms to the Divine embrace of the Lord Jesus. And shall I not meet him among those who have washed their robes, and made them white through the blood of the Lamb? Shall I not soon meet him?

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in

with humble submission, though sometimes with trembling accents, 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt;' for, blessed be God, I knew whose soul had travailed for mine."

The above bereavement, the loss of a son of so much promise, was not only most acutely felt by Mr. Roberts at the time, but its effect was of long continuance, it was long before he could recover in a tolerable degree his mental and physical energies. Indeed, a relation observes: "He felt it so severely as never apparently to recover it." He, however, made a devout surrender of himself and his offspring to God, as will appear from an extract from his reflections on the anniversary of this mournful event:—

"THOU alone whose name is Jehovah art Most High in all the earth. Thou art God, and there is none besides thee. Thou who hast so many times corrected, chastened, scourged, and wounded my proud spirit, O teach me how to humble myself under thy mighty hand; let me find my level among the meanest of thy creatures; let me sink into the deepest degrees of self-annihilation, be nothing, less than nothing, before thee. Never let me arrogate the sovereignty; never, no, not for a moment, deem myself to be independent of thee. Yet permit me, thou high and lofty One, who inhabitest eternity, whose name is holy, permit me to present before mine eyes thy own most gracious and condescending declaration: 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'

"But how, in what manner, in what terms, shall I express the conflict of my feelings, when reflecting on the melancholy circumstance that presses upon my heart this returning day of grief and mourning? Surely it was my earnest desire, my fervent prayer, that the afflictive dispensation might not be lost upon me,

but that I might derive from it all the gracious benefit that was possible to be extracted by the most judicious and prudent exercise of my devotional feelings and faith. But how lamentably have I failed! My energies have sometimes seemed almost paralyzed, and my wounded, bleeding heart seemed to possess no sensation for any subject but one.

“O my son, my son! thou wast to have been the pride of my declining years, the nurse of my heart, the stay of my house, the guardian of my dear boys and girls; in thee every mental and moral excellence was anticipated. Thy morning orient glowed with beauty and glory, and presaged an auspicious day; delightful anticipations seemed to have beheld thy evening, after a long day of virtuous greatness, closing with an increase of celestial glories. But, alas! thy sun is gone down while it was yet day!

“My spirit has frequently failed when the recollection of this day’s sad occurrence has returned and impressed my memory with all its agonizing minutiae. But when I have mourned the loss of my first-born surviving son, in whom I had so many reasons to expect my most ardent parental wishes to be completely realized, in every object connected with human life, I have never felt my sorrows enhanced by any doubt of the safety and happiness of his precious soul. Viewing and reviewing his case in the light of the inspired Scriptures, and according to the most sober and correct experience I have had in the case of others, I have always felt my bosom glow with gratitude to the Lord, for the evident displays of the riches of his grace. I doubt not the redeemed spirit fled from my arms to the Divine embrace of the Lord Jesus. And shall I not meet him among those who have washed their robes, and made them white through the blood of the Lamb? Shall I not soon meet him?

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in

thee. It was not a token of thy displeasure. O let me not sink again into that most frightful condition of mind, when I could not or would not see my providences but as demonstrations of thy punitive justice. Be it so, that I am wounded for my transgressions. O let me never, never, never, forget that thy Beloved One was the expiatory sacrifice for my sins, that he was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, and bore my sins in his body on the tree!

“Here then let me repose my weary spirit. I have lost my son, but I have the Son of God; with him all things are freely given to me; nothing can therefore with propriety be said to be lost by me. I cannot doubt thou hast my dear child in thy immediate possession, who expiring said, ‘I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.’ I cannot complain of my loss, especially when I have a good hope through grace that I shall soon rejoin him, where sorrow will not be known, even in thy presence, where is fulness of joy for evermore.”

It being judged that a country excursion might be a relief to his mind, and contribute to his health, he spent two months during this summer with his excellent and sympathizing friend at Raithby-Hall, in Lincolnshire. As he was ever desirous of connecting, with personal gratification and advantage, public usefulness; as his strength increased he called it into exercise. He not only preached at Raithby, but attended missionary meetings at Louth, Boston, and Spilsby, and preached on the occasion. He also preached an anniversary sermon for the British and Foreign Bible Society at Horncastle, besides preaching at several other places. He speaks of this as peculiarly refreshing to his spirit, particularly the delightful and consoling hours he spent at Raithby-Hall. He frequently visited a favourite

alcove, now a beautiful spot but where formerly foxes had burrowed, planted with trees where the warbling birds had built their nests, and entertained him with their cheering notes. On this retreat, whose beauties had awakened the sweetly-sounding lyre of the Sheffield bard,\* he wrote the following lines :—

Lo, the birds have nests in air,  
 The fox his burrow'd bed ;  
 But, Son of man, thou hadst not where  
 To lay thy hallow'd head,

O can I but thy love admire,  
 When herb, and flower, and tree  
 With humble confidence inspire  
 To speak, my Lord, of thee ?

In every vale, on every hill,  
 Where'er my footsteps rove,  
 All objects, dear Redeemer, still  
 Remind me of thy love.

Delightful, through creation's scenes  
 To see thy love impress'd,  
 Where nature scarcely intervenes,  
 But God appears confess'd.

The change of air, scenery, and society, proved in some degree salutary to his feeble frame, and restored cheerfulness to his mind. On his returning home he removed to Bristol, on account of his second son, where there was a providential opening to place him in the medical profession. He was again among old and beloved Christian friends, who knew the way the Lord had led him ; and who could render him their kind sympathy and friendly aid. By this he was consoled and encouraged to labour, which he did not fail to do according to, and often beyond, his strength. Still

\* See the last edition of "Montgomery's Poetical Works," vol. iii., page 14.

considering himself at public command, he would often make his philanthropic excursions, and when quite exhausted in his heavenly Master's work, he had heart-felt pleasure in saying, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

At the time of his son's finishing his education at Kingswood school, he wrote a poem, which his son recited on the public day previously to his leaving that seminary, of which the subjoined is an extract:—

As some new planet 'mid the gloom of night  
 Sheds through the ethereal vault his sudden light,  
 Who, when thick darkness overspread the land,  
 Beam'd forth resplendent at heaven's high command,  
 Pour'd living light upon the mental deep,  
 And roused the waters from their torpid sleep?  
 Say, sacred Muse, and touch the sounding string:  
 Heaven will inspire thee WESLEY'S name to sing,  
 While Kingswood's classic bowers, to him so dear,  
 Suspend their echoes, and delighted hear.  
 Or fears the Muse such mighty themes to raise,  
 And shrinks she timid from the full-orb'd blaze?  
 What single beauty, what peculiar beam  
 So precious to the bard as Kingswood's theme?  
 Be Kingswood, then, sweet scene of youthful joy,  
 The theme selected by the Kingswood boy.  
 Thou Kingswood, once "a solitary place,"  
 Thy gardens, dress'd, now bloom with flowers of  
 grace:  
 Not sweeter fragrance through their spicy coast,  
 Might Sharon's vale or Carmel's mountain boast;  
 Nor lofty Lebanon, waving high in air  
 His cedar plume, co-equal glory share.  
 The way of holiness, the King's highway,  
 Was open'd in the place where dragons lay;  
 In dens obscene, among narcotic weeds,  
 Green herbage there spontaneously succeeds.

The white-robed lily, and the crimson rose,  
 Each floral beauty in thine Eden blows.  
 There dwelt thy pristine progeny of grace ;  
 Another generation fills their place ;  
 And future generations yet unborn  
 Shall crowd thy temple, and thy train adorn.  
 Wesley's strong faith, like great Amphion's lyre,  
 With voice instructive bade these walls aspire.  
 Heaven smiled propitious, while, beneath his care,  
 The dome arose in answer to his prayer ;  
 Till the high topstone, towering in its place,  
 Appear'd the votive monument of grace,  
 And each spectator view'd, with eye elate,  
 The benefit conferr'd on church or state,  
 And, fired with thankful transport, every tongue,  
 By heaven inspired, " Jehovah-Jireh " sung.  
 Here to Pieria's ever-living spring  
 Their sons the prophets for instruction bring.  
 Here may they sip bright learning's classic wave,  
 And in salvation's nobler fountain lave.  
 Not only *mdy*, for some with thirsty soul  
*Have* drunk where learning's deepest currents roll ;  
 And many a holy youth, plunged in the tide  
 Of grace, has risen renew'd and sanctified.  
 Here still, as wont, thine academic shades  
 Religion's holy influence pervades ;  
 And youthful minds, like spring's awakening  
     flowers,  
 Shed sweet perfumes and beautify thy bowers.  
 O Kingswood, ever may thy walls contain  
 A learned, pious, wise, and holy train !  
 And O may I attain the boon Divine,  
 If not the brightest, not the least to shine !

At the close of the meeting his revered father affectionately addressed the boys, and, repeated a piece he had written for the occasion, entitled "The Voice of

Wisdom," consisting of twenty-three verses, from which the four following are selected :—

WHAT angel-warblings greet mine ear?  
 What seraph sings in yonder sphere?  
 'Tis Wisdom speaking from the skies,  
 Intent to make the simple wise.

My pupils, who would knowledge gain,  
 Must first from self-conceit abstain,  
 That proud impediment remove,  
 And then the sweets of knowledge prove.

With wisdom would your soul accord?  
 Begin betimes to fear the Lord;  
 For wisdom only then begins,  
 When you renounce and quit your sins.

Let revelation's holy page  
 Your study and your prayer engage;  
 And be your inexperienced youth  
 Conducted by the lamp of truth.

Mr. Roberts's warm attachment to, and high estimation of, this institution, with his constant solicitude to promote its interest, has already been referred to, as well as expressed in the above appropriate lines. It may be here added, that a circumstance occurred in 1826 which he mentioned as highly gratifying to him. On Mr. Wesley's birthday he preached to a large congregation under the sycamore-tree beneath which that holy man opened his mission in Kingswood, as recorded in his Journal, June 26th, 1739: where he says, "I preached near the house we had a few days before begun to build for a school, in the middle of Kingswood, under a little sycamore tree, during a violent storm of rain, on those words, 'As the rain cometh down from heaven, and returneth not thither, but

watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.'” Mr. Roberts’s text on the occasion was John i. 6, 7: “There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.” The outline of this sermon will be found in his manuscripts; it displays no small power of genius in its adaptation, and ability in its execution. The scene was peculiarly interesting and affecting, not only to himself, but to the assembled congregation, who with one consent could reiterate with the voice of praise the language of the venerable Founder: “The best of all is, God is with us.” Mr. Roberts was no superstitious observer of times and seasons, or saints’ days; but he did think, and it was in accordance with his general practice, that days of remarkable occurrence ought to be regarded to the Lord by a profitable improvement, both by private meditation and public observance. The state of his mind at this time might be further delineated by the extracts from his letters to his confidential, much-esteemed, and highly-valued Lincolnshire friend:—

*“September 4th, 1821.*

“SELFISH as I am, I would not wish to live another moment merely to gratify myself. From social life my best and most genuine comforts have ever sprung. I speak of those flowing within the human boundary. Those indeed with which the celestial Spring of joys has indulged me have most of them been communicated through social channels; nor were they worse for that mode of communication. But O, to lose myself in that pure, essential, infinite Fountain! When shall I go to appear before God,—

‘ To drink the pure river of bliss,  
With life everlasting o’erflow’d !’

But I frequently fear lest the many sudden disruptions of my comforts through bodily sufferings and other trials, heavier to be borne, should induce a too anxious wish to be ‘unclothed.’ May I patiently wait my appointed time till at the Lord’s sovereign bidding my change shall come.”

“ *September 27th, 1821.*

“ I SPENT some hours in meditating on Isaiah xxvi. 3. Ah! why am I not kept in perfect peace? You will tell me, because my mind is not permanently stayed on God, and I do not illimitably and entirely trust in him. It is even so. But how shall I attain? My cry, my simple and I hope sincere cry, to the God of all grace is,

‘ Teach me the happy art,  
In all things to depend  
On Thee !’———

He heareth prayer; and this great thing may therefore be done for, to, and in even me.”

“ *BATH, November 26th, 1821.*

“ HERE will we hold: if passive virtue be now indispensable, so that the continually-occurring ills of human life may be sustained by us, and the gracious designs of the Almighty in his mysterious providence may be accomplished in our moral perfection, we have no just cause to murmur, because we have occasions, many and heavy occasions permitted, or rather granted, to us for the employment of patience, more than any other Christian grace. Patience, I have long been convinced, tends to the perfectibility of our character as creatures in a state of penal probation. So the Scripture seems to intimate: ‘Patience works experience.’ By its practical process it exceedingly tends to promote our experience of all the good, and acceptable, and

perfect will of God, as wrought in us, and with us, and by us.

“But if I thus go on, I shall put your patience to the test.

‘There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign.’

Immanuel’s land to you seems not far off. I do not mean you are just about to take possession of your celestial inheritance. I only think you greatly delight to employ your most ardent thoughts in contemplating the glory that shall hereafter be revealed to you and in you. The valley of Baca you do not allow to limit your expansive views; you climb by faith and love the heights of Nebo; and with Divine ravishment you ‘view the landscape o’er’ well: while I dwell in the valley, and am thankful, at least would be, that there is set before me in Baca ‘a door of hope,’ I sing there. Before he shall say to me, ‘Die,’ I trust he will first bid me ‘go up to the mountain, and there die.’

‘O blessed bliss-inspiring hope!’

And poor Mrs. — has gone down the mountain-side. Her feet, you say, are dipped in the brim of Jordan: but this is her mercy; for death’s cold flood frights not her timid feet from the shore; and the ransomed of the Lord will soon pass safely over.”

“BATH, *December 24th*, 1821.

“My heart was and is most certainly touched by that affecting description of the heaven-winged angels. Death! What an awful subject! How mere nature shrinks from its contemplation! But how mighty the triumph of Divine grace, that exultingly

— ‘asks the Monster,—Where’s thy sting?

And where’s thy victory, boasting Grave?’

The wife, the mother, so detached; the beautiful maiden so willing to be dissolved, so anxiously saying to corruption, ‘Thou art my sister and mother!’

But such are the victories achieved by mortals, through the all-triumphant energies of Him who was once dead, but is alive again, and has the keys of death and the grave. Such are the realized effects of the religion of Him 'who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.' O may my last end be like theirs!

"We have recently been much affected by tidings of the death of a relation, under very peculiar and trying circumstances. May the heavenly Comforter apply his balm to the hearts which profusely bleed by this poignant and most afflictive stroke of Providence! Well, the night of suffering and sorrow is far spent, and the day of endless felicity is at hand; for now is our salvation nearer,—the final, complete salvation is nearer,—approaching on the rapid wing of every flying moment. O 'come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'"

---

## CHAPTER IX.

IN 1822, beside his frequent preaching and other labours in Bristol, and Bath, and the circuits, he visited Stroud, Melksham, Clapham, London, Exeter, and several parts of Devonshire, and the East of Cornwall, preaching occasional sermons, (principally missionary,) and attending anniversaries. At Clapham he preached in the chapel of the Rev. Mr. Phillips; in the very respectable congregation were Dr. O. Gregory and two Persian princes, the latter of whom appeared to be earnestly inquiring after the truth, to whom he held forth the word of life with persuasive and impressive eloquence, preaching from 2 Peter i. 3: "Hath called us to glory and virtue," of which an interesting outline appears in his manuscript sermons.

Into West Cornwall and several places in Devonshire

the writer accompanied him, and was not more surprised than thankful to the God of help, to see that his friend, after passing through so hot a furnace of trial, possessed a more than ordinary share of physical and spiritual cheerfulness and energy in all his public efforts. He had long, in these excursions, rendered his services gratuitously; and though his circumstances had now a strong and just claim for the expenses of travelling, he always felt a secret repugnance to it, as if it deprived him in some degree, if not of his glory, of the consolation of not being chargeable to any. His friends in Plymouth, being aware of this from his former visit, secretly placed in his travelling trunk a small token of their affection, and appreciation of his valuable services, which elicited the following letter, expressive of his courtesy and disinterestedness:—

“WAS it speedily to secure to you a letter from me, or unwillingness in your Plymouth flock to submit to any thing looking like obligation, or finally was it that you and they kindly determined to overrate and overpay such feeble service as I could render to their zealous exertions in the blessed cause of God, that on unfolding my dressing-case at Exeter, should lead to such an interesting but unexpected discovery? I am willing to impute it to the best design; and, that being done, I beg to offer them and you the assurance of my grateful love. Had I not such a valuable memento, surely I should be deemed wholly deficient in friendly and pious feeling, were I not frequently to reflect on the delights of the Plymouth and Dock Missionary Anniversaries, with the preliminary and subsequent services of the sanctuary, not forgetting our few pleasurable excursions amidst the unparalleled beauties of the surrounding scenery of land and water.

“Through the blessing of Divine Providence, I returned to my house in peace on Saturday evening.

. . . . . Matters move on tolerably here, as far as I can learn. O Lord, be thou great in the midst of thy Zion. My family unite 'in best love to you and yours, with, my dear brother,

“Yours, very truly,

“THOMAS ROBERTS.”

A floating chapel having been opened in Bristol for that long-neglected and useful race of men, the sailors, and some time afterwards the ark at Clifton, he, with his usual readiness, patriotic and Christian zeal, rendered his ministerial services, and joined, so far as his circumstances would allow, in aiding this noble deed of maritime and national charity. The following hymns he composed for the opening of the latter :—

#### THE ARK OF SALVATION.

SINNERS, prepare to meet your God,

The day of punishment is nigh :

Vengeance collects her fiery flood,

Commission'd from the frowning sky ;

O flee for refuge ! and embark

Your all on board Salvation's ark !

No other refuge can ye find

Beneath the wide expanse of heaven ;

God's bounteous Gift to all mankind,

Jesus, that only name is given ;

The cross of Calvary be your mark,

And flee into Salvation's ark !

The soul that sins shall surely die ;

Hell is the ling'ring sinner's doom.

The drops bespeak the deluge nigh,

The universal flood will come :

The clouds appear, the heavens grow dark ,

Flee, sinners, to Salvation's ark .

By hope inspired, or moved by fear,  
 Believing in the Saviour's name,  
 To touch the olive branch draw near,  
 While now his heralds peace proclaim ;  
 Hark ! 't is the Gospel trumpet ! Hark !  
 Come, sinners, to Salvation's ark !

See mercy's bow in heaven appears !  
 Now seek and find the grace ye need.  
 Ye weeping mourners, dry your tears,  
 Christ will not break the bruised reed ;  
 He will not quench the glimmering spark ;  
 Then turn ye to Salvation's ark !

---

### THE NAUTIC TEMPLE.

O THOU great Teacher sent from God,  
 To make men truly wise ;  
 The mount, the main, the fields, the flood,  
 Thou didst not, Lord, despise.

Thy hallowing presence bless'd the ship,  
 By thee a temple made ;  
 When on the bosom of the deep,  
 Thy banner was display'd.

The thronging multitude received  
 The counsels of thy grace.  
 Many with all their hearts believed,  
 And holy was the place.

And holy is this hallow'd place ;  
 We meet in thy great name ;  
 Or few, or many, seek thy face,  
 Thy promise, Lord, to claim.

May we thy promised presence find  
 Within our humble bark ;  
 The tongue of fire, the rushing wind,  
 Shall consecrate "the ark."

At the close of this year he writes, relative to Bath,

"Now are ended eleven years spent in this city. How mingled with lights and shade ! My God, accept my most sincere thanks for all thou hast done to me and mine. Most wise and most merciful in all thy dispensations, pardon the past, assist for the future ! I now go to my old sphere" (meaning Bristol). "O for thy Divine light and heat !"

He had divided his labours, as has been stated, the preceding years between Bath and Bristol, residing principally in the former place. The ensuing year, 1823, he devoted his labours principally to Bristol and the circuit. At the commencement, he appears to have suffered from an inflammatory tendency in one of his legs, to which he refers in a letter to his friend:—

"THE short of the matter is, my leg is in a weak and ominous condition ; but there is a truth not less certain, that my leg, my body, my soul, are all in His hands whose omnipotence is the stay and support of the universe, and (what adds even to this conviction)

' Whose love is as great as his power.'

' Why then art thou cast down, O my soul ?' O yes, I shall yet praise him ; praise him for all his infinite wisdom designed ; for all his unfailing faithfulness will effectuate. The ultimate object, rich in eternal blessing, will soon appear :

' Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,  
 Thy better portion trace.'

"It is time I should assure you how sensibly my very spirit sympathizes in those recollections of the past,

those emotions excited by the present, and all those glowing anticipations of the future, which the island with its sanctuary, its household mansion, its cottages and its saints, awaken in your kindred mind. I could almost presume to entertain a wish, (and, indeed, the utmost effort of thought can go no farther than a wish,) to taste the sweets, the divine sweets, of your paradise. But the commissioned cherubim wave their flaming swords athwart the entrance. Here then affliction confines me, that patience, as well as the active graces, may have her perfect work. Let me, O my God, bow with meek submission, nor beg thine angel to sheath up his sword."

It has been stated, Mr. Roberts noted times and seasons as they presented profitable subjects for contemplation and improvement. Of this, his reflections on Mr. Wesley's birthday may be adduced as an instance:—

"BRISTOL, *June 28th*, 1823.

"MY mind has this day been led to meditate on the peculiar circumstances which mark this brilliant era, when God is eminently taking to himself his great power, and extending his dominion throughout the world. The 28th of June, in the year 1703, just now one hundred and twenty years ago, gave birth to the honoured Founder of Methodism. That highly qualified and eminently successful instrument, God was pleased to employ in commencing the present revival of religion, which, we trust, will eventually usher in the latter-day glory. I believe his blessed work has suffered no declension. Comparing the present with the past, we feel warranted to say with the Psalmist, 'As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it for ever. Selah.' Psalm *xlvi*. 8.

"The Christian church is the true Mount Zion, the place of God's special residence, where he dwells in the

hearts of his people, and manifests himself to men, as he does not unto the world. This is the city of our God. God will establish it for ever. We believe he will not forsake the place where his honour dwelleth. Have we not the tokens of his presence? Is not the Holy One of Israel great in the midst of us? If to us he sends forth his light and truth, and shows his glory, as to our fathers in their day, we may infer and presume he will extend his favour to succeeding generations. Let us, in a few instances, review the past, and contemplate the present. ‘O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works thou didst in their days, and in the old times before them.’ Yes, they not only told us what thou didst by them, but carried back our view to primitive Christianity. They made primitive Christianity the pattern of their work, as it was the tune of their song, when they exulted,

‘ His Spirit revives His work in our lives,  
His wonders of grace,  
So mightily wrought in the primitive days.’

God be praised, we are witnesses of these things. But let us inquire what we have heard, and what we have seen.

“I. We have heard from the lips and from the pens of our fathers, that their Divine call was to revive and spread scriptural Christianity. They said that notions and forms were not religion; that the truth might be received not in the love of it; that orthodox opinion in the head was not to be substituted for the kingdom of God in the heart; that the best forms of godliness might be punctually attended to, while, at the same time, the power of godliness be denied, contemned, and blasphemed. They said the ministerial call was, to preach repentance to sinners; faith in Christ to awakened penitents; and holiness of heart and life to believers; and that their pastoral labours were to edify and build

up those who had first given themselves to God, and then to them by the will of God; that this, the whole of this, nothing less nor more, was their object.

“‘As we have heard, so have we seen.’ Their successors are men of the same principles, spirit, and zeal, walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing; in their ministerial and pastoral labours, endeavouring to promote experimental and practical religion; living and labouring only for this important end, and only satisfied in proportion as it is attained.

“II. We have heard how the Lord was with our fathers, and crowned their labours with success.

“First. In the conviction and conversion of sinners. When the revival of religion commenced, we have heard how our fathers in cities and fields, (in this city and vicinity especially,) went forth preaching the word with all boldness. Sinners, as at first in Jerusalem, were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ whom our fathers exhorted to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out, when the times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord. Sinners did repent, penitents did believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and seasons of Divine refreshing were granted from the presence of God.

“‘As we have heard, so have we seen’—awakenings and conversions. ‘Ye are our witnesses, ye are our epistles.’ ‘Of Sion it is still said, This and that man was born there.’ Now one is wounded by the sword of the Spirit, and now to another the Lord sends his word and heals him. Still the preaching of Christ crucified is the enlightening wisdom of God. The word is still attended with more spiritual signs.

Secondly. We have also heard how the Lord owned our fathers in promoting the communion of saints. Hence their formation of classes and bands, and hence the restoration of the ancient *agapæ*. With them,

primitive Christianity arose as from the grave. The admiring world again said, 'See how these Christians love one another;' and this spirit was universal, it made them one and indivisible. Not unlike those first believers who were of one heart and soul. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.'

"'As we have heard, so have we seen'—the unity of the Spirit maintained in the bonds of peace. The enemy, it is a melancholy truth, has frequently sown his tares; and those who could no longer love us, may try to love each other as well as they can. But we have not lost the badge of discipleship; we 'love the brethren,' and are still disposed to sing unitedly,—

' Make us into one Spirit drink,  
 Baptize into thy name,  
 And let us always kindly think  
 And sweetly speak the same,' &c.

"Such being the comparative view of our Zion, we may, under the Divine blessing, presume to hope and pray, that God will establish it for ever. Nor need we doubt; for, let us be led by the Psalmist: 'Walk about Zion, go round about her;' survey the whole of this city set on a hill, and built as a city that is at unity with itself; 'tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks.' Babylon was not so well defended with her walls and towers as our Zion with her simple but undecaying discipline, not walls daubed with untempered mortar. 'Tell,'—count one by one,—'mark well her bulwarks.' Let your discipline be dear to your hearts. 'Consider her palaces'—the abodes of her inhabitants; where they dwell, find a home, and enjoy the communion of saints. 'Consider.' (Hebrew, Raise up.) Build on and raise up more palaces for the increasing inhabitants, where hundreds and thousands may meet together

to worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. 'That ye may tell it to the generation following,'—may recapitulate, recommend, that your children may perpetuate.

"Finally. The ground of encouragement is twofold : 1. Our interest in our fathers' God : 'For this God is our God, for ever and ever,' immutably and faithfully. 2. His auspicious guidance : 'He will be our guide even unto death.' He was the guide of our venerable Founder, who sang, 'Till glad I lay this body down,' &c. His request was granted ; and, expiring, he made this declaration, leaving it as a legacy to his survivors : 'The best of all is God is with us.'"

As the summer approached he became sufficiently recovered to visit Cheltenham ; and, the latter end of August, Raithby-Hall, and various parts of Lincolnshire, where he attended several missionary meetings, and preached introductory sermons, which appeared to have a resuscitative effect upon his constitution. This he expressed in a letter to his son Benjamin for whose welfare he was anxiously solicitous during his absence.

"To succeed in any profession, especially yours, which brings the professional man into verbal connexion with every person with whom he has any thing to do, how much depends on due pronounciation and a good address ! Let not its importance, its absolute necessity, escape your mind, no, not for a moment.

"Neglect not your cadence or enunciation ; and there is, so to speak, a cadence in manners and behaviour. Attend to it in everything, even the minutest. Cultivate propriety in speaking and acting ; even when alone, pay an habitual respect to yourself. Not that I wish you to be finical. And the best way to avoid the overweening punctilios which hold and enslave some petty minds, is to exercise a free, frank, yet unobtrusive carriage towards every person, yet a carefully discri-

minating manner, in respect to those with whom you have to do,—superiors, equals, friends, strangers, old, young, &c.

“ One principle after all, my dear boy, is the best and unfailing directory ; I mean that which should influence us in our conduct towards God. Be sure that will best regulate our deportment towards all. Besides, let us never forget its important effects upon our own selves. I despair of seeing you either a man or a gentleman, either a good man or a happy man, independent of that blessed principle. But its direct operation (let the uninitiated say what they will) is the production of peace and satisfaction in the bosom of its possessor, and of amity and benevolence toward others, with the daily accumulating blessings laid up in store for the future exigences of life, and the inconceivably blessed result which extends into eternity itself. I pray that God may be the guide of your youth, and direct your progress in the acquisition of every excellence ; so that you may be a wise man, a skilful surgeon, a useful citizen of the world, a good Christian, and a holy, happy saint in glory everlasting.

“ Thank God, I am on the whole in a way of improvement, though I have felt a little exhaustion from my extra labours for a week or ten days past. We have had missionary meetings at Coningsby, Spilsby, Wainfleet, and Alford ; so I have had preaching and speaking enough. We were at Louth on Sunday, from which we returned yesterday, instead of going on to Lincoln, where we purposed attending the Bible meeting.”

He also writes to his friend in Lincolnshire, on his return to Bristol :—

“ BLESSED be God, whose conduct and safeguard we have truly witnessed in our long journey by day and

night. I have at last the happiness of dating from dear home, whither Divine Providence brought us last night, without experiencing the least accident by the way.

“ Now I feel, (shall I say, self-satisfied ?) that the autumn did not pass away unblessed. We have spent no little time in the company of our esteemed friend, and in that paradisiac bower, where, above all other places on this side the celestial abodes, we might really enjoy the sweets of pious intercourse. Imagination will frequently send back its retrospective glances on those lucid seasons from which future hours, even should they be tinged with gloom, will not fail to catch some splendid reflections. How kind has Heaven been, therefore, in the construction of human spirits, so that they may felicitate their faculties in the re-enjoyments of the past, as well as in the realities of the present, and the hopes of the future.”

During the year 1824, he appears to have enjoyed an improved state of health, preaching and attending public duties more frequently than he had done for several preceding years. He writes to his good and kind friend in Lincolnshire :—

“ BRISTOL, *May 1st*, 1824.

“ COULD my timid spirit maintain a permanent evidence, that my religious energies were kept alive and obtaining accession of vital heavenly influence for their further support under the devastations of mortality, that indeed would limit my utmost wishes, as it would certainly bring home to my bosom the enjoyment of the unrivalled good which I sometimes seem to seek with a prospect of attainment. My flesh and my heart fail : but wilt not thou, O God, be now the strength of my heart, and hereafter my portion for ever ?

“ Pain of body is as the infliction laid on by an extraneous enemy. I can bear it. But there is a friend,

a companion of the bosom ; my only peace is when his heel is not lifted up against me. Amidst much mental depression, it is possible, the evil one, who was a liar from the beginning, may have deep measures of diabolical subtlety beyond our ordinary comprehension. Surely it is possible for him to suborn the conscience to bear false witness against God, and to deny the reality of his saving work in the human soul ; even that soul which, notwithstanding its moral desolations, he yet owns to be his temple ; nor has yet had the character of reprobation, the fatal Ichabod, imprinted upon its mouldering walls, if they yet stand,—stand upon the sure Foundation.

“ Once more to visit the hallowed scenes of Raithby, —the thought of such a desideratum would give me all the ecstasy I dare wish for on this side paradise. But if I may not, while the present state of being exists, have that permission, perhaps the time is not very distant when, an unseen guest, I may visit you, and experience heightened delights in its groves and arbours.

“ The time will come, perhaps, (but death must come first.) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense ; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with ; and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.”

“ BRISTOL, *May 29th*, 1824.

“ MORE than ever I now look out and around, if by such means I may but bring in some few aids to support my drooping spirits. Alas ! I experience how insuffi-

cient the generality are ; and you will tell me the special few cannot be substituted in place of the All-sufficient One ! This I do not deny ; nor am I, God be praised, content at heart without looking up, though my weakness induces me to cast my eyes around.

“ To Clapham I must look no more ! My dear Phillips has taken his flight,—my long-beloved,—my ever-esteemed friend. He knew my soul in adversity, he wiped away many a tear from those eyes whose imperfect remains shed now drops of grief because my limited sphere of friendship is not merely contracted, but irreparably rent asunder. I have not another Phillips ! ” . . . . .

The Rev. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Roberts became acquainted soon after his first marriage, when residing at Haverfordwest ; and on the death of his wife, largely participated in his afflictive bereavement. He possessed that piety of mind and wisdom in counsel which at that season proved so beneficial to Mr. Roberts, and a strong and indissoluble friendship was formed. He afterwards became the Minister of an Independent congregation at Clapham, of which he remained the faithful Pastor, till he gave up his charge to the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls. He was a man of strong mind, of extensive learning, and of useful ministerial talents, but which were often in some degree paralyzed by a nervous diffidence. He was much esteemed by the late Rev. Robert Hall, and other distinguished ministers, and finished his earthly course in honour and peace, and was much lamented by his friend, as suggested by the preceding notice of his death.

Mr. Roberts attended the Conference at Leeds, and preached to his brethren, and a crowded congregation from Psalm lx. 4 : “ Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.” The Conference being concluded, he returned

through Lincolnshire, but was able to make only a very short stay at the place where he had had so much pleasurable enjoyment the previous autumn, as he proposed visiting London, where he preached in Queen-street chapel, and attended a missionary anniversary in Hindestreet.

He entered upon the following year, 1825, with a gratifying prospect of being more effective in the work of his Divine Master. His heart appeared largely to participate in the sentiment of his first text, "Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." In one of his memorandums he states: "On Sunday, Jan. 16th, the organ was opened in Portland chapel. The hymns and appropriate tunes were selected the previous week from the Sacred Harmony, with particular reference to congregational singing. The morning service was conducted by the Rev. James Wood, who preached from Psalm ciii. 1—4: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name,' &c. I preached in the afternoon from Psalm cl. 4: 'Praise him with organs,' and the Rev. J. Stanley in the evening from 1 Cor. xiv. 15: 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.'

"The Rev. W. Toase assisted in the services; the people were much pleased, particularly as the instrument was well supported by the voices of the congregation, and, I trust, profited. The organ is not intended to supersede, but to assist, the singing; and we hope there will be a new and improved era in this department, as it is not unlikely that other chapels may have the benefit of an organ."

Mr. Roberts was a great admirer of this part of congregational worship: he considered it contributed much to the spirituality, holy fervour, and devout solemnity of

the sanctuary, when properly conducted; and conceived it to be an important part of ministerial duty to attend to it, and make such arrangements as should contribute to the harmonious and high praises of God.

Though he had enjoyed a degree of improved health, affliction still awaited him. In the month of March, he paid a visit to London, where, instead of the pleasure of active service, he was called to patient endurance, and passive submission to the will of his heavenly Father; he was seized with a severe illness, which confined him nearly a month. Relative to this he states in a letter to his eldest son:—

“THE Almighty has graciously strengthened me. We left London at nine o'clock, and were safely set down here (Newbury) at six. I felt fatigued, but am amazingly benefited by the journey. . . . .  
 ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul,’ who healeth, as by a miracle, my disease, and redeemeth my life from destruction. He was pleased to bring down my strength, and prostrate me to the margin of the grave. . . . . But whatever God might think proper to do with my body, a good hope through grace sustained the Divine conviction that all would be well with the soul. The subject which pressed momentarily upon my heart, was the spiritual and everlasting interest of my dear children. With what good-will would I have quitted this world of sin and sorrow, nor have cast one lingering look behind, only so far as half-a-dozen attractions drew me back!”

His reflections on this dispensation, and the state of his mind, is recorded in one of his papers, as follows:—

“‘THE Lord hath need of him.’ And does the Lord of the universe need ‘the colt of an ass?’ Has he not declared, ‘Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills?’ How then should he now need this poor, despicable quadruped? O thou, in whom is the

fulness of wisdom, thou knowest when to arrest the sun in his career, when to make the clouds thy chariot, to walk on the wings of the wind, to ride on the wings of cherubs, to ride on the heavens, and in thy excellency on the sky ; and yet thou wast pleased to assure thy disciples that their Lord needed the ass's colt. I see one reason ; it was by thus humbling thyself, thou, the King of Sion, entering into thy capital, wouldst show thyself to be meek, and having not a temporal but a spiritual salvation, therefore thou wouldst thus make thy lowly triumph into Jerusalem. And may I learn of thee to be meek and lowly in heart, so shall I find rest and refreshing to my soul !

“ But I see what an honour thou conferrest on that meanest of the animal creation. Such splendour never glowed on the neck of the war-horse, though it be clothed with thunder. Such majesty never adorned the prancing steeds employed in drawing the magnificent car of a Pompey or a Vespasian, in an imperial triumph. With the exulting disciples, permit me to hail thee, ‘ Thou Son of David, who comest in the name of the Lord, Hosanna ! ’ Save me, Lord, I beseech thee !

“ I admire the literal and exact fulfilment of the prophecies which spoke of thee. In the contingencies of this thy public entry into Jerusalem, I see such a combination of circumstances, that, were there scarcely another fulfilment of prophecy throughout thy whole life on earth, I should condemn myself for infidelity, did I not confess that Zechariah spoke of Jesus. But this is not a solitary instance. To thee, my blessed Lord, give all the prophets witness.

“ While I hear the children reciprocating and repeating the shouts of the multitude, and listen to thy commendation of them, and behold thy application of the Spirit's testimony, that thus ‘ out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, and perfected thy praise, ’ O let me mingle among them. Let me then

find, in the spirit and disposition of a little child, I have received thy kingdom into my heart ; and let me, free from hypocrisy and pride, exult in thee, and shout thy adorable praise, insensible to all persons around me. Especially may I thus appear in thy sight, in thy holy temple.

“ And is it thus by ordaining strength out of the mouth of babes, that thou ‘ stillest the enemy and the avenger ? ’ O my Lord, my Master, what shall I say ? Shall thy infernal enemy, the proud avenger, overwhelm my soul, and silence my tongue ? shall fear paralyze my spirit ? shall shame seal my lips, because I am a mere infant, because I understand only as a child, and think and speak as an infant of days ? If thou canst use such a feeble babe, and if thou wilt ordain strength in my weakness, lo ! here I am, send me. Only let the woman’s conquering Seed put forth his almighty energy in me and by me, and I will tread upon the lion and adder ; the young lion and the dragon will I trample under my feet.

“ Now then I can perceive how the Lord may have need of me, even me. Absolute necessity there is none. He can send by whom he will send. If he deposes a Paul to plant, or an Apollos to water ; ‘ neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth.’ But if the powers of darkness may be chased by an infant ; if the devils are made subject through the name of Jesus, when but feebly stammered by an infant tongue ; and if the excellency of the power be thereby made evidently to appear that it belongs to God, then let the great high priest sound the ram’s-horn trumpet, let the mighty Gideon smash to pieces the earthen vessel, so that it may thereby send forth the light of the glory of God. Let his omnipotent arm roll the barley cake into the enemy’s camp. May even I but hear my heavenly Master declare, ‘ The Lord hath need of him ! ’ Though no grandeur be in my department, no music in my

voice, no splendour in my intellects, let me be meek and lowly, even as the despised animal which the Prince of glory honoured in his triumph, and I will go forth at his bidding. Has my Divine Lord again brought me back from the gates of death, because he hath thus need of me? Then,

‘ A spectacle to fiends and men,  
To all their cool or fierce disdain,  
With calmest pity I submit :  
Determin’d nought to know beside  
My Jesus, and him crucified,  
I tread the world beneath my feet.

“ O Lord, in thee have I trusted ; let me never be confounded !

“ THOMAS ROBERTS.”

He writes again :—

“ *May 22nd, 1825.*

“ I CAN truly affirm I have experienced much improvement, though my weakness is still very great. But here I rest: ‘ Abba, Father, with thee all things are possible.’ Should not this conviction, this acquiescence, teach me habitually to look beyond the sphere of what mortals call probability? Sometimes I think I have attained, that probabilities have no manifest existence in my view. This I take to be walking by faith, and not by sight. Lord, increase my faith !”

In the month of June he was able once more to visit his friends in South Wales. After spending fifteen days at Carmarthen and in Pembrokeshire, his strength was so far restored as to enable him to return to Bristol, and on the 28th, to preach at Kingswood, being Mr. Wesley’s birthday, to which circumstance reference has already been made ; and by a favourable continuance of health, he was able to pursue his ministerial labours the remaining part of the year, and the succeeding one, with little intermission, paying occasional visits to various places.

About the middle of the month of January, 1827, he was again cast into the fiery furnace; and, what to him was a greater affliction than any corporeal sufferings, he was under the necessity of remaining in silence and inactivity, till the month of May. A letter to his confidential friend will convey some idea of the state of his mind, which occasionally appeared to be under more than ordinary depression and discouragement.

*“ March 24th, 1826.*

“FOR myself, what shall I say? a miserable theme at any time, but never worse than now. The shell has suffered several shocks, constant pains, and indescribable weakness. The interior, what can be said of it? My mind has been harassed and excruciated by most overwhelming and distressing matters of various kinds, in-somuch that I feel at times unmanned, and almost unchristianized; but I have frequently brighter and better moments, and hope upon the whole I am hurried onward by the blast, pursuing the right course to the fair haven. But enough of self.”

It being judged that a journey and voyage to Ireland might contribute to the recovery of a degree of health and strength, and being very desirous of once more seeing his much-beloved relations there, he undertook it, and arrived at Beaumont, the mansion of A. Guinness, Esq., May 3rd; which he memorializes in the following stanzas:—

### THE MEETING SCENE AT BEAUMONT,

MAY 3RD, 1827.

LET bards who fly on fiction's wing  
 Of fairy elves their visions sing;  
 To me is fancy's spell unknown,  
 Who but respond pure nature's tone.  
 'T was nature's instinct pointing o'er  
 The ocean stretch'd to Erin's shore,

Who moved the mind, the wish inspired,  
And crown'd the rapture when acquired.  
What pageant led from fiction's bower,  
Intended to beguile the hour,  
Could shed such splendour on the heart  
As that bright moment did impart,  
When Beaumont's princely hall sent forth  
The fairest forms that grace the earth ;  
Their arms enfold, their lips of bliss  
Ecstatic press the welcome kiss ;  
And nature pours without control  
The purest incense on the soul.  
Such moments to enjoy again,  
Who would not brook the billowy main,  
And deem his sick'ning toil o'erpaid,  
By every smile from every maid ?

The social vivacity of his mind appears in this poetic effusion, notwithstanding his complicated and often overwhelming afflictions. He commenced preaching on the 13th at Beaumont, to Mr. Guinness's family and others, from Ephes. iii. 14: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He preached frequently, principally between Beaumont and Dublin, and attended the Conference at Belfast ; on which occasion he was much affected, reviewing the years that were past ; not one being present who was in the ministry when he first visited that kingdom, and more particularly when some of the brethren addressed the throne of grace in his behalf, as their "venerable father in Christ."

After a prolonged visit to Ireland, he took an affecting leave of his beloved Irish friends, devoutly "commending them to God, and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified ;" in which heavenly inheritance he hoped to meet them in the

Divine fruition, where their friendship should be renewed and perfected in the harmony of eternal love.

On his return to England he wrote to his son Benjamin, who was at that time studying in London, which shows that domestic moved in unison with ministerial duties :—

“ WE were all pleased with the good report you gave in your letter to your dear mother. With due care, which we hope you will prudently bestow on yourself, we doubt not, through the blessing of God, your health will not suffer from your many and constant employments. I have confidence in you, that, seeing you have such an important stake at issue, your all of temporal good, your means of passing honestly and respectably through life, you will assiduously employ your time, and exert your utmost efforts to acquire, I will not say reputation, but an essential acquaintance with every thing belonging to your profession.

“ Let your aim be high, and your pursuit unremitting. Between the various lectures and the duties of the hospital, I am aware your moments will be fully occupied. Let me beg they may be well improved. Now is your golden opportunity ; see, therefore, you give no cause for future regret, in consequence of neglect or misimprovement.

“ While I am sanguine on the subject of industry and labour of your weekly avocation, I feel not less desirous, that you should give your Lord's day to the Lord. Consecrate that day to Him who has benignly instituted it a holy day, for the comfort and moral improvement of his creatures.

“ And, once for all, I beseech you, and, as your parent, I charge you, beware of the two great evils to which members of your profession are, if possible, more than any other people exposed : I mean infidelity and sensuality. Guard yourself, your whole self, body and

mind, against these radical evils. Destruction and misery are their certain attendants. Beware of forming any intimacy with those whom you even suspect to be the unhappy votaries of these demons. In this instance especially, 'evil communications corrupt good manners.' From one kind relative, Surgeon Morton, whose experience and talents in the profession rank so high, and who knows so much of the world, and with all connects true piety, you cannot fail to derive incalculable benefit.

"And now, my dear Ben, let me conclude by expressing my hope that you will mind yourself, and forget not your God, nor

"Your very affectionate father,

"THOMAS ROBERTS."

---

## CHAPTER X.

A FAVOURABLE opening presenting itself in Bath for the professional practice of his son, Mr. Roberts was induced to return to that city in 1828, to contribute to his convenience and comfort, and to promote his interest. Providence having blighted his hopes relative to his first son, he became the more solicitous that he might realize them in one whose prospects were not less favourable, and who, from the cheerfulness of his disposition, the urbanity of his manners, as well as his medical knowledge, met with a kind reception from those who knew him, and whose prospects became increasingly favourable. He, as all young practitioners ought, in the commencement of his career, became decided in his religious character. Solemnly devoting himself to the service of God, he sought the special blessing and direction of the great and good Physician, and relied on the fulfilment of his faithful promise: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

He also made choice of a pious and amiable companion, the daughter of the late John Morton, Esq., to whom he was married; these flattering prospects were highly gratifying to Mr. Roberts's parental feelings, and tended to soothe a heart which had so often been pierced by the sword of sorrow.

In the month of August he again visited his favourite retreat, Raithby-Hall, preaching at several places in Lincolnshire. One circumstance particularly evinces that the fervour of his missionary zeal had suffered no diminution. Though the flesh was weak, the spirit was willing, and anxiously solicitous to carry the Gospel of salvation to those who had it not, but sat in the region of darkness and shadow of death. His friend Mrs. Brackenbury—feeling great commiseration for a place called Corby, where, on inquiry, she found there was neither Sunday-school, Bible Society, nor even the Gospel preached to the people, but that they were as sheep without a shepherd—took Mr. Roberts to preach to them; and not being able to get a more convenient place, they were allowed by the courtesy of the landlord of the inn to occupy a part of his house, where a large concourse of people assembled, to whom he preached with the simplicity adapted to their circumstances, from Romans iii. 24, 25: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” The word was received gladly; and, after distributing a variety of tracts and Bibles, they proceeded to Colsterworth, where he preached at six o'clock the next morning, and in the evening at Sleaford. It was no small gratification to him to learn, that this little missionary excursion was succeeded with a Divine blessing. A relation, who accompanied him, states: “This was not an end of Corby and its interests.

Through Mrs. Brackenbury's exertions, and chiefly at her expense, a young man, who is since gone out as a missionary, was induced to take up his residence there ; he formed a society, and in the list of the members was soon found reckoned our landlord, and the person belonging to the first cottage we visited.

“ A Sunday-school was formed, a Bible Society established, and a chapel was soon after erected. It is now regularly supplied by our ministers ; and the last I heard of it, was, that it was in a flourishing condition.” Thus the little mustard-seed planted in Corby grew up, and spread its benign branches to the surrounding country.

Mr. Roberts appears to have had a presentiment that this was his last earthly visit to this oft consolatory retreat, as he writes in his text-book : “ September 7th, arrived in Bath !—last stage ! ”

His social enjoyment in his family circle has been several times referred to ; and it ought not to be omitted, that, on the anniversary of his wedding-day this year, Mrs. Roberts and himself, having presented to them by their children a present, expressive of their filial love and congratulations, it called forth from Mr. Roberts a poetic expression of his paternal acceptance and approbation:—

WHERE breathes the bard who boasts a muse  
 And can a willing lay refuse,  
 When beauty's voice invokes the lyre,  
 The herald of the household choir,  
 And on this nuptial morn demands  
 The tribute of a father's hands ?

Receive, then, darlings of my soul,  
 The strain that flows without control ;  
 Permit the pure parental tide  
 Within your tender hearts to glide,

And, like a humble tinkling rill,  
Your gentle breasts with pleasure fill.

Accept, then, objects of our cares,  
Of all our hopes and all our prayers,  
Accept your parents' grateful strain  
Of thanks, and thousand thanks again,  
For all the duteous love you pay  
On our auspicious wedding-day.

And may you at some future time,  
Amidst domestic scenes sublime,  
See, like yourselves, a lovely race,  
Endow'd with innocence and grace,  
Your sons and daughters, to return  
The thanks we owe this bridal morn!

In the month of October he attended missionary meetings at Brecon and Carmarthen, and preached on both occasions; where the writer of this joined him in this delightful labour of Christian zeal for the salvation of the Heathen and the world. This appears to have closed his missionary career, being the last excursion recorded by him. That this hallowed fire still burned with pristine and undiminished fervour, which had led him to attend at least one hundred of these and similar meetings, from the time of their formation, through the extensive range of England, Wales, and Ireland, a hymn he composed, and had translated into the Welsh language, is a sufficient proof:—

Lo, He comes, the world's Creator!  
From his creatures long conceal'd,  
Soon the ills of human nature  
Shall in every soul be heal'd.  
Hallelujah,  
God appears on earth reveal'd.

Flee, expell'd, the powers infernal,  
 With the bloody rites obscene ;  
 Beams the light of life eternal,  
 Where the shades of death had been.

Hallelujah,

Shines the Sun of truth serene !

Lo ! He comes, the world's Redeemer !

Hark, the trumpet speaks him nigh !

Wide unfurls the crimson streamer,

Where the Gospel heralds fly !

Hallelujah,

Lift the sacred ensign high !

Every people, every nation,

Every tribe, and every tongue,

Hail the chariot of salvation,

Rolling rapidly along !

Hallelujah,

Shout the Conqueror's victor song !

Lo ! He comes, the world's Renewer !

Wide the Spirit's influence flows ;

Truth celestial, graces pure,

Bud and blossom like the rose.

Hallelujah,

Gifts and graces Heaven bestows !

Barren wilds and deserts dreary,

Change to Eden's blooming bowers,

Earth, no longer solitary,

Yields her fruits, and strews her flowers.

Hallelujah,

God on all his Spirit pours !

May the Father's love, in union

With the grace of Christ the Lord,

And the Spirit's full communion,

Be to Adam's race restored.

Reign, Jehovah !

Tri-une God, by all adored.

During the year 1829 his labours were principally confined to the city of Bath, with the exception of a short excursion into Devonshire. On the 6th of September, he writes: "From this time to the end of the year, much afflicted." This affliction had so completely prostrated his strength as to render him incapable of attending the watch-night at the close of the year; in which he not only always felt great interest, but received much spiritual profit. His heart, however, was there; and while his family were uniting in public worship on the solemn occasion, he composed the following lines:—

I CHARGE my soul, this day, O Lord,  
Thy bounteous blessings to record;  
How manifold, immense, and free  
The benefits bestow'd on me!

Not aught of merit can I boast,  
A criminal condemn'd and lost,  
A sinner in the sight of heaven,  
Who only sues to be forgiven.

Not doom'd to drink the cup of woe,  
My respite to thy grace I owe:  
By mercy spared another year,  
For mercy I again appear.

Among the saints within thy house,  
Permit me soon to pay my vows;  
There let me to thine altar bind  
The sacrifice by thee assign'd.

Accept, my God, on whom I call,  
My heart, my tongue, my life, my all;  
I count myself no longer mine,  
But Thine entirely, always Thine.

My Maker, my redeeming Lord,  
Whose mercies I this day record,  
Appoint or life or death for me,  
To Thee I live, I die to Thee!

His public labours now became very limited: he was capable of occupying the pulpit only six times in 1830. April 7th, he writes to his particular friend:—

“BATH, *April 7th*, 1830.

“You congratulate me on my attempts to speak in public. I have tried, but suffered so much, I am compelled to commit myself in silence to my blessed Master’s will, and am imprisoned in my house, incapable of going to the house of the Lord.”

“*May 19th*, 1830.

“I AM dying, not merely daily, but hourly. I am all debility in mind and body; at times it would seem impossible for me to survive a moment. Such faintings, I imagine, as are felt by those who are in the article of death. Such I had on Sunday, the sad anniversary of my own Randolph’s removal; but I am strangely brought back again and again. Yet I hold myself (rather would I say the good Lord holds me) in readiness to obey the final call, which will probably be given at a sudden moment.”

On the 26th, he writes to his much-esteemed niece, Miss Sibly:—

“BATH, *May 26th*, 1830.

“MY DEAR BETSY,

“BEFORE your ead this’ letter, I beg you will dismiss every alarming apprehension, lest the worst of the case be kept back, for you shall be made acquainted with my case to its utmost extent. The sovereign Disposer

is in all; and the issue, be it what it may, will justify his wisdom and goodness.

“Having premised thus much, I must now inform you, that to forbear writing would be the imposition of a task to be borne with greater difficulty than I can apprehend to be the result of writing.

“Let me then tell you, my dear Betsy, that the declining state of my health calls me to a sense of duty which I judge it but right to comply with, by making this communication. From the commencement of the disease, which has afflicted me during the last eight months, I have continued to feel increasing weakness, and to suffer almost daily diminution of flesh, insomuch that, according to human appearance, I am swiftly hastening to the house appointed for all living. If my Divine Master deems me no longer qualified to perform his kind work, which was once my delight, shall I not resign myself in meek submission to his sovereign will? If I may no longer act, why should I not bear? Let my sole desire be then to sustain the burden of the Lord, if it be indeed a burden; let me sit in silence at his feet, as becomes a redeemed sinner, supported by his mighty hand, to the praise of the glory of his grace. This is now my only remaining desire; and I fear not even my own weakness, for he hath said, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’

“During the progress of disease, I have endeavoured to withhold the indulgence of hope on one hand, and despondency on the other, in regard to a restoration of health. My constant prayer has been for passiveness of will, so that for me to live might be to serve and glorify Christ, or that death might put me in possession of that infinite gain which the blessed Saviour procured by his sufferings unto death, and ever lives to bestow on redeemed rebels, even me also!

“Latterly my strength has prodigiously failed, and my flesh, as it were, vanished. I exhibit something of

a resemblance of my poor brother not long before his death. But though at first I suffered severely, I feel now entirely free from pain. I can take almost any kind of food ; but such is the weakness of my whole internal structure, I derive no nourishment, and the tokens of decay increase continually.

“ Ben is as attentive as can be wished in the way of his profession, and has called in the assistance of others. From my dear wife and children I receive the tenderest sympathy and attention. Every thing is done for me that the creature can do. I take it thankfully from their hand. Yet I dare not lean upon these reeds, nor even accept their aid, without the paramount conviction that God alone is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the needful time of trouble. His immutable word and oath I endeavour to realize as the foundation of my faith, and the anchor of my hope. His promises in Christ Jesus I wish to claim for my heritage.

“ The retrospect of my life would flush my cheeks with guilty shame. Alas ! to how little purpose has my life been spent, just now extended to half the last decade of years allotted to mankind ! But for the glorious atonement, my spirit would sink overwhelmed with fearful apprehension at the thought of entering into the eternal world. While I cling to the cross as the only means of all my salvation, and the one object of all my desire, I have but this petition, ‘ God be merciful to me a sinner, and let the sprinkled blood of the all-meritorious Lamb of God take away the iniquity of my holy, my holiest things ! ’

“ Why should I speak of the mental anguish I have felt in relation to those dear objects of my love whom I leave behind in this wilderness of sin and sorrow ? Must I not have suffered severely when reflecting on my beloved wife and children, on my poor sister, and, let me add, yourself, with others. This, taking into

account my almost ruined fortune, would wring my heart with anguish, did I not feel persuaded there is a God, who embraces you all in the arms of his paternal love, and will certainly prove himself worthy of his peculiar character under covenant-engagements, as the Lord your God !”

Such was his ardent and continued affection for Kingswood School, that notwithstanding his great weakness he was resolved to visit that highly favoured and favourite place on Mr. Wesley's birth-day. He states, “I addressed the scholars, and read the elegy on Mr. Wesley.” This was the final close, and indeed, the last public effort but one of his multiplied visits to that seminary which had ever received his liberal support and wise counsels: nothing could be more appropriate than the manner in which he closed his valuable services.

One circumstance, however, had greatly consoled Mr. Roberts in his affliction; that in his domestic circle all appeared to move on in harmony and happiness; and, what was the most pleasing to him, so far as he could judge, all growing in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was bowed down by increasing infirmity, he writes:—

“THE last sabbath day I occupied the pulpit at Walcot chapel; for I wish to be doing a little in my Lord's vineyard; the audience heard me with no great difficulty, though my voice was exceedingly weak. Benjamin and his wife love the Lord; the rest of my family are all well.”

Alas! this season of blissful calm was suddenly interrupted by the affliction of his much-beloved son, who, having taken a severe cold, it soon so affected his lungs as to baffle all medical skill. He lingered about

nine months, perfectly aware of his danger, but fully prepared to bear this dispensation with patient resignation, and for the glory which should be revealed by that grace which had abounded toward him, and was now revealed in him, in pardon, adoption, and sanctification, by the Spirit. Of this he bore a constant and pleasing testimony. When father and son were so reduced as to be incapable of mutual visits, and when verbal communication in a great measure failed, they encouraged and comforted each other in the Lord, by a written correspondence, of which the following letters are not more interesting than affecting:—

“NORFOLK BUILDINGS, *Oct. 7th*, 1830.

“MY DEAR SON,

“THE Divine goodness enabling me to take the pen in hand once more, to whom should I present my first effort but to you? To have had the opportunity and ability of visiting you yesterday, afforded me an inexpressible degree of comfort. It is true, I perceived you were oppressed with weakness; but, on the whole, I was considerably gratified, and my mind was cheered with hope that your pains will by and by be alleviated, and your constitutional vigour be soon restored. More than all, my beloved Ben, my heart-felt joy, which had previously been increased by what had been told me by dear Augusta, was greatly augmented when I beheld the blessed tokens of the grace of God so evidently dwelling in you. You have seen the gracious design of your heavenly Father in this visitation.

“You kiss the rod, and adore the wisdom and mercy which direct it. Hold fast, therefore, the conviction impressed on your judgment and conscience; never forget that the hand of God is in this providential dispensation, and will certainly direct the issue to secure your (perhaps temporal, but absolutely) spiritual and everlasting good.

“ I send you herewith a copy of some verses, which, in the season of darkness and distress fourteen years since, I dictated to your mother. I hoped it might yield you some comfort, now that you are passing the ordeal.

“ That the Almighty may abundantly bless her and you in soul and body, is, my dear son, the earnest prayer of,

“ Your affectionate father,  
“ THOMAS ROBERTS.”

“ *Christmas-day.*

“ MY DEAREST BEN,

“ CUSTOM teaches friends to offer their mutual compliments on the return of this social season. But how can I, from my couch of weakness, congratulate you, the subject of pain and debility? you, who are, in your afflictive condition, more than a son, even a brother in adversity! Yet why should a living man complain? Let us be dumb, nor presume to open our mouth before him who hath done it. Rather let us open our lips to show forth his praise, who, I doubt not, is preparing, in this mournful moment of affliction, a glorious theme for our everlasting joy. Though his sovereign interposition forbids our embrace, he withholds not his blessed benediction. In his holy name, and, I trust, under his Divine influence, I cordially present my paternal blessing to you, my dear daughter Augusta, and Octavia. Heaven bless you for ever, prays

Your affectionate father,  
“ THOMAS ROBERTS.”

“ *January 2nd, 1831.*

“ MY DEAR BENJAMIN,

“ MOST cordially do I thank you and Augusta for your united congratulations so feelingly expressed in your note of yesterday. Yes, mine eyes have seen,

even to the end of one year more, and, at the commencement of another new year, the goodness of the Lord, in the light and land of the living. So hath he done above all I durst ask, or presume to think, when in so many a suffering season he greatly overwhelmed my spirit, and plunged my emaciated body into the depth of, as it were, dying debility. The icy hand of death seemed sometimes to have grasped his prey, and quenched the vital spark!

“But I was not alone. He who once in his own person combated and vanquished the king of terrors, deigned to lay underneath the everlasting arms of Almighty aid. His rod and staff supported me,—yes, even while I felt as entering into the valley of death. All thanks to the Prince of life and glory!

“Yet am I now nearer the bourne of that eternal world, from which I was so frequently brought back to the sight and enjoyment of my beloved wife and our dear children. I could then satisfactorily leave you all to the protection of Him who, in his holy habitation, is the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widow. But that was not achieved till after the severest struggles with all that is of nature! I did hope, you, your partner, and each of your sisters, and our dear Arthur, were all, through grace, determined for Christ, for his cross on earth, his crown in heaven. And are ye not? And shall not our darling ‘wee one’ of the second generation be given to our prayers, and finally associated with us all in the family of heaven?

“The circumstances to which your note so immediately alludes are indeed highly calculated to enhance the value of our mercies. God has heretofore been merciful to us; his benefits have been renewed recently. What therefore shall we render to him? Our hearts—our lives—our all! May he be pleased to remove your present sufferings and sorrows! May you serve him better than your father has served him! be

blessed with every temporal and eternal blessing! and Augusta and her sweet daughter mutually enjoy their portion in earth and heaven! So prays, with paternal affection,

“Your very faithful and affectionate father,  
“THOMAS ROBERTS.”

His muse was still alive, and profitably energetic, as will appear in a hymn composed while one of his daughters was playing Martin Luther's beautiful piece. He entitles it,

### THE EXIT OF EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY.

As if an angel spoke,  
I feel the solemn sound. If known aright,  
It is the knell of my departed hours.  
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.

(TO MARTIN LUTHER'S HYMN.)

WHAT means that awful midnight bell,  
On heedless mortals calling?  
Why tolls that solemn funeral knell,  
In tones the heart appalling?  
It sounds the knell of dying year,  
Borne off-on Time's oblivious bier,  
To pass away for ever.

Another year will pass along,  
Its fleeting moments various,  
Or dew'd with tears, or charm'd with song,  
All transient and precarious.  
But who shall hear that midnight bell  
Proclaim its end, and wing its knell,  
When pass'd away for ever?

Still other years will come and go,  
Advancing and retiring,

Their moments fill'd with weal or woe,  
 Expanding or expiring :  
 And bards unborn through ages tell  
 The records of that midnight bell,  
 When pass'd away for ever.

Beside his lyre will many a bard  
 In peaceful grave be slumbering ;  
 Nor more the annual bell regard,  
 Its generations numbering :  
 In silent sleep he there shall dwell  
 Till Death hath rung Time's funeral knell,  
 Then rise, and live for ever.

This poem introduces the last complete year of his earthly course ; the solemnity of the occurrences of it, and the affecting scenes of the abodes of affliction and mortality, cannot be entered upon but with that serious awe which becomes the valley and shadow of death, while a glory is shed upon it at the triumphant gate of heaven. His state of mind during this eventful and solemn season is best delineated by extracts from his notes and letters. To his son he says :—

“ *January 2nd, 1831.*

“ LET me call on you to rejoice with me, by giving you to learn that, in my lowest moments, around me and beneath were spread the everlasting arms. O yes ! be it known that all was peace within—peace, peace, through the blood of the cross, even quietness and assurance for ever !!! ”

“ *March 7th, 1831.*

“ And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.’ Thus, Abba, Father, with thee all things are possible. This day I raise a new Ebenezer in the sight of thy resplendent sun and surrounded with the glo-

rious manifestation of thy Divine Majesty. And is it so? Am I enabled, this fifteenth anniversary of my deliverance from the horrors of darkness, to direct the pen in making this record of Thy almost miraculous interposition?"\*

*“March 19th, 1831.*

“AND now, my beloved friend, let me assure you, I am fully warranted, by the distinguishing mercy of Heaven so eminently manifested towards me, to adopt the angelic announcement: ‘Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy!’ O yes, my dear M——, ‘good tidings of great joy!’ deliverance from bodily sufferings, lost strength regained,—my appearance the object of astonishment to every beholder;—but, above all, and beyond all, my mind, once so frequently dejected and sick unto death, (if mind could expire,) no longer sinking, fainting, dying, but raised by the merciful interposition of Omnipotence to the peaceful enjoyment of light, life, and liberty, both mental and Divine! O praise my great Deliverer! Hear it, and be glad with me and for me.”

Bristol and Bath had enjoyed a considerable portion of his valuable ministerial labours during forty years, in which he had preached in those cities more than a thousand sermons. April 29th, he made the last entry in his text-book, after an intermission of twelve months:—“Ebenezer, New King-street chapel. Job xiii. 15: ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’” This was the language of believing confidence in relation to himself; though encompassed with troublous clouds, he stood firmly fixed on the immutable Rock of ages, the sure foundation; and faith, mighty faith, said, “Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” “For I know that if this earthly

\* Referring to the restoration of his sight.

house of my tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." To this effect he writes :—"God is good, and only good ; and I am satisfied of his favour, which is better than life, and stronger than death ; yet my faith and patience have been greatly exercised by weakness and sufferings, by temptations and satanic conflicts ; but the Captain of the host of the Lord appears in my behalf, and arms my weakness with his might. I yet stand my ground, and do believe I shall be more than conqueror, even over the final enemy. I have a good hope through grace all will be well with me."

During this time Mr. Roberts was tremblingly alive to the sufferings and the increasing disease of his much endeared son. After many prayers and tears, all human hope vanishing, he freely surrendered him to God. A little more than a fortnight before his dissolution, his beloved wife being engaged with him in fervent prayer, he ruptured a blood-vessel ; it was thought he was dying ; but, recovering a little, though unable to speak so as to be heard, he wrote many sentences expressive of his unshaken confidence in Christ, and Christ alone : of this, the calmness with which he contemplated his departure was pleasingly indicative. Mr. Roberts, writing to one of his daughters, who had been called from home, says :—

*" May 17th.*

" I WRITE these lines, which will inform you how matters are at present with our beloved Benjamin. His mind enjoys perfect peace, and relies in the most comfortable manner on the truth of God, and his redeeming mercy in Christ Jesus. Lest the hemorrhage should again recur, he is kept in silence ; but has frequently written with pencil, which he has repeated this day ; and all is calculated to yield us much com-

fort. He is on the Rock of ages, and in full expectation of his departure to the Lord. He begs his love to you, in case he should not see you again in this life. We have now no prayer but for his easy dismissal, and the gracious presence of the good Shepherd while passing through the valley and shadow of death. He sinks rapidly, but may hold out some time, if the blood-vessel does not give way.

“Your mother is wonderfully supported in the midst of her trials and afflictions. We hope Augusta rallies in some degree; but she has been overwhelmed. God speaks loudly to us. May we hear his voice, and embrace his intended design,—our everlasting good! May He bring you speedily and safely to our arms, and finally to the arms of Him who loved you, and gave himself for you! Amen and amen! So prays your most loving father.”

On the morning of his death he was enabled to address his assembled family in an affecting and heavenly manner, speaking separately to each, and requesting that he might die with his hand in that of his beloved wife; and that the Testament in which he had written the name of his infant daughter, with a short address, might be the subject of her tuition, that she might meet him in heaven; then calmly bidding them all farewell, he entered into the rest and joy of his Lord.

This very sorrowful bereavement and heavy stroke made a deep impression on Mr. Roberts's whole frame, which had for a considerable time been declining. But his mind continued to be kept in peace, his joy in the Lord was sometimes interrupted by great physical depression and powerful assaults from the adversary; yet supported by the omnipotence of grace, as he writes:—

“ BATH, *August 23rd*, 1831.

“ ERE long I shall be fully gratified to mention my acknowledgments in the nobler terms employed in the celestial world, disburdened of the oppressive weight of all mortal and moral infirmities.

“ These expressions flow not indifferently, as things of course. I have shaken hands with life, and am bracing on my sandals for my final stage. Through Divine mercy I fear not to enter the valley of death ; but I have not the triumph I felt three months ago. On this account, I go mourning, but still cry on, ‘ O when wilt thou come unto me ? ’ I am honoured with transient visits while I pray with Herbert unceasingly,—

‘ O show thyself to me,  
Or take me up to thee ! ’ ”

He still tenderly cared for the surviving part of his family, and appeared to suffer no moments to pass unemployed for their edification. His conversation was spiritual, communicating to each at seasonable opportunities such instruction and advice as he deemed appropriate, and also made several efforts with his pen. August 2nd he writes to one of his daughters :—

“ MY DEAR CHILD,

“ AMIDST great pains and inexpressible weakness I transcribed those few portions of the sacred Scripture on the accompanying sheet. I pray the Lord to inscribe them on your heart ! They may be instructive in life, and a cordial in those melancholy circumstances when (as with me) your heart and flesh shall fail. May you be found washed, through the precious blood of the Lamb once slain, when we meet in the eternal world !

“ My theme assumes a gloomy aspect, such as might not have been anticipated for the second of August ; but this must be imputed to my ardent regard for your best interests in this world and the next.

“ ‘ A time to be born, and a time to die.’—SOLOMON.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not.’—SOLOMON.

“For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.’—ST. JAMES.

“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.’—ISAIAH.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.’—ST. PAUL.

“Believe, love, obey.

“My dying blessing be on my dear Mary Anne!

“THOMAS ROBERTS.”

To his much endeared and now only son, he writes :—

“September 13th, 1831.

“IN a condition of bodily weakness and complete exhaustion of physical vigour, my mind still recurs to you, my youngest, and if not best, yet surely my equally and tenderly beloved child.

“The effort I now make, in the midst of indescribable weakness, is to summon forth my utmost energy to congratulate you upon your approaching birth-day. I thank my God you were ever born. May you truly know what it is to be born again, and be the child of God by adoption and grace. May you be richly endowed with heavenly grace, to qualify you to be a holy, happy, and useful Christian. May you, through grace, be an upright and consistent example of all that is lovely and of good report, a close follower of the Lamb wheresoever he goeth. Adieu!

“Your affectionate father,

“THOMAS ROBERTS.”

## CHAPTER XI.

BEING convinced, from increasing weakness, that the time of his departure was drawing nigh, Mr. Roberts resolved, notwithstanding his great debility, to remove to Bristol, where he had long desired to finish his course, that his remains might be more conveniently deposited at Portland chapel, a place he had ever manifested a strong partiality for, and which had been increasingly endeared to him as the sacred deposit of his dead. After this remove, which took place in October, he sank rapidly, and was soon confined to his bed. The opinion he had formed of his state, his devout resignation to the will of God, and the consolations of hope, he enjoyed in reference to the near approach of eternity, are further expressed in one of the last letters he ever penned, written to the writer of this memoir; of which the following is a short extract:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“MY heart, with warmest emotions of gratitude and esteem, offers its best thanks for your affectionate, sympathizing epistle. Assured you will be pleased to have a few lines written by my own hand, let me tell you truly I have equal pleasure in making the attempt to gratify you. The good Lord hath done great things for me, whereof my friend will be glad. My debility is very distressing, and though my pain is slight and unfrequent, I am greatly reduced. The conclusion of the whole is, in a word, I think the die is cast for death. I dare not say my wish elevates or depresses the beam; my prayer is, ‘Father, thy will be done.’ He leaves me not. I cling to the cross. ‘For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’ Mrs. Roberts is divinely upheld; my children most assiduously administer to my comfort; they are close, but I hope not so close as my blessed Lord.”





Engr. J.

*W. Robt. Smith,  
Preacher of the Gospel.*

To friends, and his brethren in the ministry, who visited him, he gave a satisfactory expression of the hope that was in him of eternal life; his articulation often became difficult, so as to prevent his entering into much conversation.

The following account of the closing scene is furnished by his beloved wife and children, his constant and assiduous attendants:—

“HE had at one time been troubled with distressing doubts and fears; but towards the close he was entirely free from them; he would sometimes request some of his favourite hymns to be read to him, especially, and often, that which begins,

‘Jesu, lover of my soul;’

of which he said, ‘That is my favourite hymn;’ the last lines he would several times repeat, concluding with a fervent ‘Amen, amen.’ The one being read to him which commences with,

‘Come, O thou traveller unknown,’ &c.;

when those parts were read which he thought to be applicable to himself, he would say very emphatically, ‘Yes, my soul, yes, yes, I shall, I shall.’

“He would sometimes express surprise that he continued, that he was still living. He said to his daughter, Susan Jane, ‘How is it I am still here? Why will you not give me up?’ She replied, ‘My dear papa, we have given you up;’ at which he appeared satisfied. He afterwards said to Mrs. Roberts, ‘What is it that detains me on earth? I am still here in answer to your prayers and those of my children; why will you not let me go?’ She answered, ‘My love, we have given you up to God; we have no hope of your recovery, and do not now pray for it.’ ‘Then,’ he replied with emphasis, ‘Thank God, I shall soon be gone home, I shall soon be in heaven.’

“The last time his eldest daughter, who had been married a short time previously, and resided in Bath, went over to Bristol with her husband to see him, he blessed them both, and prayed that they might be blessed in and through each other.

“He was for some days nearly speechless, but perfectly collected and sensible to what passed, quietly waiting with great tranquillity and peaceful expectation for the coming of his Lord; when on the 10th of January, 1832, he entered into the kingdom and glory which he had so long anticipated; joined the general assembly who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, to share the fulfilment of the word of promise, with all the triumphant ministers of his grace. ‘They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.’

\* \* \* \* \*

leaving a greatly bereft and sorrowing widow, one son, and four daughters, to lament the loss of a much endeared husband, and kindly affectionate father. His funeral was attended by all the preachers, both travelling and supernumerary, in the Bristol and Bath circuits; and his remains deposited in Portland chapel, with those of his beloved wife and eight children. Funeral sermons were preached by the Rev. James Wood, at Bristol; the Rev. Jacob Stanley, at Bath; and the Rev. Robert Smith, at Kingswood.

“His removal was much felt and deeply lamented in the cities and their vicinities, where his labours had been so long and so abundantly useful. Many mourned the loss of a spiritual father, and thousands that of an able and faithful minister of Christ, by whom they had been instructed, and under whose word they had often sat as in heavenly places; while many in the blissful mansions of glory would await and hail his triumphant spirit into the transcendent joy of his Lord, to receive

the crown of life, 'and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father.'"

The writer of this might have said much more of this great and good man of God, from long and intimate acquaintance with him; but has refrained, lest, in attempting further to delineate his many excellencies, he should be suspected of undue partiality to a much-loved and justly-valued friend. He has indeed lamented the insufficiency of what he has written, to give an adequate delineation of his manifold virtues and pleasing qualities; and, above all, of the grace which so richly abounded in him,—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having attempted to record but little more than a simple narrative of facts, with extracts from his manuscripts and letters, he subjoins the following testimonies out of many, from persons of respectability and veracity, who had for many years known the subject of this memoir in private and public life.

The first is that of a lady of no ordinary intelligence, piety, and just discernment of character:—

“OF Mr. Roberts it may be justly said, his intelligence and his intellectual powers were great, of higher rank than was generally apprehended; but he wanted firmness of nerve to employ them with that commanding energy which would have given an efficiency of equal effort and success. His imagination had a richness and variety which threw around an irresistible charm of improvement and delight. His feelings were very acute:—‘tremblingly alive all over,’ he mourned and sympathized to an almost unheard-of extent.

“As to his own sufferings and sorrows, they were too numerous, severe, and complicated, not to require a pen of more than ordinary delicacy, in attempting to give but the slightest sketch of them, as they affected him; so that whatever belongs to the interior character will be with difficulty delineated, because so few have

trodden the same path with fellow-feeling and close sympathy. Every-day characters are seen, understood, and forgotten; but where rare and variegated combinations are met with, (in some sort sudden,) no small skill is required to analyze and adjust them, so as to give proportionate merit to each separate excellence. This is peculiarly applicable to Mr. Roberts. There was in him so much talent and worth, as only became discoverable by a minute knowledge of the possessor; and even then the developement was not clear and full, unless to minds in unison with his own. This did not arise from any reserve or concealment on his part, but from that generous expansion of soul which instantaneously and imperceptibly joined itself to a kindred spirit, and expatiated in all the luxury of high and pure communication. To such a mind, but to be understood was a luxury of no ordinary kind.

“‘Thought meeting thought,’ in social intercourse, he felt to be a joy transcending any earthly good. He was no stranger to the philosophy of M. Malebranche; but dreaded, and on all occasions avoided, throwing the veil of obscurity over the simplicity of truth. Neither did he invest religion with a mysteriousness beyond what is natural to a subject so far beyond the cognizance of mere human reason. Far from it; truth from his lips or pen was Christ and his Gospel; and the theme flowed with an ingenuous eloquence from a heart that felt the hallowed fire, and its refining saving power!”

The following is from “the Bath and Cheltenham Gazette,” written by a gentleman of literary celebrity, who had been favoured with a long personal knowledge of Mr. Roberts, and sat under his ministry in Bristol Bath, and elsewhere:—

“THIS amiable man and respected minister, whose decease we recently announced, had been during many

years a resident alternately of this and of the neighbouring city, and powerfully promoted the religious interests of both, as well by his labours in the pulpit, as his influential co-operation in various charities, and by the uniform consistency of his private character. Under any circumstances, the narrative of such a life could not fail to be instructive; and we the more regret the present scantiness of our means of gratifying public curiosity in this instance, because the tenor of such information as we possess indicates a passage through an ordeal unusually varied and unusually trying. Mr. Roberts's comparatively permanent residence in these parts commenced a few years before the termination of the last century, at which time he was an object of very general attraction, partly for his talents as a preacher, which were then becoming matured, and partly, we must presume, for the novel spectacle of a Wesleyan itinerant surrounded with the appendages of worldly affluence, and distinguished by an elegance of mind and of accomplishments which would have been an ornament to the highest fortune. It was no obscure proof of the solid quality of his mental constitution and spiritual gifts, that, in a situation exposing its tenant so directly both to invidious and seductive influences, he maintained both the affection and esteem of his brethren.

“Hospitable, affable, and simple in his private conduct; laborious, steady, and zealous in his ministerial and other duties; he exerted himself with equal energy and acceptance among colliers and peasants, as before the opulent and refined, and was a valuable servant of the itinerancy in departments where the union of talent and worldly respectability is sought for. No surer criterion of the state of his heart during the period of external prosperity need be cited, than the fact of his intimate union of spirit with two men of so decided character as the late Dr. Coke and Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., who were more attached to him than

perhaps to any other man. It will be in the recollection of many, that, when the former died in 1813, on his voyage to introduce the Wesleyan mission into India, his friend was selected to preach his funeral sermon in King-street chapel in this city; when the intense interest of the occasion was manifested by the concourse of the most dense assemblage ever collected within those walls.

“But the ‘palmy’ state of fortune was not the only probation through which this ‘servant of Jesus Christ’ had to pass; nor was it unvaried while it lasted. In the earlier years of an itinerant ministry, commencing about forty-nine years ago, he appears to have ‘endured hardships’ with the hardiest of the ‘good soldiers’ of that day, and was encouragingly distinguished by the venerable Wesley. The frequent visitations of death in his domestic circle, or circles, (for he was twice a widower, and often bereaved of children,) were, to feelings acute as his, most trying. The vicissitudes of what is called ‘fortune’ were apparently much less so.

“But, indeed, the equanimity with which the complicated afflictions of his latter years were undergone was a continual occasion of sober surprise and useful reflection to his friends. Broken health, gradual extinction of sight; its partial restoration by a painful operation on both eyes; misplaced confidence; the death of a son, about to enter professional life, with cherished and promising expectations; more recently the death of another son in the bloom of wedded and parental felicity and professional hopes;—these were severe trials, sustained by this excellent man with a serenity quite inexplicable but on Christian principles, and the more remarkable for standing in contrast with an almost fastidious delicacy of feeling, and an ardent and not unaspiring temperament. To these must be added an affliction which to a minister zealously devoted to his Master’s business, must appear less tolerable

than any other,—the tediousness of protracted decay, and comparative uselessness, while the heart and intellect are unimpaired. The whole manner of his last re-appearance at the sacramental table, several months ago, is said to have been deeply affecting. The manifestation of his feelings at that time, and on a few other public occasions, gave intimation of the quality of that support which he required and obtained in his constrained seclusion.

“ Unconnected with character, the consideration of talent in a preacher is a light thing, even while he lives ; so vital in regard of the sacred orator is the dependence of the hearer’s acquiescence upon the speaker’s consistency ; but how much more so, when he is gone to render up his account ! In other cases, talent varnishes over defects of private conduct : in this, that which is lovely and of good report in the life veils the imperfections and the beauties of intellectual structure ; and, like a well adapted dress, at once hides the one and enhances the other. During the vigour of his physical and mental powers, Mr. Roberts enjoyed some of the most enviable requisites for giving effect to pleading in any cause ; that superior beauty and graceful dignity of person and countenance, which it is more easy to depreciate afterwards, than to withstand at the time ; a memory minutely tenacious ; a perfectly ready recollection ; a pleasing and diversified range of fancy ; a natural facility of utterance, and variety of intonation. To these his exemplary industry supplied the materials for ample elucidation of whatever subject he undertook to unfold. He enforced the Christian doctrines with the authority of one who had not only examined them laboriously as a theologian, but as a scholar, philosophically ; and who felt not only their truth, but their beauty and fitness.

“ Grace, rather than power, was his characteristic ; but he was often powerful, and his gracefulness was

neat and manly. In his exordiums he used a very low tone of voice, which imposed on his hearers a necessity of breathless attention. His main explication was sometimes prolix; the natural effect of his accurate retention of an elaborate scheme, and his readiness to yield to impulse in elucidation. In application, his manner was at once fervid and correct. In week-night lectures also, and on occasions when he had levied a less severe tax than usual upon his industry in the study, the eloquence of his heart, his piety, his knowledge, and cultivation, edified and gratified every hearer.

“ In the pulpit, in society, and no less so at home, he appeared to have disciplined himself to recommend that which he regarded as the truth of Christianity, by every amiable adjunct; and, did the limits of a sketch allow, it would be a pleasing task to dilate upon his Christian liberality and amenity, compromising no principle, yet affronting no honest predilection; the delicacy of his hospitable attentions; his wonderful powers in conversation, animated, intellectual, playful, abounding in the most accurate and diversified information and the happiest allusions; his kindness to the young; the warmth of his discriminating friendship; his tenderness as a husband; his indulgence and providence as a parent. His excellencies were many; and his defects such as, perhaps, could hardly be detected by an eye strong enough to view his entire character.”

---

FROM the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, who enjoyed the intimate friendship of Mr. Roberts:—

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ My compliance with your request does not proceed from the presumptuous idea of adding any thing worthy of notice to your valuable account of his life. But, having had the pleasure of a long and intimate

acquaintance with that eminent man, and cherishing a high esteem for his memory, I am induced to subjoin to the preceding narrative a few observations on his character :—

“ To analyze the elements of character, and give a just and luminous delineation of the materials of which it is composed, is a delicate and difficult task. No subject can be more interesting to a contemplative mind, than the history of a human being in his passage through time to eternity; and if the lights and shades are so justly displayed, and the excellencies and defects so faithfully exhibited, as to enable the reader to form an accurate estimate of the individual whose portrait is before him, his knowledge will be enlarged, and his heart improved, by the contemplation.

“ The first and most important part of the character, because that which is the only true key to the whole, is religion. The religious character of our late invaluable friend, Mr. Roberts, is strongly marked in the preceding narrative. The divine grace, which in early life separated him to the service of Christ, became the great master-principle of his conduct; and continued to be the guide, and the stay, and the ornament of his truly Christian life; so that his religious course, as he advanced, became more extended and refulgent, ‘shining more and more unto the perfect day.’ He did not frequently introduce his own spiritual joys and sorrows into religious discourse; and, perhaps from constitutional temperament, refrained from even making the interior exercises of his mind on divine subjects the topic of ordinary conversation. His religion, however, could not be hid. It was made manifest in its fruits, in gentleness, humility, benevolence, and a uniform holiness of life. Indeed, the foundation of all these virtues which adorned his character, was laid in Christian piety. It was this which originated his motives, animated his affections, regulated his pursuits, and formed

the plastic soul of his entire conduct. It will be evident to those who, by the perusal of the preceding pages, are become sufficiently acquainted with this part of his character that he was 'a faithful man, and feared God above many.' During a considerable portion of his life he was prevented by the feeble and delicate state of his health from enjoying the full work of the ministry. This distressed him; and though he bowed with submission to the mysterious dispensation of his heavenly Father, he was occasionally liable to great depression of spirits. Under these afflictive visitations, religion was his only support and consolation, and led him to be more fervent and incessant in his supplications at a throne of grace.

“ Thus his afflictions, though they occasionally disqualified him for the discharge of his ministerial functions, proved a source of great spiritual improvement; and brought him to a more profound knowledge of himself, and a more deep and humble confidence in the veracity and faithfulness of God, as pledged in the atonement of Christ. His personal character derived its complexion, whether of gloom or of brightness, from the interior conflicts with which he was exercised; and, as none but his bosom friends were permitted to know the state of his mind, or to share his secret joys and sorrows, they only could fully understand and appreciate his character. It will, however, be acknowledged by all who were acquainted with him, that it consisted of a combination of amiable and pleasing qualities. The gentleness and amenity of his private manners, and the sincerity and tenderness of his friendship, secured to him the warm esteem and attachment of the various circles in which he moved. Candour and liberality were conspicuous in his intercourse with the church.

“ He was ardently devoted to the interests and prosperity of Wesleyan Methodism; but his affection was extended to all who 'love our Lord Jesus Christ in

sincerity,' with many of whom he maintained Christian friendship. His conversation was rich and edifying, and happily exempt from those eccentricities of genius, and those sallies of wit, which give pain to the tender and susceptible mind.

“He possessed formidable powers of satire; and it was obviously a work of considerable difficulty, and requiring incessant watchfulness, to restrain those powers within the bounds of kindness. With him character was sacred. However brilliantly the flame of his humour might burn, it was gentle and lambent. No one was injured by it. Often, very often, have I been struck with this pleasing trait in the social character of our beloved friend. I witnessed, with delight, the exhilarating influence of his conversation, seasoned with the salt of wisdom and piety, ministering grace to the hearers.

“The literary and intellectual character of Mr. Roberts will be perceived in those fragments of his writings which are now presented to the public.

“At a very early age he engaged in the earnest pursuit of Christian truth, and continued till the close of his valuable life to increase his literary and theological stores, by careful study, and persevering diligence. He was endowed with a capacity for high attainments in science, and might, had he so determined, have arrived at literary eminence; but his powers of mind and body were consecrated to the sole purpose of doing good. Few men, however, in similar circumstances, have more extensively availed themselves of those sources of information on moral and religious subjects, which are furnished by the learning and industry of the wise and good of all ages. He gave himself to reading and meditation, extending his inquiries beyond the circle of his own profession, and enriching his mind with the stores of general literature.

“But theology, in its various branches, was his

favourite study. He viewed things not so much in their separate existences, as in their mutual relations and remote connexions. With him truth was one and undivided,—‘the truth as it is in Jesus.’ The various doctrines of the Gospel were not, in his discourses, disunited or warped to serve the peculiarities of a system, but exhibited in their beauteous harmony and collective glory, as the grand central luminary by whose rays the path of peace is illuminated from age to age, and from generation to generation; till all the nations of the earth shall walk in its expansive light. In studying the sacred Scriptures, it is peculiarly desirable that we should on no occasion depart from the just and natural import of the phrases which there occur; or, for party purposes, disjoint and isolate the great doctrines they reveal; but employ them according to the will of their great Author, in the relation and proportion of their several parts, as the instrument which we are to apply to the instruction and salvation of man.

“The ministry of Mr. Roberts was replete with sound and scriptural instructions. He belonged to that class of minds which may be denominated ‘imaginative.’ He possessed, in a very eminent degree, the power of imagination, and could illustrate his subject by felicities of figure, and the splendour of imagery; yet in his public discourses there was much more of what he valued far higher, in both himself and others, and what must, by all the best judges, be regarded as the highest of mental and ministerial endowments,—intellectual power, nourished and strengthened by the word of God, and consecrated to spiritual usefulness. In the preaching of our departed friend, the fire of genius occasionally appeared, glowing and shining in the most striking and beautiful imagery, but always pregnant with vital qualities, and employed for the purpose of illustrating important truth. He never attempted by any arts or tricks to secure admiration to himself. He had, in

one single view, the great object for which he entered the pulpit; and with a mind deeply imbued with the Spirit of Christ, and animated with an intense desire to save souls, he advanced straight forward to its accomplishment. His whole style, and manner, and address, produced an instantaneous conviction of his sincerity.

“The wisdom of this eminent and venerated minister of Christ was displayed in the evangelical character of his preaching. To him may be applied, in a subordinate sense, as one of the under shepherds of the flock, the descriptive language of the prophet concerning the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls: ‘He stood and fed the flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.’ But he always stood beneath the cross, and employed, with impressive and fervent eloquence, the attractive influence of its hallowing doctrines to draw sinners to Him who hung upon it. Redemption was his favourite theme, and his ministry was enriched with pure evangelical truth, directed to every purpose for which the Christian ministry was instituted, and accompanied with the gracious unction of the Holy Spirit. The impression produced by his sermons during their delivery would, in all probability, have been more powerful and intense, had he not indulged in a too minute series of divisions; a mode of preaching more favourable to beauty of arrangement, and accuracy of language, than to copiousness of expression. He was seldom excited to ardour of emotion and utterance, and never became impetuous; but the absence of vehemence was amply compensated for, by a certain tone of kindness and a milder pathos, more expressive of benevolence to his hearers. To the sanctifying and saving efficacy of his ministry, hundreds, however, can bear testimony, who will be his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.”

Extracted from the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for February, 1832, under the article "Recent Deaths."

"JAN. 10th.—At Bristol, the Rev. Thomas Roberts, A.M. Mr. Roberts was called to the work of an itinerant preacher in the Methodist Connexion, by the Rev. John Wesley, in the year 1786. He was first stationed four or five years in Ireland, where his ministerial labours were owned of God, and highly approved by the people; and afterwards he travelled, and preached 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' with great acceptance and usefulness, about fifteen years, principally in Bristol, Bath, Downend, Banwell, and the principality of Wales. At length, being much afflicted, he became a supernumerary preacher, and resided sometimes in Bristol, and sometimes in Bath. But though he did not take a Circuit, his heart was in the work, and he was ever ready to preach the Gospel of Jesus when his health was sufficient for public duty. Mr. Roberts was a steady and uniform advocate for Methodism, both in its doctrines and discipline; and the preachers, most of whom he esteemed and loved, were his constant friends and companions. He was a man of sound judgment, and of a fine imagination. The former appears in the sermons that he published; and the latter in his poetical compositions. For many years he was afflicted with violent spasms, and his sufferings in those attacks were extreme. But his last illness, which was a gradual decay of nature, was of a mild character, and his last moments were calm and tranquil. To his friends and family he expressed entire confidence in the merits of Jesus, his God and Saviour; but he saw and felt, as he observed to me, that 'it is an awful thing, indeed, to pass out of a state of probation into an unchangeable state in the eternal world.' The last time I visited him I put this question to him: 'Is all well? and are your prospects of heaven bright and cheering?' He replied

in a feeble tone of voice, 'O yes, O yes!' Once, after a short slumber, he said to his family, 'Am I here yet?' and, thinking that their prayers kept him back from his heavenly home, he begged that they would not pray for his life; and when he was assured that they had given him up, and were resigned to the Divine will, he seemed quite satisfied. He was so extremely exhausted for some time previous to his death, that he could not often speak so as to be heard; and his departure was so calm and quiet, that no one knew, though several were watching around him, when he breathed his last. Mr. Roberts was a man of considerable literary attainments; an able minister of the Gospel; a sincere follower of Jesus Christ; an affectionate husband; an indulgent parent; a faithful friend; a pleasant companion; and a man of honour and integrity. His manners were those of a gentleman; his conduct that of a genuine Christian; and he will long be remembered, with warm affection, by his numerous friends. J. E."

Extracted from the Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference in 1832, from the brief record of the Ministers who had died that year:—

THOMAS ROBERTS, M.A. He sought the Lord and obtained mercy in early life; and, believing he had a Divine call, began to preach the Gospel when he was very young. In the year 1786, the Rev. John Wesley sent him out as an Itinerant Preacher, and appointed him to travel in Ireland, where he laboured about five years with considerable success, and with the entire esteem of the people. Afterwards he travelled in Bristol, Bath, Banwell, Downend, and some of the Circuits in South Wales, greatly beloved, and generally useful. About twenty years ago, being much afflicted, he became a supernumerary preacher, and remained on that list to the end of his life; but he still laboured diligently in the work while he was able and had oppor-

67  
tunity. For many years he was a great sufferer ; and his last illness was a gradual and gentle decay, in which he was graciously supported and kept in perfect peace. Relying on the all-sufficient merit of his Saviour, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, he quietly fell asleep in Jesus, January 10th, 1832, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and in the forty-sixth year of his ministry. Mr. Roberts had a superior mind, well cultivated, and richly stored with useful knowledge. He had also a generous heart, and a liberal hand ; and his general conversation was such as became the Gospel of Christ. To him the words of the Psalmist may be appropriately applied: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

SERMONS,  
AND  
SKETCHES OF SERMONS.



SERMONS,  
AND  
SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

---

SERMON I.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE SOUTH WALES DISTRICT MEETING, JUNE 12TH, 1811; IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE REJECTION OF LORD SIDMOUTH'S BILL FOR LIMITING THE TOLERATION ACT.

---

*Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Isaiah lxvi. 5.*

“MAN,” says the Roman orator, “is distinguished from the brute, by possessing a capacity for religion.” To cultivate the moral principle, is man's greatest glory and highest interest. His indispensable duty requires him to employ all the means heaven has favoured him with, that he may make this improvement. For the proper use of those means, he must be accountable at the final judgment; and woe unto him if he has either neglected them, or permitted any created power to deprive him of their exercise, thereby merging the man in the brute. When the accuser of the brethren affirmed, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will

he give for his life," he spoke in character ; he considered man as a mere animal, or, if possessing any portion of religion, as being that degree, which (to use the expression of Dr. South) "is only skin-deep." The faithful and true Witness adopts another language : "He that loveth his life, shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." Myriads in the Christian church have "loved not their lives unto the death," rather than prostitute their consciences, or suffer truth to be dethroned in her sovereign empire of the mind. For the dominion over conscience, the Seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, from the time of their first encounter in Paradise, have been ever since contending. Those who have impiously committed the government of their consciences to the brood of the serpent, have, it is true, avoided the "pains and penalties" of persecution ; those who have preferred a loyal adherence to Christ, have sometimes been differently circumstanced ; but always, in the result, their God, whom they served, made them more than conquerors. Nor, mean time, during the arduous conflict, does he fail to animate the faithful by encouraging promises of present aid, and inviolable assurances of future triumph. Among these, the important address in the text is to be ranked. Its discussion will lead us to examine, by the light of his word, and the assistance of his Spirit, the subjects—and the nature of the address—with the sentiments it is calculated to inspire.

I. The subjects of the address are described as those who "tremble at the word of the Lord."—The word of God may be considered, as both written, and ministerial. The written word is the divinely-inspired volume. Holy men of God penned it under the plenary inspiration and immediate guidance of the Spirit. This word, contained in

the Old and New Testaments, is divided into the law, and the Gospel. The law proclaims the will and authority of the Supreme Being, as the legislator and governor of the universe. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is just and good." It is the unspotted mirror of the Divine nature, the full manifestation of the moral perfections of the Deity, the permanent rule which binds to perfect, undeviating obedience, all the rational beings in existence. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Its essential purity and comprehensive requirements give us to see how that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." It is the office of the law to judge and condemn. But it is not in the nature nor province of law, whether human or divine, to proceed on any other principles than those of rigorous judicial rectitude. Law knows nothing of clemency. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." Hence is perceived the infinite benefit of the Gospel, the second part of the written word. It is significantly styled, "the glad tidings." The gracious display of God's ineffable love, in the gift of his only-begotten Son, for the redemption of the world, is there exhibited to the view of admiring men and angels. There, through the Saviour's atoning sacrifice, mercy, consistent with justice and propriety, is seen illustriously glorified in the pardon of sin; and there, through his prevailing advocacy, grace, attended with omnipotent power, is beheld effectually operating in the renovation and eternal redemption of all "who obey the Gospel."—The ministerial word is more ancient than the written. Among the antediluvians, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was a minister of the word; and Noah was a preacher of righteousness, who preached one hundred and twenty years, to those disembodied human spirits, that are now imprisoned in the invisible world. The ministerial word was main-

tained throughout the subsequent ages. In the fulness of the time, the great Preacher himself, "who spake as never man spake," made his long-expected appearance; and by him, as the Head of the church, provision is made for the continuance of the ministry until the consummation of all things. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, for the work of the ministry," as the ordinary means of maintaining the interests of religion among mankind. The written word of God is justly denominated "the sword of the Spirit." But it is drawn from the scabbard by the experienced preacher; and, wielded with an unerring hand, proves itself to be "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

"The word of the Lord," both written and ministerial, is designed, in the striking figure of prophecy, to "take hold" of us. But many disregard it entirely. Some despise it through speculative, others through practical, infidelity. "When I called, none did answer: when I spake, they did not hear." (Isai. lxiv. 4.) Some will not search the Scriptures. Others, if they read the Bible, do not consider themselves interested in its contents. Their indifferent conduct justifies the truth of that ancient complaint, which was made by the prophet in the name of the Almighty: "I have written to him the great things of my law; but they were counted as a strange thing." The most terrible threatenings awaken no serious concern in such a character, though "the devils believe and tremble." Many reject the ministerial word, by contemning, persecuting, and, if they can, silencing its preachers, and prohibiting its propagation. Yet are there some "who tremble at the word of the Lord." The Scripture describes principles by effects. Trembling is an involuntary motion of the body, occasioned

by a powerful excitement of the passions, chiefly those of the unpleasant kind, such as fear, dismay, terror. Sometimes, in Scripture, trembling is likewise considered as indicating the sentiment of reverence towards God. In each acceptation, as importing both fear and reverence, it is descriptive of the subjects of this address.

“They tremble at the word of the Lord,” through fearful apprehension of the awful threatenings denounced against sin.—They tremble on account of *themselves*. Believing the Divine testimony, filled with godly sorrow, impelled by anxious fear, and at the same time evangelically encouraged by the precious promises, “they flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope of the Gospel.” Thus Saul of Tarsus, when “apprehended” by the Lord Jesus, trembling, inquired, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” and was led to the knowledge of Christ crucified: thus the Philippian jailor cried out, trembling, “What must I do to be saved?” and was directed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: and thus, when “Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled;” though, like too many, he unhappily wished to defer repentance to “a more convenient season.” These people are described in the context, as “poor” and “contrite;” the genuine character of all who have truly repented. Nor is this disposition of a mere temporary duration; it is wrought into the very habit of their minds; it is uniformly evinced by their “working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.”—They tremble on account of *others*. Religion awakens all the sensibilities of the human heart; it leads us to love our neighbour as ourselves, to strive by all the means in our power to promote his salvation. Religion also excites to sorrow, on account of the impiety and incorrigibleness of sinners. Hence St. Paul passionately exclaimed, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for

Israel is, that they might be saved. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." In like manner, religion produces ingenuous fear and dread, at the prospect of the inevitable doom awaiting the impenitent. The devout Psalmist felt this fearful apprehension when he declared, "I am horribly afraid for the ungodly that forsake thy law." Yes, religion inclines its sympathizing votaries to entertain serious alarm for the infatuated "fools who make a mock at sin," to shudder for the vile ingrates who despise the riches of mercy, to tremble for the presuming rebels who insult the Majesty of heaven! Secure themselves in the ark of salvation, they fear the flood which is about to be brought on "the world of the ungodly." With dreadful emotion, they hear the terrible denunciation that flows from the lip of the Eternal. Well do the righteous know the certainty of its fulfilment in the punishment of the wicked, if it be not averted in time, by their believing it, and trembling for themselves.

They "tremble at the word of the Lord," through awful reverence of the purity and holiness, of the majesty and grandeur, of the Deity. "Holy and reverend is his name." They are aware that "angels tremble while they gaze" on his unapproachable glories. To the word, whether the inspired volume, or that ministry which is "according to the oracles of God," good men feel a reverend regard, being sensible that every promise has its counterpart in an opposite threatening, every plaudit its opposite reproof, every encouragement its opposite caution. Therefore they "rejoice with trembling." Although "the spirit of glory rests upon them," they "fear the Lord and his goodness." Even while reviewing the complete perfection of their Christian privileges, though they "rejoice with joy

unspeakable," yet they say, with the primitive believers, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." Such are the subjects: Let us examine,

## II. The nature of the address.

This is to be obtained by analyzing its terms. Behold the prophet filling the office of a herald, and requiring this people to attend to the word of Jehovah, who, by his eternal Spirit, thus addresses them: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word!" He proceeds, in the name of Jehovah, to deliver his important message: "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Here are four parts: the description of the enemies; their imperious conduct; their seemingly pious pretext; and the final issue of their persecution.

1. The enemies are not such as commonly rank under that character; they are not a foreign hostile people; they are not professors of another religion, for Hindoos and Mohammedans do not persecute Christians. The Jews indeed were cruel persecutors of their brethren, who embraced Christianity; but they did it ignorantly, believing that the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, and the consequent renunciation of the Levitical ceremonies, could only be considered as impious apostasy from the institutions they knew to have been established by heavenly appointment. To bring this interesting matter home to "our own business and bosoms:" the enemies are not aliens, but your brethren. You must look for them at home, among Protestants! among those who profess the same reformed religion with yourselves! that very Protestant-

ism which is founded on freedom of thought! This cruel incongruity it is, that aggravates the mischief, that extends the intolerable evil to the greatest possible degree of endurance; but which elevates the agents to the highest eminence of egregious celebrity. The Redeemer himself, when he spoke by the Spirit of prophecy, made a similar circumstance the subject of sorrowful complaint. He thought it the bitterest ingredient in his own cup of woe. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; but it was thou, my companion, and mine own familiar friend."

2. The conduct of these enemies is described, first, in its origin, which is "hatred:" "Your brethren that hated you." Hatred is a passion generally excited by evil, real or imagined, in its object; otherwise, this passion, at the best unreasonable, becomes perfectly absurd. Such is the present case, wherein absurdity has attained its acmé. For here, with what evident propriety may the sympathizing remonstrance of the afflicted king of Israel be appropriated!—"These sheep, what have they done?" Why, they presumed to "tremble at God's word!" This is all! Truly, to be hated for such a crime, would be marvellous, if the Bible had not previously solved the paradox, by saying, "Marvel not, if the world hate you."

The conduct of these enemies is described, secondly, by their actions: They "cast you out for my name's sake." The pious in every age have met with this unworthy treatment. The great Master of the family never palliated the difficulties to which a faithful attachment to him would inevitably expose his servants. He prepares them to relinquish the comforts of domestic life: "I am not come to send peace, but a sword; a man's foes are they of his own household." He prepares them to forego the pleasures of social life: "They shall hate you, and separate you from their company, and

shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." He gives them to understand they will be deprived of church privileges: "They shall put you out of the synagogues;" and when you are driven away, be strangely censured for going, and, with eminent perversion of logic, be calumniated as schismatics and separatists, by the authors of schism and separation. He forewarns them, that, under a cloak of juridical authority, they will be treated with most iniquitous inhumanity: "They shall bring you before kings and councils," not to "execute justice," nor to "maintain truth," but to cast you out of the protection of the law; or, when the principle of the law does not exclude you, they will strive to wrest its provisions to their purpose; or, if it be found inflexible, they will probably seek to obtain other statutes, capable in their administration of accomplishing their injurious design.

3. And the reason of this conduct, so flagrantly manifest, is here declared by the Lord himself, to be hostility to him. "For my name's sake, they cast you out" of their houses, out of their synagogues, out of the protection of the law; because you conscientiously and loyally adhere to me, believing and obeying my word. "The world hath hated them," says the Saviour, "because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me."

Far different is the pretext they assign for their conduct. "They say, Let the Lord be glorified." They gravely declare, that it is for no ill purpose they let slip the demon of persecution. It is from pure devotedness to God's glory, that they afflict his rational offspring. No motive impels them, but such as righteous heaven most honourably sanctions. They are especially inspired by "zeal without innovation," for the credit of Christianity. They are solicitous to "maintain the

purity of the Gospel." No object under heaven is pursued, but to "preserve religion from degradation;" that "ignorant and immoral persons," presuming, "unauthorized," to explain the Bible, and pray for their king and country, may be gently restrained, and the due order of things restored, as it was before the present melancholy era, in which the exercise of private judgment, and the free discussion of religious topics, have nearly supplanted all the sober maxims of wisdom and prudence, transmitted to us by our enlightened ancestors. What a pretext! "Ignorant and immoral persons!" Where are they to be found? Will the calumniated flinch from a comparison with the calumniators? I trow not. "Unauthorized teachers!" What mean they? Unauthorized by the Holy Ghost? What better evidence do they themselves give of a Divine call? Unauthorized by the Bible? The proof is dared. Unauthorized by the law of the land? The assertion is denied. Unauthorized by them? So are they by the others.

Yet it is not unlikely, that the occupiers of the front ground, who avowedly support those measures, may have sincerely said, "Let the Lord be glorified." St. Paul informs us, he verily thought, in the days of his ignorance, that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Fired by zeal without knowledge, he accepted the commission of the chief priests; and the execution of affairs being left to his prompt fidelity, he judged it, not merely harmless officiousness, but a deed of godly heroism, extremely meritorious, to "hale men and women to prison," who presumed to attend the preaching of poor ambulatory apostles, retainers of the itinerant Galilean. Him too they had wantonly aspersed: "Whence hath this man learning? Is not this the carpenter's son?" The common people hear him gladly: "But this people, who know not the law, are cursed;" that is, "They are the

*canaille* : vulgar, ignorant fanatics ; whose opinion is not worthy of our regard." This "trial of cruel mockings," however, comes infinitely short of the treatment our Saviour has given his disciples to expect : "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service."

4. But mark the final issue of persecution, in the interposition of Jehovah himself for the joyful deliverance of his people, and the shameful discomfiture of their foes : "He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Behold, God arises to plead his own cause ! He will convince the adversary, that "the apple of his eye" cannot be touched with impunity. "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle ? I would go through them, I would burn them together."

Sometimes, the Lord quickly appears. Mark the case of the apostles. Their beloved Master was about to leave them, and at the soul-rending prospect of their orphan condition, "sorrow filled their hearts ;" but he tenderly consoled them with the assurance of his re-appearance, to their unspeakable comfort, and to the utter confusion of their foes. "Ye now therefore have sorrow, and the world rejoiceth ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." How strikingly was this verified within the space of a few days only, when Christ arose from the dead ; and yet more fully after the lapse of a few weeks, when, at the Pentecost, he plenteously "endued them with power from on high," and filled them with the richest consolations of the blessed Comforter !

Frequently, the Almighty sees it proper to defer his intervention. He suffers his people to be involved in imminent dangers. He leaves them to almost insuperable woes. Now their thorny path becomes altogether impenetrable : now the dilemma is inexplicable : and now the critical moment is advanced ; when lo ! it is

astonishingly seized by the finger of God, and made the signal opportunity of his immediate interposition. During the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, the God of their fathers seemed totally to discard their descendants. But had he violated the oath he swore unto Abraham? No! At length he descends. From the burning but unconsumable bush, the emblem of the persecuted church, he declares, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them." Ere long, he subjected them to another trial; and when there appeared no way to escape, he inverted the very laws of nature, to open a passage for his people. Conducted by him, they marched through the channels of the deep; and the pursuing foe he overwhelmed with the mighty waters. To this remarkable phenomenon, to this stupendous miracle, we are frequently referred by the omnipotent Author, as if, not only to remind us of the power employed at all times in behalf of his people, but also to intimate the similarity of their situation. The literal event is typical of future circumstances. In every age, the Israel of God may look up to him for a similar, evident, and triumphant deliverance. The song of the Lamb is the counterpart of the song of Moses. In effect, have not even we heard it said, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you this day?" Even for us, too, the miraculous rod hath divided the yielding waves; we, too, have securely passed the watery deep; we, too, have seen how "the Lord looked through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drove on heavily;" we have seen how "the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea," where they sank like lead to the bottom of the ocean, "so that there remained not so much as one of them." We, too, have

cause to say, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea!"

On some particular occasions, God eminently appears, to the joyful deliverance of his people, and to the shameful discomfiture of their enemies, by turning their hostile weapons against the persecutors themselves. Heaven seems to glory in the administration of a retaliating providence, by taking the wise in their own craftiness, by involving them in such a manner, that they mar their own plots. "He that sitteth in the heavens holds them in derision," while, by the instrumentality of their own hands, they entirely defeat their ill-concerted schemes, and fall ignominiously into the pit they digged for the innocent. How plainly may this be perceived in an instance which occurred in the latter period of the Jewish history! Haman, a favoured courtier, conceiving he had cause for being offended with one poor captive Jew, who, though in bondage, possessed an independent mind, obtained from the sovereign of the Medio-Persian empire, an irreversible decree, that all the Jews in his dominions should be put to death. Over poor Mordecai, the innocent cause of Haman's abominable design, the triumph was intended to be pre-eminent. A gallows, fifty cubits high, was erected by the special orders of Haman, on which to hang him. As to the Jewish people in general, being no otherwise implicated but as belonging to the same nation, there were no particular directions issued, no mode specifically appointed for their massacre. In their case all the subjects in the "one hundred and twenty seven provinces, from Ethiopia to India," were merely commissioned by post letters, "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The posts went out; and the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city

Shushan was perplexed." "Perplexed, but not in despair," is the motto of the church of God. And now behold his finger! The loyal fidelity of Mordecai, evinced in a particular case which happened some time previously, is providentially brought to the monarch's notice; in consequence of which, the extirpating decree is immediately superseded by another of an import its very reverse. The whole train of providence is changed. The assassins fall beneath the hands of the Jews; Haman hangs on the gallows erected by himself; and Mordecai is "the man whom the king delighteth to honour!" In like manner, Heaven turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness; who, presently "saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself,"—"to save the executioner the trouble," as was quaintly remarked by an ancient episcopal commentator.

But the Supreme Being does not deem it proper always to interpose in an obvious way, for the deliverance of his people, and the punishment of their persecutors. Consistently with his moral government of the world, he sees it expedient to defer the principal part of his retributive acts till the day of general judgment, when "the many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The lamp of the wicked will then be put out in eternal darkness; but "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Then, indeed, "the Lord will appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed!" What unutterable bliss will be the portion of the righteous! What inconceivable horror the lot of the wicked! The joy of the former, immense, perfect, eternal, communicated from the fulness of essential felicity, in the beatific presence and immediate fruition of the Deity! The shame of the latter, as abundant, as complete, and

O! equal in its duration, to be suffered in the infernal company of "the devil and his angels!"

Review, my brethren, the vast import of this address. Is it not worthy of the Infinite Being by whom it is given? If he please to accomplish it in the present life, he possesses sufficient ability. His omnipresent eye surveys all circumstances; his omnipotent hand embraces all means; his sovereign will operates on all instruments; his directing finger can turn the current of all events. "The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." But if he delays the vindication of his friends, and the punishment of his foes, yet "the day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed will come." Does not revelation assure us, that, to effect the purpose of this important address, the justice and truth of "God, who cannot lie," are immutably pledged? What is the Bible, in fact, but the history of God's moral empire? what, but an authentic narrative of his conduct, for his friends, and against his foes? Be it admitted, that the administration of Providence is partial and incomplete; will this concession afford a plea for infidelity? Rather, there is greater cause to believe, that a general judgment will fill up the chasm. And that this will unquestionably be the case, the striking instances of providential intervention which we sometimes perceive, yield to every reflecting mind a very convincing and consoling intimation. Struck by remarkable events, we have been led to exclaim, "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, he is a God who judgeth in the earth!" We must therefore believe, that, sooner or later, either during the process of time, or when time shall be no longer, "the Judge of all the earth will certainly do right." For the improvement of this subject, let us examine,

III. The sentiments which this address is calculated to inspire.

We must, I think, feel the warmest sentiments of delight and admiration, arising from the conviction of God's faithfulness, and care of his people. We have seen how they may, for a while, be "destitute, afflicted, tormented;" but even then they are not abandoned by their heavenly Friend. His consolatory promise can calm every rising fear, and give them to "rejoice in tribulation."

We are justified in maintaining confidence in the Lord for the future. Is it said, "He will appear to your joy?" In every possible circumstance, faith will repose itself upon this immutable promise. Moreover, when, in addition to his faithful engagements, we have been repeatedly favoured with tokens of his manifest performances, we may well adopt the exulting language of apostles and prophets: "He hath delivered, he doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation. If God be for us, who can be against us?" We may confidently depend on that promise, which is given to the church as a right of inheritance: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall arise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."

Have we, at any time, experienced a signal and ample fulfilment of the text? Has the Lord appeared to our joy, and to the shame of our adversaries? Then, let us learn to enjoy our triumph with Christian moderation. As, I hope, we felt at no time a vindictive temper; so let us guard against that pride of conquest which generally characterizes the worldly victor. Remember, the conquest was not achieved by your prowess. The Almighty who "appeared to your joy," he obtained the victory! And remember likewise, the vanquished foes are "your brethren." If they disown

you, and “cast you out,” think not that their unkind renunciation of fraternal feeling exonerates you from discharging the duty of Christians towards them. Were their conduct so flagrant, that the utmost stretch of Christian candour would not permit you to say, with your dying Lord, “They know not what they do;” yet you can pray, with Stephen, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!”

If, by God’s timely interposition, we have heretofore obtained a singular deliverance, let us hereafter maintain a holy jealousy over ourselves, lest our sins should provoke him to give us over as a prey to the teeth of the enemy. May we never forget the peculiar character of the people who are the subjects of this address; they “tremble at his word.” Therefore, let us be humble and circumspect. The same power that has been wonderfully employed for us, may, in a manner equally unexpected, be enlisted against us; and probably will, if we walk not humbly with our God. To the authoritative voice of revelation, may we therefore continue to pay a devout and conscientious respect. Do we affirm, that the Sacred Scripture alone has authority to enjoin religious duties? that it prescribes the only proper motives to moral actions, pointing out the only manner of rightly performing them? and urging their performance by irresistible arguments, in their nature essentially just, in their influence uniformly effectual? Then let our general deportment exhibit a perfect correspondence with the revealed rule of duty. / Let us evince that undeniable fact, that the religion recommended by the Bible never fails to lead all real Christians to the practice of “whatsoever is lovely and of good report;” teaching them to “render unto all their dues: fear to whom fear is due, honour to whom honour.” Let us prove to the conviction of every candid spectator, how that genuine religion founds loyalty on a moral and sacred principle, instructing us to “render

unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," as we render "unto God the things which are God's;" and, on the same inviolable principle, to discharge the duties of justice, benevolence, and charity, towards every child of man.

If, in any instance, we have been rescued from hostile attacks, we should be shamefully criminal were we not henceforth to exercise prudent watchfulness; especially over those interests which have been the objects of assault. Perhaps, the enemies do not slumber; perhaps, they only shut their eyes. Do they affirm, that their ill success was not the result of defective measures, nor of deficient influence, but merely because the attack was "ill-timed?" Then, undeniably, it will become you to be sober and vigilant for the future. Granted, that "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain;" yet, if the Lord keep the city, it is the watchman's duty to be awake, and at his post. God's promise does not supersede man's duty. To exemplify the propriety of this prudent watchfulness: have we, to instance in one case, beheld our religious liberties, as legally secured at the glorious Revolution, lately exposed to imminent peril, but most opportunely rescued and maintained by an act of Providence? How imperative then is our duty to keep a good look out in future? a duty impressed upon us by a thousand motives of the greatest moment! Do we venerate the sacred memory of our forefathers, who so nobly struggled to obtain those liberties for us? Have we due regard for posterity? Do we love our king and country, whose honour and prosperity are blended with our religious freedom? Do we desire to see the cause of religion promoted? mankind made universally happy? and the empire of the Redeemer extended "from Indus to the pole?" Then, beware of inattention to those interests which were confided to you by the Divine mercy, and which the jealous eye of Providence

has always watched over intently, as the most distinguished blessings that Heaven has bestowed on man.

Finally: the subject is calculated to excite in us the sentiment of heartfelt gratitude to our great Deliverer. We have seen his word fulfilled; fulfilled in a manner so evidently demonstrative, so signally conspicuous, that the evidence of the fact, and the admiration it awakens, are equally felt by all spectators: friends and foes alike are penetrated with conviction, and lost in wonder! "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Gratitude is likewise due to those illustrious instruments whom the Almighty employed to vindicate his righteous cause. But their glories, howsoever transcendent, their assistances, however opportune, are derived from the great "Father of lights." To him, therefore, shall our praises for ever aspire. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give we glory. Our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are escaped."

---

## APPENDIX.

"THE Swansea and Glamorgan Committee for protecting liberty of conscience," voted their thanks to his Grace the archbishop of Canterbury, his Grace the duke of Norfolk, the most noble the marquis of Lansdowne, the right honourable earls Stanhope, Grey, Moira, and Rosslyn, and lords Erskine and Holland,

for the distinguished manner in which they maintained the cause of religious liberty, in the House of Peers, on Tuesday, the twenty-first of May. The following letter from lord Erskine, in reply to the secretary of "the Swansea Committee," was read towards the close of the preceding discourse. By his lordship's permission, it is now printed, with another letter to the secretary, from earl Stanhope.

LONDON, *June 10th*, 1811.

SIR,

MY business for some days in the country has prevented me from sooner receiving and acknowledging the honour of your obliging communication, from the Swansea and Glamorgan Committee. They, and every denomination of Christians, may always depend upon every effort in support of religious liberty, which my station in the country may enable me to employ. So far from its being fit for the legislature to abridge the Acts of Toleration, it ought to be matter of deep regret, that the laws of any Christian country should at any time have sanctioned a penal system of restraint, in manifest repugnance to the origin, and destructive to the progress, of the Gospel; and that a Reformed church, so long persecuted, should ever have consented to accept the aid of persecution for its support!

I have the honour to be,

Your faithful, humble servant,

ERSKINE.

MR. LA BEAUME, *Secretary*, &c.

BERNER-STREET, *June 10th*, 1811.

SIR,

I HAVE received your obliging letter of the 4th instant, enclosing the Resolutions of the Committee at Swansea for protecting Liberty of Conscience, and I request you to communicate my most cordial thanks to those gentlemen, for the favourable notice they have

taken of the manner in which I have merely discharged my duty. My very soul revolts at the idea of toleration, which seems to imply the right to be intolerant ; and I never, for one, will grant even religious liberty ; which ought not to be granted, but to be recognised, as an unalienable right of all mankind.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most faithful servant,

STANHOPE.

MR. LA BEAUME, *Secretary, &c.*

To these excellent letters must be attributed the publication of the preceding discourse. The author, in fact, when he reluctantly occupied the pulpit, entertained no reference to the press. Nor could the sermon, in his opinion, have excited in the minds of those ministers and others, who patiently listened to its delivery, the most distant desire to see it survive its hour. But they heard those letters ; they saw the unalienable right of religious liberty maintained, in terms the most cogent and most perspicuous ; maintained, too, in the face of the world, by the most respectable authorities of this enlightened age. An association of ideas, it is presumed, must have combined the interest of the general subject discussed by the preacher, with those pleasurable feelings which were powerfully awakened by the sentiments so admirably expressed in the letters. For what appeal, more rational and animating, could be made both to their judgments and feelings, as men and as Christians ? If, indeed, it had been intended to print the sermon, the preacher might, and probably would, have judged it expedient to make something more than incidental allusions to the important subject, which has lately occupied the public mind. He might have deemed it his duty, to bring it forward in the most explicit manner. He might have given his thoughts on Christian

freedom; in what degree he conceived the late projected legislative interference to have intrenched on the principle of the toleration, and on the sacred liberty of the Gospel; what are the unparalleled benefits resulting to society, from the free and unshackled exercise of religion; what injurious effects, fatal to Christianity itself, as well as to the wholesome laws of the land, must necessarily flow from the paramount interdict of the civil magistrate, in employing discretionary, instead of ministerial, authority. These, and other points, essentially connected, would, perhaps, have undergone an extended investigation. But, as in the occupancy of the pulpit, the author's deference having obliged him to bow submissively to the wishes of his respected brethren, in bringing forth his sermon a second time, he could conscientiously, and with becoming regard for truth, present only the same subject they requested him to publish. When he says, "the same," he means not verbally, but as near as he can recollect, not being in the habit of writing his discourses prior to their delivery. This must account, likewise, for the style. Without adventitious refinement, it is literally transferred from the pulpit to the press; which circumstance, it is hoped, will be admitted as a sufficient apology for using "great plainness of speech."

## SERMON II.

### ILLUMINATION, HELP, AND COMFORT.

PREACHED AT BATH, JULY 7TH, 1816.

---

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE following discourse was delivered at the time of rendering public thanksgiving to GOD, for the Divine blessing on an operation performed the preceding 7th of March, by which the preacher was restored to the enjoyment of sight. It was delivered under an impression of mingled feelings, of which the preacher only can form any just conception; and the only design in printing is, to gratify some near and dear connexions, who will feel deeply interested in reviewing this humble attempt to raise a grateful memorial inscribed to the glory of HIM “who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever.”

---

*The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous. Psalm cxlvi. 8.*

THE constant communications of Divine goodness, in the dispensations of Providence, we participate in common with all the human family. Were those favours duly estimated, they would enkindle sentiments of gratitude in every bosom, and inspire every tongue with strains of devout thanksgiving. When the Psalmist, contemplating the general diffusion of the Creator's bounty, uttered that expression, “The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works,” he immediately subjoined, “All thy works shall praise

thee, O Lord! and thy saints shall bless thee." The persons thus characterised, besides sharing those communications of the universal Father's benevolence, are the distinguished partakers of peculiar favours, to which they attach a higher value than to his temporal gifts; they are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." "By him, therefore, should they offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, giving thanks to his name." To the performance of this delightful duty the sweet singer of Israel, in the commencement of this Psalm, proposes to lead them, and becomes himself the precentor of the choir: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul: while I live, will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto God, while I have any being."

But in addition to the general effusion of temporal mercies, enjoyed by us as creatures; and likewise those spiritual blessings enjoyed by Christian believers; the people of God have sometimes been favoured with extraordinary manifestations of his goodness. Even we, "who are not worthy to be called saints," may have known seasons when his interposition was signally apparent. Do not some of us remember scenes of suffering, when, in the eye of every spectator, our condition appeared most afflictive? Fainting under the weight of our woes, no effort of our own could free us from its pressure; and neither lover nor friend, however tender their sympathy, could find means to mitigate our sorrow. Then it was that God undertook for us. "In his love and in his pity he redeemed us, and the angel of his presence saved us." "He delivered our soul from death, and our eyes from tears," by seizing the moment of our necessity, and making it the moment of his opportunity.

Is it possible such a signal interposition should ever be forgotten? A circumstance of this kind indelibly imprints itself upon the memory. It presents to the

vivid remembrance all its prominent features; and the retrospect fails not to impress the heart powerfully and permanently. Sooner will a whole year of unmingled satisfaction be obliterated from the tablet of memory, than the consolation obtained in one lonely night of grief. We think of the time when, benighted and bewildered, we were solitary wanderers in a pathless wilderness; we remember every timid step we took in the dark; we recall to mind our ardent wishes, which would have compounded for the least comfort, if it were but the glimmering of a taper upon our desolate path. We review the welcome appearance of the taper, and can paint it out more passionately than we can describe any of the recent three hundred and sixty-five revolutions of the glorious sun.

My brethren: it is not however to the retrospect of a glimmering taper—No! it is to the striking interpositions of “the God of all grace and consolation,” that I would fain direct your view: I would point out those manifestations of his pity and power, which peculiarly require the thankful recognition of his wonder-working hand. I therefore call upon you, and, with special cause, upon myself, to contemplate the three instances presented by the text:—“The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous.”

### I. “The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.”

God is the source of illumination. The act here ascribed to him, he is pleased to perform, first, *providentially*, in respect to the eyes of the body: sometimes by giving efficacy to healing remedies; sometimes by miracle, as recorded of our blessed Saviour, who, on many occasions, miraculously restored sight to the blind;—blending one of the most affecting instances of his benevolence, with one of the most convincing proofs of the divinity of his mission. And sometimes

sight is restored through the instrumentality of human mechanical skill, a kind of secondary miracle, by which the cause of obstructed vision is removed from the organ of sight; and even in some cases, by a portion of its delicate machinery being removed, and its service supplied by superinducing the external aid of a simple artificial instrument.\* Now, whosoever, through any of these means, whether by *healing remedies*, or by *primary* or *secondary* miracle, has obtained the blessing of restored vision, is laid under obligation to praise "the Lord, who openeth the eyes of the blind."

For how inestimable is the blessing of sight! Truly is it esteemed one of the chief senses, if not the very chief sense, in that organization, the whole of which is so curiously formed as to be an incontrovertible proof of its being the workmanship of God, to the conviction of the atheist, and the confirmation of the believer.† But the organ of vision is, perhaps, more wonderful in its conformation, than any other part of our frame. How curious! how beautiful! how useful! What would the possession of all the other senses avail, if there were no sight? What were the magnificent universe, this boundless manifestation of the Deity in the productions of his wisdom, goodness, and power, had there not been an eye to behold it! Were man void of a capacity for seeing, he had never said with transport, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eye to behold the sun." It is the eye that embraces an immensurable portion of space; without laborious effort, it wanders forth amidst unnumbered worlds; or,

\* The lens of the eyes being removed by couching, and its office supplied by spectacles with a double convex lens, surrounded by a broad dense rim.

† Galen is said to have been convinced of the existence of God, by contemplating a human skeleton; and Dr. Paley has beautifully illustrated the evidences of the Divine skill and goodness in the animal economy.

concentrating its poignant vigour, inspects, with the nicest precision, the minutiae of every thing subjected to its scrutiny; and summons every faculty of the soul to celebrate that blessed Being, who combines with his bounty the tokens of his complacency;—not merely satisfying us with good things, but delighting us with the beautiful; by decorating with the most resplendent scenery the theatre of his operation. Indeed, to all our senses there are presented appropriate objects whose office is to administer pleasures to us. This is a superadded favour, conferred on us by our Creator, to be looked on, in some respects, as purely advenient, and not of indispensable necessity to the maintenance of our being. But so it is, because He “rejoices in the habitable parts of the earth,” and delights in the communication of pleasure to his rational offspring. Hence, the organs of hearing are charmed with harmonious sounds; those of smelling with exquisite odours; while the taste is gratified with delicious viands; and the feeling affords its fine sensation. But chiefly is the sense of seeing indulged with an endless variety of beautiful objects. Above, is seen the expanded firmament, stretched out by the hands of the Almighty, as the curtain of his ethereal tent, spangled with millions of glowing gems; beneath, the beauteous earth, with her mighty continents and million isles, in their variegated scenery of mountains, hills, and plains, valleys, forests, fields, and floods. And the eye affects the heart.—Hence the spectator, like our primitive parents in Eden, is led to exclaim in strains of admiration,—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty; thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then!”

But, more than all these,—there is a sweeter, lovelier scene, which does not require the eye of a philosopher

to appreciate its beauty, a scene most delightful to the view of man in the exercise of his best feelings. Whose heart does not anticipate the preacher's tongue? How precious the objects of social and domestic life,—“the human face divine,” the dear countenance of those to whom God and nature, and ten thousand endearing cares, and solitudes, and loves, and pleasures, have tenderly attached every feeling, emotion, and sympathy of our heart, and in whom our life has been bound up! The tear of sensibility, and the smile of joy, yield ample remuneration for all the toils, and all the anxieties, that can possibly be occasioned by connubial life: that tear is richer than the purest diamond Asia ever produced; that smile sheds radiance on the soul more refulgent than a meridian sun-beam!

But, ah! how painful to contemplate one who once beheld and once appreciated all these delights, but who perceives a dimming veil drawn athwart his vision! The obscurity continually thickens, like the closing twilight, till at length vain, alas! is the most strenuous attempt to recognise one of those beloved objects; and the eye, whose only business now left is to weep, finds they are each shut out, and hidden in impenetrable darkness. Perhaps, without being subject to the charge of murmuring against Heaven, he may sometimes be thus heard, in the lonely indulgence of his melancholy musings:—

“ With the year

Seasons return; but not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
 But cloud, instead, and ever-during dark  
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
 Presented with a universal blank  
 Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,  
 And wisdom, at one entrance, quite shut out.”

If he have been previously instructed in the school of sacred wisdom, perhaps we shall hear him, in his pious endeavour to seek some amelioration of his mournful condition, thus breathing forth his soul towards the Infinite Source of spiritual light and consolation,—

“So much the rather thou, celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate : there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse.”

Blindness is a calamity which is of a nature strongly to dispose its subject, unless he maintain an habitual recurrence to the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Being, to indulge a train of gloomy reflections, tending, not only to enfeeble the mind, but most unrighteously to dishonour God. How needful then is the inward celestial visitation !

Should the blessing of sight be restored, whether through the salutary influence of medicine, or by the skill of the oculist, a pious mind will ascribe the effect to the finger of God, as much as if it had been performed by miracle ; and will, with pleasure, employ the language of the text, “The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.” With what emotions of transport is the face of nature once more beheld ! How intently gazes the re-illuminated eye upon the dear objects of domestic bliss, now rendered doubly dear by the previous mournful exclusion ! How ravishing again to “see thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary !” again to behold those fellow-worshippers whom it recognises in the participation of pious gratitude, as they once sympathized in sorrow, when they “offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears,—and were heard in that they feared.”\* The sun seems to look down with glowing

\* A meeting for prayer was held by some pious friends, in Bath ; and another was held in Bristol, on the 7th of March, at the hour when the operation was performed in London.

sympathy; the very light seems to assume new splendour, as its radiance fills the house of God, this beautiful sabbath morning.

“ Hail, holy Light, offspring of heaven first-born;  
Or of th’ eternal co-eternal beam,  
May I express thee unblamed? since God is Light.”

And not only by his providence does the Lord open the natural eyes of the body, but, secondly, this he does graciously in respect to the eyes of the mind. To this appropriation of the text, I beg to call your attention. How does the Scripture depict the moral condition of mankind? It represents them as being totally dark, and even without the capability of discerning spiritual objects. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Is not this description confirmed by fact? Alas! how blind are the unregenerate both to the relative situation in which God stands towards them, and they towards him? As to him—they have no just conviction of the spotless purity of his nature, the perfect rectitude of his will, and the spirituality and extent of his law, which requires the entire devotedness of the whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, in the exercise of supreme love to God, in all the modifications of that ruling passion. As to themselves—in their relation to God, they have no just apprehension of their accountability, as those whom He will bring into judgment. And, to heighten this picture, they are described as not more insensible of their peril, than of the only means by which their deliverance can be obtained. The human mind, unenlightened by the Spirit of Truth, is the just emblem of those

“ Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell;”

with this only exception, that hope is not finally excluded.

From whence, and from whom, can effectual relief be obtained? from earth? from man? An apostle, indeed, informs us, that he received a commission from the Lord Jesus in these terms: "I send thee now to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." The same apostle declares: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But does St. Paul, therefore, assume to himself the power and influence of the essential Cause? As well might a mere reptile pretend to exercise the almighty fiat, "Let there be light." No! For though the ministry of the Gospel be the means, it is but instrumentally operative. The administration of the word is honoured by being made the medium through which the Holy Spirit pours his enlightening beams into the human soul. In cases of this kind, sometimes conviction of the guilt and evil of sin flashes like a beam darted from the tribunal of the Almighty. "The word of God is living and powerful;" and proves itself to be a judicial "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It inscribes, in flaming characters, the sentence against the criminal, and appears in the act of committing him over to the punishment due to sin, which is—eternal death! In other cases this conviction of sin is as the first faint gleam of the morning dawn. But whether it be like the instantaneous glance of lightning; or like the scarcely perceptible rays which streak the orient; it is soon afterwards attended with the cheering beams of Gospel day. Thus Bartimeus was told that Jesus of Nazareth passed by; and, emboldened to make personal application, the compassionate Son of David gave him to find in himself the effect of that gracious word, "Receive thy sight." The believer, following Him who

is the Light of the world, no longer walks in darkness, but in "the light of life."

It is now he is capacitated to discern spiritual objects through the medium of the sacred Scripture, and under the tuition of the Spirit of Truth. With the eye of faith he sees the things of God, in their connexion with eternity. They appear in his view,—a they really are,—all-interesting, all-important; while, on the other hand, every object merely connected with time is beheld in its relative condition. He sees that human life, even with its legitimate duties, and necessary concerns, and best enjoyments, is only so far important, and in no degree farther, than as it stands connected with the ultimate object of our probationary existence—the acquisition of heaven: and every other pursuit, not corresponding with the lawful duties of life, but of a still lower character, is seen to be, what in truth it is, a mere delusive phantom, a destructive evil, whose end is death and perdition!

With such new and convincing views of things, is it possible there should not be an indubitable evidence in the mind, that nothing less than a supernatural influence has produced the spiritual—what shall I call it?—the spiritual miracle? Can one, who is sensible that in his own person he has been the subject of this gracious work, be persuaded by an objector, that he is still blind? Will he not rather, feeling the liveliest conviction of the blessed reality, confidently affirm?—"One thing I know—whereas I was once blind, now I see."

There is another illustration of the text given by the Scripture. We might refer it to the introductory part of this discourse, but judge it deserving particular mention. A person "walks in" providential "darkness, having no light." He is involved in perplexing circumstances, and sees no way of extrication. The cloud of Providence presents its dark side, and totally eclipses the mind. So circumstanced was the ancient

patriarch, renowned for his unparalleled patience, when even he could not forbear expressing himself in these lamentable terms,—“O that I knew where I might find him! 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.” If at such a juncture, the Almighty, in an extraordinary and unanticipated manner, effects a complete deliverance, this distinguishing intervention is characterised by his “causing the eyes of the blind to see out of darkness and obscurity;” he opens a vista, and “leads the blind by a way they knew not, in paths they had not known, and makes darkness to become light before them.”

The case of a person who is the subject of this previous darkness and subsequent illumination, is not unlike that of the prophet's servant in Samaria, who saw no deliverance, the city being so closely besieged by the enemy. But when, in answer to the prophet's prayer, “his eyes were (supernaturally) opened,” he beheld the mountains filled with their celestial protectors. Or, like the desolate wanderer in the wilderness of Shur, the desponding one is brought to the extremity of anguish, when the Lord opens his eyes to behold the fountain of consolation springing up before him. Such a person is led to exclaim, with mingled emotions of awe and delight, “Surely God is in this dispensation, and I knew it not. Thou, God, seest me.”

Frequently have we, in this manner, witnessed the hand of Divine Providence evidently interposed, so as to justify the appropriation of the terms expressed in the text. In the instances alluded to of natural and of spiritual blindness, so also in the present case, which may be termed “circumstantial blindness,” the subject of this peculiar dispensation will not fail to acknowledge, that “the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.”

And here we might conclude, satisfied with the review of those Divine illuminations: but the text records other acts of the Supreme Being. These we shall briefly touch. See then the procedure of his goodness.

II. "The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down."

God is the source of all effectual help. Let us behold this act of gracious power.

Is a soul sinking, weary and heavy laden, beneath the load of guilt? so pressed by the burden, as to be "bowed,"—"bowed down," down to the dust of despondency and death? But, though bowed down, it is in humble contrition; and surely the Lord will "revive the spirit of the contrite ones." They are "humbled under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift them up." They are fainting at the footstool of that merciful Being who "will not break the bruised reed." It is the pleasure and the prerogative of our blessed Saviour to "heal the broken-hearted," as well as to "open the eyes of the blind." "He raiseth" them, perhaps at first to the feeble exercise of desire; then to lively and still livelier anticipation of his promised help; and then by the consoling application of the pardon, sealed on the heart by the Spirit of adoption, attended with its blessed effects and evidences, particularly by "the love of God shed abroad in the heart." He raiseth them in their condition,—by lifting them (to apply the language of the Scripture) "from the dunghill, and setting them among the princes of his people," investing them with the honour which comes from God. Will they not exult with the apostle?—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ!" And this can be contemplated as only the earnest of

that fruition of felicity which awaits them. The everlasting arms will ere long raise them far above this region of sorrow and sin, to the mansions, the thrones, the glories, of their heavenly inheritance.

“If needs be,” (and God himself is to judge the case,) he may sometimes permit his children to be “in heaviness through manifold temptations.” But have they, therefore, cause for complaint? Most certainly not. In the firm conviction of the wisdom and faithfulness, the power and love, of their heavenly Father; and in the exercise of faith and hope in their Almighty Saviour, they may “glory in tribulation also:” and have the distinguished honour of “glorifying God in the fires.” If to Him it appears right, without whose permission there can be no burden from any quarter whatever laid upon his children, he can at once remove the load. / But if he sees the removal not to be proper, he will do what is equally as good; he will do what they shall prove to be better than the obtainment of immediate release;—he will strengthen them to bear the burden. And is not his strength, when made perfect in weakness, sufficient to cheer, to elevate, and to bear them aloft, even in the endurance of the severest trials? / But if unerring wisdom deem it most conducive to their benefit and his glory, that the burden should be very heavy, and continued very long, so as to “bow” them—so as to bow them “down” low, so exceeding low, that they feel their “heart and flesh fail,” (for he may try them to this extremity,) then will he appear as “riding on the heaven to their help, and in his excellency on the sky; he will lay underneath the everlasting arms;” and thus evidently furnish a complete comment on the text; and by lifting his desponding children above all their trials and depressions, demonstratively prove that “the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down.”

Having proceeded thus far in contemplating the dis-

plays of the Divine goodness, let us venture another step, and glance at a farther manifestation.

III. "The Lord loveth the righteous."

God is the only source of genuine comfort. "God is love." They whom He has illuminated by his truth, and raised by his power, are treated by him as righteous; justified by his grace through the redemption which is in the blood of Christ, they have obtained "the righteousness which is of faith," being freely forgiven, and "justified from all things." They have also been endued with the principles of righteousness, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, —and these principles, implanted within them, produce their effects, in a conduct "unblamable and irreproachable," such as "adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

But however holy and useful they are, they may not expect an exemption from the common calamities of human life. No! In some respects, they should rather calculate on meeting peculiar trials, to which their character and circumstances will expose them; for "many are the afflictions of the righteous." Yet they may rejoice in this conviction, supported by the testimony of God himself, that, whatever they suffer according to his will, their sufferings are only the fruit of his parental love,—his chastening for their profit, the evidence of their sonship,—and, however painful, yet beneficial, in conducing to their present and eternal welfare. Are they afflicted, destitute, tormented? In all their afflictions, he is afflicted. His skilful hand, over-ruling and leading to results worthy of himself, and illustrative of his glory, directs all things so as "to work together for their good." This will appear in the final issue, when it will be seen, that whatever their heavenly Father himself immediately did to them, or in any instance remotely permitted, was intended to make a

deeper and wider channel in which his love should for ever flow forth to "the righteous." Precisely with this view, the great apostle, in nothing greater than the triumph of his faith, exultingly challenged the whole universe,—all finite beings, human and diabolical, and all possible circumstances, present and future:—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or peril? or sword?—Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things that are 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."

The love of God is the never-failing fountain of consolation. When Moses said, "Yea, the Lord loved his people;" then he said every thing. The Lord constantly cared for his people; he bountifully provided for their wants; he securely defended them from their foes; he safely preserved them in their perils; he affectionately pitied them in their grief; he completely extricated them out of their difficulties; he tenderly nourished them as a nurse doth her infant; he gathered them with his arms, as the shepherd his lambs, and carried them in his bosom;—he did all that a God could be expected to perform for a people whom he professed to love. And all this he will do, for "the Lord loveth the righteous."

But the complete exhibition of his love to them is not to be seen in their present low terrestrial state of existence. He never designed to make a full discovery of his love to them in this transitory world of ours. Immersed in mortality, encompassed with infirmities, we could not sustain the view of his unveiled love; still less could we support that exceeding weight of beatific communication. We can only express our astonish-

ment, by adopting the language of the ecstasied apostle: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" But as it doth not yet appear what we shall be, so it is now inconceivable what his love will be, when it shall be fully displayed,—when, through the interminable lapse of endless ages, the love of God, from the transcendent zenith of its infinite effulgence, shall blaze forth in everlasting manifestation. Then will be unfolded to their clear and capacious view, all those wonderful results, most worthy of God himself, and illustrative of his every perfection, in all the characters he has been pleased to sustain relative to the righteous. What a developement, when the final issues of creating and redeeming love shall be unveiled! Will not each transported spirit overflow with abounding joy? Will not every melodious tongue be inspired with the heavenly theme? And will not the impetus of rapture burst forth in the song of Moses and of the Lamb:—"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: Just and true are thy ways, Thou King of saints!" "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever!"

Having successively noticed the display of the Divine goodness in the instances mentioned in the text, we might make many practical inductions; but your attention shall be directed to two considerations only, which shall be treated as,

#### IV. The improvement of the subject.

First. God is the Author of all our blessings. Hence the emphatic repetition of his adorable name Jehovah, as some divines have noticed, in the passage which has been reviewed: "the Lord"—"the Lord"—"the Lord." Need we help in any of the cases thus enumerated? We see, then, to whom we should apply for relief. Are we, for instance, enveloped with the gloom of guilt? or surrounded by the darkness of a mysterious Providence?

Are we dejected and depressed under accumulated trials ? or are we in the school of suffering, undergoing the peculiar and painful tuition which God bestows on his beloved children for their greatest profit, refining them in the fiercest ordeal, to make them the distinguished partakers of his holiness ? We here see, that the Lord is a very present help in trouble. We behold him, the resplendent Illuminator—the almighty Helper—the everlasting Lover.—His aid, then, should be sought ; his only. For the encouragement of our faith and hope, let us seek to have our minds impressed, powerfully and effectually, with this cheering conviction, arising from the character and conduct of our heavenly Father, that as his omnipotence can with ease effect our relief, so his benignity is equal to his ability ; and if, in the all-comprehensive view of his omniscience, he perceives a possibility in connection with our real benefit, his power and pity may be piously and scripturally expected to work our deliverance. May we never forget this imperishable inscription in the eternal volume of inspiration—Jehovah openeth the eyes of the blind : Jehovah raiseth them that are bowed down : Jehovah loveth the righteous. “These are the true sayings of God.”

But is this only an abstract speculation on the nature and character of Deity ? Or is it only the solitary declaration of the text ? I ask, Is this only speculative ? or is at best but mere Scripture testimony ? Have the facts never been realized ? Who then is this illustrious personage presenting himself to the view of the world ? and what the wonderful deeds his hands achieve ? His form, is it like the Son of God ? O, yes ! He it is, employed in the exercise of Divine benevolence ! O, listen to the melting accents which drop from his lip :—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at

liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv. 18, 19. O! hear him, thou whose misery moves his pitying heart, and needs his helping hand. Arise ; he calleth thee : " What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ? " Lord, that my eyes may be opened—that I may be raised up from the dismal deep of distress—that I may enjoy the ineffable fruition of thy love for ever !

Lastly. God is to be praised for all the good he has done to us. And have we, then, in any of those instances mentioned in the text, obtained help from the Lord ? Let us return and give glory to God. We may have employed means—may have had recourse to the help, the skill, the kindness of those whom we judged capable, through the blessing of heaven, of administering relief : and these were legitimate measures. Without their prudent adoption, if put in our power, we could not consistently pray for the help of the Almighty. We are not permitted to presume on unwarrantable expectations of miraculous interposition. But while we employ the means, let us remember that God jealously maintains his own prerogative. He will not give his glory to another ; neither will he permit us to tender it, no, not even to the means of his own providential appointment, nor to the instrument he chose to employ. These are not our light, our support, our consolation. Let not, then, the sacrifice of thanksgiving be desecrated, but sacredly offered up on the holy altar of the Most High. Especially, should those who have obtained extraordinary tokens of his providence, and peculiar instances of his strengthening, or consoling, or delivering grace, sink down in humble prostration before him, and solemnly charge all their powers to unite in a thankful hymn of praise :—" Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

### SERMON III.

## CONFIDENT EXPECTATION OF THE DIVINE BLESSING, THE GROUND OF ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE CAUSE OF RELIGION.

PREACHED IN LONDON, MAY 1st, 1818, AT THE FOURTH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY  
SOCIETY.

---

*The God of heaven, he will prosper us ; therefore we his servants  
will arise and build. Nehemiah ii. 20.*

CONFIDENT expectation of the Divine blessing is the ground of encouragement to exertion in the cause of religion. A consideration less invigorating than the text employs, cannot convey an impulse to the mind, sufficient to stimulate our energies in the Missionary department, whose final object,—we speak tremblingly, but not with despondence,—is the conversion of the whole world unto God. May the appropriation of the text to that important object be justified by our renewed efforts, with the blessing of heaven manifestly succeeding them !

All the works of God with which we are acquainted, present the character of continuous analogy. This character, perceived by the philosopher in the construction of the material world, is clearly traced by the Christian in the history of the church of God. Coincidences

appear through its successive dispensations, as face answers to face in a mirror. The description of the past is the representation of the future. Such analogies are frequently brought forward by the inspired writers in both the Old Testament and the New. Nehemiah records a circumstance in the history of the Jewish people, namely, the re-building of their metropolitan city, after their return from the captivity in Babylon, wherein, perhaps, we might, upon examination, find an evident correspondency with matters occurring at the present period, especially in that department whose claims we are called upon at the present time to advocate. Their undertaking was great and good,—they met with many discouragements,—they however persevered,—and their labour was finally crowned with complete success. From their history we mean to illustrate our subject; and in its discussion we shall,

I. Propose our design.

II. Expose the discouragements which might tend to impede its prosecution. And,

III. Oppose to them our sources of encouragement to perseverance for its ultimate completion.

I. Propose our design; which is to assist with our utmost ability in promoting the interests of the Christian church: “We will arise and build.”

Jerusalem of old has been long since demolished, and the Levitical economy vanished away. The shadowy types have receded before the spiritual antitype, as the stars disappear before the risen sun. Christian believers, in their better dispensation, are come to the true Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, whose walls are salvation, and her gates praise. More sublime than her ancient material type, she assumes an appellation over which no veil is drawn. She is not the mere vision of peace; her

name is Jehovah-Shammah, "The Lord is there!" the royal residence of the true Melchizedek, the King of righteousness and King of peace. Such is the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all, whose important interests make more than maternal claims on our reverence and affection.

But the Christian church is not yet completed, except in the prescient design of her great Architect. We see her future millennial splendour sketched by the pencil of prophecy. Nay, more: already her twelve foundations are laid in the imperishable doctrines of the holy apostles, more beautiful and valuable than precious stones; her crystal walls of Divine truth, continually rising, will soon aspire to their loftiest height;—her pearly gates are set wide open day and night;—and the kindling glories of God and the Lamb shine refulgent upon her battlements. Ere long, not a few individuals, one of a city, and two of a family, but whole nations of those which are saved, shall walk in her light, and exult in her immunities. And thus, by that faith which "passes through the years between"—may we obtain a glimpse of her destined perfection; and, with joyful anticipation, adopt the language of our own poet,—

" By faith we already behold  
That lovely Jerusalem here !"

This is the magnificent object of our faith.

Alas! when we look around this world lying in the wicked one, how very different at the present time appear the objects of sight! We see indeed a city that would impose upon the spectator, by presuming to call herself "the New Jerusalem:" but her real name is "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." She is the blasphemous rival of the true Jerusalem, extending her tyrannic domination, and shedding her foul influence, over the

greater part of Christendom. But the souls of the martyrs from under the altar invoke the vengeance of the Almighty upon her. She is doomed to fall, and rise no more.

If we look beyond this Babylon, through the many-peopled world, alas ! all is seen lying in Mohammedan delusion or Heathen desolation, dark places of the earth filled with the habitations of cruelty. The Arabian imposture is beheld dominant in the eastern parts of Europe,—in large portions of the vast continent and islands of Asia,—and throughout the whole extent of Africa. We admit, there are to be seen some few faint rays caught from the sun of truth, and reflected by the glimmering of the Mohammedan crescent : we allow the jejune Koran exhibits some light collected from Divine revelation ; but it is only like that pallid and sickly lustre of the moon in the nights of her waning, just sufficient to make darkness visible. The heart bleeds when we contemplate those countries where the banner of the cross was first elevated ; there the insulting ensign of Mohammed is seen flying, and the abomination of desolation standing even in the holy place. Do we look beyond this lunar sphere ? All is heathen darkness, the nocturnal empire of those cruel confederates,—ignorance, crime, and misery ;—the gloomy abodes of the dragons and the owls of midnight superstition ;—the dreary haunts of the powers of darkness ; “regions of sorrow, doleful shades,” unvisited by the holy light of revelation, uncheered by the healing beams of the Sun of righteousness. There, under the transforming influence of falsehood, they put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; under the polluting influence of sin, they put evil for good, and good for evil ; under the illusive sophistry of the old murderer, even he himself is worshipped and adored, and his obscene and bloody rites are performed by more than a moiety of mankind ;—all of them under demoniac pos-

session, dwelling among the tombs of moral and spiritual death.

But, shall we therefore despond? Shall we entertain a doubt of being, through Divine assistance, instrumental in re-edifying the Asiatic and African tabernacles that are fallen down, and raising the walls of the city of our God upon the ruins of Mohammedan mosques, Chinese pagodas, and Buddhist and Brahminical temples?—This is our design, in which, like those mentioned in Nehemiah's narrative, we keep two things distinctly in view:—

1. A conviction of the certainty of success: "The God of heaven, he will prosper us;" and

2. A determination founded on this conviction: "Therefore we his servants will arise and build." The former without the latter would be enthusiastic folly: and the latter without the former would be impious presumption. It might serve for building a Babel, but not for those master-builders employed in raising the walls of the Christian church.

1. In the conviction of our certain success, behold Him whom we expect to render our efforts prosperous,—"The God of heaven!" Not the gods of earth. I said, "Ye are gods; but ye shall all die like men." "The God of heaven!" who spreads out the heavens as a curtain, who upholds all things by the word of his power. "The God of heaven!" who dwells in the high and lofty place, who sends forth the efficient energy of his infinite perfections throughout all the regions of the universe.

Behold, likewise, the grounds of our confidence in Him. He can prosper us. As his omniscience and omnipotence, are exercised over all persons and circumstances, so the issues of all are in his sovereign hands. But more: "He will prosper us." We entertain no doubt; for the decree of the God of heaven is gone forth, that Jerusalem shall be built; that the ful-

ness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel be saved. "I will declare the decree: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Moreover, the providence of the God of heaven is in apparent operation. Providence is the harbinger of grace, whose voice is heard in the heathen wilderness, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." God is risen up out of his holy place. He shakes, not the earth only, but the heavens also. The Desire of all nations shall come, and shall not tarry. Besides, more than any other circumstance, the Spirit of the God of heaven is poured out from on high, without whose influence nothing can be effected, but which is fully effectual to the accomplishment of our design. By an extraordinary effusion of this holy influence, we see the builders stirred up. Zealous Missionaries, whose lips have been touched by a coal from the altar, press forward, saying, "Here we are; send us:" and the Heathen solicitously cry, "Come over and help us." Who can doubt the raising of the Christian church? The angel, extending his golden reed, is laying out the length and breadth of the city, and adjusting the height of her walls. Nay, her walls are even now extending east, west, north, and south; and her gates are thrown open towards Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. From these considerations, we confidently conclude, that the time for the Lord to have mercy on Sion, yea, the set time is come: "Therefore we his servants will arise and build."

2. Let us express our determination, founded on the certainty of our success. We commenced with directing our eyes to Him whom we expect to render our work

prosperous. "But who," it may be said, "are the persons presuming to be workers together with God? Who and what are they?" We reply, We are his servants. We aspire to no greater honour; but will not abandon our duty. We, though unworthy, believe ourselves to be employed by Him. We commit ourselves to the rule and guidance of his Spirit and providence, and submit, in this great work, to be directed and employed in whatever manner, and in whatever station, he shall be pleased to place us: nor would we criminally forget our awful responsibility, when he shall summon us to the final account.

"We, his servants," who have formed the determination, we "will arise,"—will engage our hearts in the work. Not sleep as do others; not stand all the day idle; but strenuously put forth our energies. We "will arise and build;" not only will we engage our hearts, but likewise employ our hands in the work. There is sufficient labour for all hands—to collect materials, to set them in their proper place in the building, to labour each in his own station, 'every man building opposite his own house.' Thus will we build carefully; lay the good foundation, Jesus Christ,—for other foundation can no man lay; use proper materials, not wood, hay, stubble; and finish the work well; so that admiring beholders may "walk about Sion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that they may tell it to the generation following." Thus have we proposed our design, which is to assist with our utmost ability in promoting the advancement of the Christian church. Let us,

II. Expose the discouragements which may tend to impede its prosecution.

If we still follow the parallel in Nehemiah's narrative, we shall find these discouragements arise from two classes of people:—

1. Absolute enemies; and
2. Unprofitable friends.

1. We begin with those who are enemies to us and our design: Men of infidel minds, aliens and foreigners, like their predecessors, Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, who both contemn and oppose.

These enemies contemn our design. They despise the instruments on account of their weakness and inability. "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews?" Neh. iv. 1, 2. "Enthusiasts! fanatics!" cry our contemptuous foes, "with feeble heads, with feeble hands, weak and inefficient, and feeble resources; no treasures, no purse, no scrip!" "A few young, raw heads," said the Bishop of London, "what can they pretend to do?" "They pretended," said Mr. Wesley in reply, "to be *that* in the hand of God that a pen is in the hand of a man. They purposed to do the work whereunto they were sent; to do just what the Lord pleased. And if it be his pleasure to throw down the strongholds of Satan—not by the engines of war, but by the blast of rams' horns—who shall say unto Him, What doest thou?"

These enemies deride our expectation of final success. "Will they make an end in a day?" Neh. iv. 2. No, we do not anticipate quite so much. Rome was not built in a day, neither will Jerusalem. Yet one day with the Lord is as a thousand years. Infidels may query, "Who hath heard such a thing? shall a nation be born in a day?" Yes! if God make bare his holy arm. "Is any thing too hard for me?" saith Jehovah. No! The Omnipotent can raise up the walls of Sion with greater facility than were raised up the walls of Thebes. He can inspire dead stones with life. He has more

than an Amphion's lyre, more than an Amphion's theme. He can quicken, move, attract, collect the stones, where

“Scatter'd o'er all the earth they lie;  
Draw by the music of his name,  
And charm into a beauteous frame.”

Whether immediately or more remotely, the walls of Jerusalem shall be built, be the times ever so troublous. And for this assurance, have we not the engagement of Him who is called the True and Faithful? “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted! behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

These enemies despise what we have already performed. “Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” Neh. iv. 3.

One cannot but remark in this instance the effect of association: “If a *fox* go up;” he meant to intimate the physical weakness of that animal. But if it were to give the notion of feebleness, why not say a *lamb*, whose weakness forms the apt exemplification of an universal adage,—“As feeble as a lamb?” But no, Tobiah can think of no animal but a fox, and their stone wall he shall even break down, by his strength, or by—his cunning. But presuming to adopt the words of our Divine Master, we would say, “Go and tell that fox, we work to-day and to-morrow.”

And is ours then a stone wall? not a mud wall daubed with untempered mortar? Then the virgin, the daughter of Sion, hath despised thy taunts; she hath shaken her head at thee, Tobiah the Ammonite! If

thou hadst said, we have done but little, that were true ; but surely, as we proceed with the work, we use the very best materials, both of stone and cement. Remus, to shew his contempt of his brother's undertaking, leaped over the moat ; but Romulus was commencing "the eternal city." "So we built the wall ; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work." Neh. iv. 6.

These enemies not only contemn, but oppose our design,

By violent hostilities : "But it came to pass that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." Neh. iv. 7, 8.

By secret machinations : "Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein, (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates,) that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief, and I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down ; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort ; and I answered them after the same manner." Neh. vi. 1—4.

Captious enemies wish to prevail on us to waste, in arguments with them, the time and strength we should bestow on our labour. But how acted prudent Nehemiah in such a case ? He said, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down : why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you ?"

Neh. vi. 3. The time and strength were employed where they should be, on the work, so that "in fifty-two days the walls were raised;" whereas "fifty-two weeks spent in wordy altercations would not have forwarded the work in the least degree.

By lying accusations: "Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me, in like manner, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand; wherein was written, It is reported among the Heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done." Neh. vi. 5—9.

2. We have looked abroad for the first class, absolute enemies, let us now look among ourselves for the second.

These are "unprofitable friends," who are of four kinds; the false-hearted, the half-hearted, the faint-hearted, the fearful-hearted.

(1.) The false-hearted. Among the Jews there were false prophets and prophetesses, who pretended to inspiration; but as to inspiration, their only wish was to inspire Nehemiah with fear, and thus paralyse him. "Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up, and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple; and let us shut the doors of the temple; for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there that, being as I am, would go into the

temple to save his life? I will not go in. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced his prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear." Neh. vi. 10—14.

(2.) The half-hearted: "And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord." Neh. iii. 5. Not many mighty, not many noble, have at any period been disposed to labour with much effect in the Lord's service. But God has chosen those reputed by a despising world as weak and base, that no flesh should glory in his presence. But, alas! among the people there were found,

(3.) The faint-hearted: "And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall." Neh. iv. 10. All this we see through. Instead therefore of replying to these splendid arguments, we would say, This language would be unbecoming in any tribe, but is most reprehensible in Judah. Judah's name is praise; but for this I praise you not. Judah should have been the principal in the work. If the distant inhabitants of Dan, Zebulun, or Issachar, had thus spoken, it might have been palliated, because their residence was so remote, that they had less interest than Judah in the capital. Judah was honoured by having the metropolis in—what shall we call it?—their tribe, their district? But we might reply, "If the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, try to rally; employ more bearers. If there be much rubbish, this demands your greater exertion: therefore this is an argument, not for, but against, you; labour harder, longer."

(4.) The fearful-hearted : these are a kind of renegade friends. "And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye return unto us, they will be upon you." Neh. iv. 12. These came up from different parts of the land to Jerusalem, with frightful alarms, repeated "ten times," of numerous and mighty foes. "There saw we the sons of Anak, that are giants, and we were as grass-hoppers in their eyes. We saw three hundred millions of gods in Hindostan, with Shasters and Vedas, and cities of idols walled up to heaven by ancient superstitions! We saw the great empire of China surrounded by its impregnable barrier, which none can sap or scale! We saw Africa enforested in impenetrable ignorance! We saw—what did we not see?" Ye did not see the directing finger!—the uplifted hand!—the out-stretched arm of Jehovah!

Such are the discouragements from both foes and friends, which might tend to impede us in the prosecution of our design. We have stated them fully, and presented their front, that we may be apprized of their number and strength. We would look at them, and contemplate their utmost influence; but we need not be dispirited: which will appear when we,

III. Oppose to them our sources of encouragement for the ultimate completion of our design.

Still referring to the historical narrative,—we have means of defence and incitements to continued exertion.

1. We have means of defence.

The first, and indeed the chief of our means, is the one to which pious Nehemiah continually recurred, namely, prayer. If any one might ever dispense with prayer, surely Nehemiah might be justified in acting upon the plea of self-sufficiency. Power, influence, talent, prudence, zeal, courage, fortitude,—all those transcendent qualities which adorn station and dignify

character, were possessed by this eminent man, who may well be said to have been the brightest star in the constellation of the fourth century before Christ, so renowned for philosophers, poets, historians, statesmen, heroes, &c. But this great person was nothing in his own eyes. He depended not on his own wisdom or might. He referred every thing to God. In which particular instance, as well as his general undertaking to build the walls of Jerusalem, he was a striking type of Christ, the Builder of the Gospel-church. Nehemiah appears to have been a man of all prayer. From first to last, he made every thing the subject of prayer. How cheering and invigorating to follow him in his pious course! Has he received the melancholy account of the dilapidation of Jerusalem, and the misery of the province? He is immediately found at the throne of mercy, pouring forth his soul in closet prayer: "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cup-bearer." Neh. i. 4—6, 11. Do we see him discharging his office in the royal presence of Artaxerxes, and meanwhile meditating the restoration of beloved Jerusalem? He first

lifts up his soul in mental prayer, and then makes known to the monarch his patriotic request. "Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." Neh. ii. 4, 5. Did he afterwards detect the foul design of the enemies, who formed a conspiracy against him and his people? What was his resource? Public united prayer. "Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God." Neh. iv. 9. Do the enemies endeavour to make him afraid, that his hands may be weakened? We hear him in fervent ejaculatory prayer. "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands." Neh. vi. 9. And with reference to his devotional habit of prayer, it is even delightful to read the conclusion of the interesting narrative. The design which occupied his whole mind, after long labour, amidst most distressing circumstances, he at last beheld completed. And now we hear him, with simplicity, and cordial yet reverential confidence, committing himself to the Divine remembrance: "Remember me, O my God, for good." Neh. xiii. 31. Let us then follow this man of prayer. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Prayer may be said to be almighty, for it engages Omnipotence in our assistance. Prayer will sanctify all our endeavours. And the universal spread of religion is the warranted object of prayer. Our blessed Lord commands us, when we pray, to say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Our instruments of warfare likewise are means of defence. We have mighty weapons; the armour of righteousness, on our right hand and on our left. Thus the people, while prosecuting their work, were armed:

“Every man had his sword girded by his side : with one hand he wrought in the work, with the other he held a weapon.” Neh. iv. 17, 18. Let us then take to ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil, and the fiery darts of the wicked. And while we pray without ceasing, let us still have on our armour, and continue to watch against the enemy. In this view precisely, the apostle to the Gentiles connects the panoply of God “with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.” Eph. vi. 13, 18.

Our implements of labour may be thus employed. These, to be useful means of defence, should be constantly used. It was sufficient, among the Jews, that one hand merely grasped the weapon, not employed it ; but not sufficient that with the other he should merely hold, but laboriously employ, the implement of labour : “With one hand he held a weapon, and with the other he wrought in the work.”

2. We have incitements to continued exertion. An incitement is derived from the imbecility of the efforts employed by absolute enemies and unprofitable friends, to prevent the accomplishment of our design. Contumely and scorn, open hostilities, disguised machinations, and false accusations of enemies, are not irresistible. Nor need the unfaithfulness and timidity of friends prove a hinderance. Nehemiah and his people met all these, yet they went on and prospered. Let us remember, that great minds surmount difficulties by daring them.

Another incitement is derived from the increasing attachment of the people in general to the church of God, and their disposition to labour in the work.

Such is their zealous attachment, that every countenance appears impressed with sympathetic concern for desolate Jerusalem. Do we inquire of a Christian brother, as did Artaxerxes of Nehemiah, “Why is thy

countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart;" we might expect Nehemiah's reply, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres," the residence of my fathers' God, "lieth waste?"

The woful condition of the perishing millions in Heathen lands,—indeed, the guilty, polluted, and miserable state of the whole world, lying in the wicked one, might fill the direful record of every clime. Like the prophet's roll, it would be written, within and without, with lamentation, mourning, and woe. Surely, none can reflect, without great sorrow of heart, on the miserable myriads, who, by our common nature, must be recognised as members of the human family, perishing for lack of knowledge, and desecrated to sensual and diabolical abominations! Every British Christian may well indulge the melancholy strain of the weeping prophet: "O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the (morally and spiritually) slain of my people!"

Some there are who mourn over this moral desolation, and, to lessen the evil, are industriously employed, according to the order of Providence, every one in his proper station.

And such is their disposition for labour, that we may say of them, in the language of Nehemiah, "The people have a mind to work." Nor is it merely in their mind; they have been employed; portions of the walls are up in many places; they have "laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof."

Another, indeed our principal incitement, is derived from God's promise of our final success. "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory." Thus, as God was our Alpha in our design, so must he be our Omega in the result. Confidence in

his attendant blessing, engaged by his faithful promise, must be our grand incitement to exertion. "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build."

Thus have we proposed our design; exposed those discouragements that might tend to impede its prosecution; and opposed to them our sources of encouragement to perseverance for its ultimate completion.

Is there any thing more to be done? The word of God is characterised by completeness; perhaps we may find in the narrative a plan for our imitation. This, then, shall be,

#### IV. The improvement of the subject.

We find in the plan a list of names inscribed by the sacred historian in the true temple of honour; renowned names of those worthies, who exerted themselves in the good work. This list begins with the priesthood: "Then Eliashib the high priest rose up, with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep-gate; they sanctified it by thanksgiving and prayer." Neh. iii. 1. This is the proper method of commencement. The ministers of God should be prompt and foremost, and commence in a holy manner, consecrating their work to God.

Succeeding the priests, families arranged themselves in their departments; the rich and the poor; none too great; none too mean: the carrying on the work was made a family-concern.

Pious females exerted themselves, who are honourably mentioned: not indeed by their names, for the sacred penman paid all due deference to the retired virtues of the softer sex. But their father's name, and his rank in society, are specified, which is deemed sufficient honour for the daughters: "And next unto him repaired Shallum, the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters." Neh. iii. 12. Our own Tirshatha in the Mission department,

remarks in his Commentary upon this place, "Shalum's daughters are honourably mentioned as assisting in this good work. Though they could not themselves handle the trowel, they could hire assistance, and provide materials. Good women," he adds, "in every age have been great helpers in the cause of God."—*Dr. Coke's Commentary.*

Here is also in their plan a list of donations.

The Tirshatha's donation stands at the head: "The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold" (according to the bishop of Peterborough's table, drams, value each £1. 0s. 4d., £1,016. 13s. 4d. sterling,) "fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments." Neh. vii. 70. A handsome donation of money, utensils, and apparel, becoming the dignity of the donor.

The chiefs' donation: they "gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams (or *darics*) of gold," (£20,336. 6s. 8d.,) "and two thousand two hundred pounds" (*minas*, value each £7. 1s. 5d.) "of silver," (£15,555. 16s. 8d.,) making together, £35,892. 3s. 4d. Neh. vii. 71.

The last, but not the least, is the donation of the people: "And that which the rest of the people gave, was twenty thousand drams of gold," (they made up the exact sum of gold given by the chiefs, namely, £20,336. 6s. 8d.,) "and two thousand pounds' weight (*minas*) of silver." Neh. vii. 72. In the silver they came not up to the chiefs, who gave two thousand two hundred pounds, that is, two hundred pounds (*minas*) more than the people. But they were not outdone by their superiors; perhaps they had not more than £14,141. 13s. 4d., in money, but they added "threescore and seven priests' garments," which I suppose to be worth £1000, and made up their donations equal to that of their chiefs!

The grand total of donations is,

	£	s.	d.
Basons.....50.. Gold.....	41,689	6	6
Priests' garments, 5975.. Silver.....	29,697	10	0
	<hr/>		
	£71,386	16	6
	<hr/>		

Some scholars value the dram or *daric* of gold at £1. 5s., and the pound or *mina* of silver at £9. According to this valuation, the amount of the

	£
Tirshatha's 1,000 drams of gold is.....	1,250
Chiefs' 20,000 drams of gold.....	25,000
Chiefs' 2,200 <i>minas</i> of silver.....	19,800
The People's 20,000 drams of gold.....	25,000
The People's 2,000 <i>minas</i> of silver.....	18,000
	<hr/>
Total.....	£89,050
	<hr/>

Such were the donations of a people just returned from captivity, the total number of whom was only 42,360; not a twentieth of the population of London, reckoned at the round number of a million. The particular numbers mentioned by Ezra in his catalogue, amount only to 29,818; and Nehemiah's particulars make only 31,031; though both set down the same total, namely, 42,360. To complete this sum, therefore, we think, with bishop Pearson, dean Prideaux, Dr. Lightfoot, and other authorities, the surplus includes some relics of the ten tribes and others, such as are mentioned, Neh. i. 3: "The remnant that were left of the captivity there in the province, who were in great affliction and reproach."

Here are in their plan annual subscriptions: "Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God." Neh. x. 32. It may be supposed that many, having ample means, gave more, and some of slender means could not give so much; but they made their annual subscriptions to amount on the whole to the

value of the third of a shekel for each person. It was to this very service the poor widow cast in her two mites, which obtained the honourable eulogy of our blessed Saviour.

That their business might be performed with regularity, we see in their plan an appointment of treasurers : “ And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelamiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe.” Neh. xiii. 13. These were the General Treasurers ; one belonging to the priesthood, and the other from among the people. And to these were added others, chiefly from among the Levites, who seem to have been local treasurers of the country districts. Their character for probity is given, and the duty of their office described, Neh. xiii. 13 : “ They were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren,”

To give a delightful effect to their object, they had a general meeting in the metropolis, which was afterwards kept annually, in joyful commemoration of that auspicious day. The manner of conducting the services is minutely related in the twelfth chapter, which, without disturbing the sacred narrative, we recognise as presenting a remarkable and pleasing coincidence. “ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi, from Gilgal, Geba, and Azmaveth.” Neh. xii. 27. “ Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall ;” led by the princes, followed by the priests, some with trumpets, and the singers with the musical instruments, “ and Ezra the

scribe before them." Neh. xii. 31. In verse 37, their route is particularly described: "And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward." This was the east circuit. Verses 38 to 43 commences the tour of the west circuit: "And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; and from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate. So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers, with me: and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang aloud, with Jezrahiah their overseer. Also, that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." Thus was the religious part of the business concluded, in which men, women, and children, all joyfully participated.

There requires but one thing more to complete the whole, which is expressed, verse 44: the appointment of Collectors: "And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the first-fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portion of the law for the priests and Levites."

Judah recovers her character, "for Judah rejoiced or the priests and for the Levites that waited."

And now, what remains? If the blessing of God be a sufficient ground for encouragement, let us be careful to make it our only ground. May we not begin to build before we look into the heavenly treasury, from which the cost is to be defrayed, lest it should be said, we began to build and were not able to finish. May we act under the conviction, that the help that is done in the earth, it is the Lord who doeth it. Let us be mindful of this truth, that, as our undertaking will certainly succeed if God prosper us; so we ought not to indulge the least expectation that our labour will be otherwise than in vain, if he grant not his blessing. But we have not been denied tokens of the approbation of our God. We have been honoured with his smile on our feeble exertions. To him let us ascribe the glory for what he has already achieved; and never forget, in all our future labours, to commence, proceed, and persevere, in humble dependence upon him. And let us refer our ultimate object where our blessed Lord has directed:—"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

If we entertain the cheering confidence, that the blessing of God is sufficient ground of encouragement, let us not be so absurd as to think it a licence for indolence or indifference. No! it is an encouragement to duty. Let us remember Nehemiah's inference: "Therefore we his servants will arise and build."

They had their dispensation, and were honoured to fulfil the first portion of Daniel's famous prophecy, chap. ix. 25. At the conclusion of the seven prophetic weeks of years, forty-nine years after the decree of Cyrus, "the street was built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." We have our dispensation; and surely there is sufficient employment to engage every heart and every hand. O! contemplate the moral ruin of mankind, the universal desolation seen throughout the miserable regions of this apostate world.

Let your eye affect your heart ; your heart affect your hand ; and what your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. While some of us have been hesitating, others have embarked in the glorious work, are this hour toiling in foreign fields, bearing the burden and heat of the day, not counting their lives dear unto themselves. Some have fallen victims to inhospitable climates, and epidemic distempers. But, in their expiring moments, did they regret the sacrifice of their lives for the honour of their Lord? Ah, no! they were satisfied, they even rejoiced in the prospect of dying in that department of their adorable Master's service.

We owe all we can do (how little, at best!) to God, who has done so much for us. Not only have the blessings of the Gospel been presented to our view in the volume of revelation, but they have been offered to us, and pressed upon us, by an evangelical ministry. The unsearchable riches of Christ have not only been preached among us, but many have personally obtained their acquisition. If we have been thus enriched by those inestimable treasures, their further distribution will not lessen, but rather enhance our portion in them. We might maintain it to be a duty we owe to ourselves, as well as our fellow-men, to extend the blessings of salvation unto all the perishing progeny of Adam.

And besides, are not the interests of the city of God dear to our hearts? Should we not prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy? Are we not told it is our duty to promote and to pray for her peace and prosperity? Then put forth your powers. Employ your influence on earth; your interest in heaven. Labour unweariedly; pray unceasingly. You now see the dawn of the latter-day glory; but look forward to that approaching season, when the church of God, rising to her meridian splendour, shall fill the whole world with truth and

righteousness, when they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto her.

Has Messiah himself declared, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory?"—Favoured by the administration of his Gospel, partakers of the plenitude of its blessings, let us, influenced by the Spirit of grace and supplication, follow his bright example, and continue to obey his sovereign injunction: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God! Soon shall their full accomplishment open upon thee, and

"One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze  
O'erflow thy courts: the Light himself shall shine  
Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine!"

## SERMON IV.

PREACHED UNDER THE SYCAMORE TREE, AT KINGSWOOD,  
ON MR. WESLEY'S BIRTH-DAY.

---

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. John i. 6, 7.*

It has been said of Mr. Wesley's fame, (for which term I would substitute the more hallowed and legitimate word, character,) that "from panegyric it has nothing to hope, and from detraction has nothing to fear." Let not any person presume to charge us with vain superstition, or venal idolatry, when we speak thus of our venerable father. Perhaps our fault is, that we have not sufficiently embalmed the memory of that highly honoured servant of the Most High, with the incense of our best affections; nor, consequently, felt the immense obligation laid upon us by the Divine Master, who so long favoured us, the church, and the world, with the labours of his eminently laborious and successful messenger. No, we do not substitute him for the Lord Christ; we put not the servant in the place of his Lord; "he was not that light;" never did he cease to acknowledge, "Christ must increase, I must decrease:" "His shoes I am not worthy to bear;" and dying he explicitly bore the same unchanging testimony, in life and death

"Ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb."

Permit me, my brethren, on this interesting occasion to call your attention to the text, which speaks of

Christ's honoured harbinger,—that burning and shining light, John the Baptist. We may notice,

I. The name of this divinely commissioned messenger.

II. The character of his mission. And,

III. Its design.

I. "His name was John." Hebrew, *Johanán*. It is observable the Scriptures attach the meaning, and give importance to the names of persons; as in the instances of Adam, "red earth;" Eve, or Heva, "life;" Noah, "rest;" Abram, "lord;" afterwards elevated to Abraham, "prince;" Sarai, "lady;" changed to Sarah, "princess;" Isaac, "laughter;" Jacob, "supplanter;" afterwards changed to Israel, "a prince with God;" Oshea, changed to Joshua, "a divine saviour;" who was in his name and character a type of Him whose name was given according to the direction of the angel Gabriel before his birth, who at the same time assigned the reason for his being called Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins;" Immanuel, which being interpreted is, "God with us." All which names indicated either character or office. The forerunner of Messiah, like his Divine Master, had his name given before his birth, being announced to his father Zacharias by Gabriel, the honoured messenger who announced the name of Jesus. John, *Johanán*, "the amiable, or beloved, or delight of the Lord;" or, "the favour, gift, or mercy of the Lord." Let us not be thought trifling in remarking, this name is perhaps more in use than any other in Christendom. German, *Johannes*; French, *Jean*; Dutch, *Hans*; Welsh, *Johan*; English, *John*. In many instances it appears to have been peculiarly honoured; John Baptist, that more than prophet, the messenger before the face of the Lord. John, the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of his Lord, who was the substituted son of the

blessed mother of Christ, who bore more titles than any other person, and filled more offices than any besides him: an evangelist, an apostle, a prophet; justly honoured by the church with the title of "the divine." Shall we descend to subsequent ages of the church? We see in 1324, that is, 500 years ago, long before Luther's day, John Wickliff, rector of Lutterworth, bearing the character of the first English reformer—John Huss, one of the earliest and most celebrated sufferers under the papal tyranny—John Calvin, the zealous associate of Luther—John Knox, the Scottish reformer—Finally, John Wesley, the world's reformer! that splendid morning star which led on the present era, when light and truth are gone forth to illuminate and bless all the nations upon earth. Nor should we forget John Fletcher, with piety burning like seraphic ardour, and sound in the faith with apostolic orthodoxy, not unworthy of the bright constellation of the Johns. God has been pleased to honour with no secondary regard another name: let us not pass without noticing Thomas Coke, "in labours more abundant," like the apocalyptic angel flying under the whole heaven, to preach the everlasting Gospel to all nations, and people, and languages. Nor let us be so criminal as to leave unmentioned the precious and honoured names of those triumvirs, the first three itinerant preachers, Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxwell, and Thomas Westall; and subsequently that prodigy of combined learning and piety, Thomas Walsh, who so laboured for his Divine Master, that he died, to use Mr. Wesley's words, an old man at the age of twenty-eight years.

Let such distinguished names, long since written in the Lamb's book of life, be inscribed in our memory. In reference to our venerable Father, I will at present only observe that this amiable, this merciful gift of the Lord was sent into the world on June 28th, 1703; and Epworth, on the banks of the Trent, had the honour of

being his birth-place. The world was blessed by his residence here below, during the long space of eighty-eight years, when he finished his course in London, March 2nd, 1791; God granting him the petition his heart and lips had so frequently presented at the throne of grace:—

“Till glad I lay this body down,  
 Thy servant, Lord, attend;  
 And O, my life of mercies crown  
 With a triumphant end!”

## II. The character of the Baptist's mission.

“He was sent from God, to be a witness to bear witness to the light.”

1. The sender, God. God employs his own servants to do his work. “God counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” “I have not sent them, yet they run.” “Send by whom thou wilt send.” God, by special providence, and by his Spirit, sends every servant of his; but some are more especially sent by him to fulfil an eminent service, as the Baptist, to prepare the way of the Lord; to make ready a people for the Lord; to fulfil the dispensation between the law and the gospel. Now it is very observable that those whom God sends, he prepares and adapts for their work. Thus was the Baptist prepared, and by easy transitions we may pass from the preparations of the earlier to those of the latter messenger. John was fitted by various natural endowments, and he was in the wilderness of Judea till his appearance in public. About the same age, he to whom we now more particularly allude, with a compact frame of body, and strong, intrepid, well-furnished mind, was sent forth from one of the most celebrated seats of learning. But was he to preach the Gospel with the wisdom of words? Ah, no! He was first sent into the American wilderness. It was in the woods of Georgia that he was taught to know himself, and prepared for the clearer knowledge of God, and so to be introduced into that

providential dispensation of which his own appearance and labours were destined to be the historical characteristics.

2. Then there is the Baptist's entrance on his ministry: not in the synagogues, but in the open air, where went out to him the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, and of all the regions round about Jordan. Mr. Wesley, without any previous plan of his own, being thrust out of the churches, went forth to the fields and highways where all flocked to him. It was not far distant from the place where we are now standing that, on Rose Mount, he first preached abroad, and not long after he published salvation on this very spot, and subsequently over all the kingdom, where worshipping thousands sang freely and delightfully,—

“Ye mountains and vales, with praises abound,  
Ye hills and ye dales, continue the sound;  
Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood,  
For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God.”

3. Notice, thirdly, the Baptist's ministry. He called all to repentance, whether pharisees or sadducees, publicans or sinners. He warned them to flee from the wrath to come, telling them that “the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and that every tree not bringing forth good fruit, would be hewn down and cast into the fire.” He cut off their vain pleas, admonishing them not to indulge the false hope that they might call Abraham their father. He detected and exposed their false professions, and required them to give practical evidence that their minds were seriously affected by his preaching, boldly saying to them, “Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.” And this was the method pursued by our modern Boanerges. He went forth, preaching every where that men must repent, and grounding the necessity of repentance, not merely upon profligacy of life, but upon corruption of heart, though

concealed by an exterior respectability of deportment : he described it as a clear perception of our guilt, misery, danger, and helplessness, with all those feelings which it unavoidably produces.

And as John preached repentance to the assembled multitudes of Judea, so he pointed them to the only author of salvation, his own superior and Lord. "Behold," said he, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And thus did the "John" of whom I now speak. He was the great instrument of reviving the almost forgotten doctrine of the Reformation and of the Bible,—the justification of a sinner by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. He did not ascribe the office of justifying even to the repentance which he preached so explicitly, and to which he so earnestly laboured to bring men. He spoke of man as ungodly, and of repentance as the perception, feeling, and acknowledgment of ungodliness; and to the sinner who thus saw that he needed salvation, and could not save himself, his constant language was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Christ was the great object to which his whole ministry pointed. He and his brother, in their own beautiful poetry, each described the feelings and purposes of his own heart :—

" His only righteousness I show,  
His saving truth proclaim :  
'Tis all my business here below,  
To cry, ' Behold the Lamb ! '

" Happy, if with my latest breath  
I may but gasp his name ;  
Preach him to all, and cry in death,  
' Behold, behold the Lamb ! ' "

Nor to the manner of salvation, only, did he bear witness, but likewise to its nature and extent. He preached a present deliverance from the guilt and

power of sin, through faith in Christ ; he preached this salvation as free for all ; he preached it as intended to issue in the full sanctification of spirit, and soul, and body,—in a state of established holiness, in which, the thoughts of the heart being cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God would be perfectly loved, and his holy name worthily magnified. “He bore witness to the light.”

And his witness was clear. Through a long life he wavered not, but delivered a testimony which, however it might be disliked, and sometimes misrepresented, could never be misunderstood by those who seriously and Christianly considered it. And it was scriptural ; for to those sacred fountains of heavenly wisdom, the holy Scriptures, he continually had recourse, that he might know the will of God. Though a man of learning, and of extensive reading, yet there was a sense in which he spoke of himself as *homo unius libri*, “a man of one book,” and that book, the Book of God. We may add that it was powerful : he did not merely state the truths which he testified, but laboured to make them impressive. In the energetic language of Paul, we may say of him, that “he persuaded men,” and not only told them of reconciliation, but besought them—earnestly, tenderly, alarmingly besought them—to be reconciled to God. And, then, it was constant and persevering : long as his life was, it was spent in one employment. His last public address, delivered in age and feebleness, and when life was now trembling into death, was a fit close of labours such as his had been. The venerable old man visited Leatherhead, in Surrey, and with all his remaining strength, cried, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near : Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly justify him.”

dantly pardon." And when laid on his dying bed, his testimony wavered not. He said,—

“ I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.”

And at length, literally, in attempting to express his feelings in the beautiful language of Dr. Watts,

“ I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,”

of which he could only utter the first words,

“ His last and faltering accents, whispered PRAISE!”

III. But let us now consider the grand design of the message:—“That all men through him might believe.” That is, that redemption itself being general, the testimony might possess an answerable character. “He bore witness of that light, that all men through him might believe.” The Baptist's was thus a non-exclusive ministry, and so was that which the angel from heaven exercised when he said to the shepherds, “I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to you, and to all people; for unto you is this day born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” And this is the proper character of the Christian ministry, according to the commission given by our blessed Lord,—“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Thus St. Paul understood it. “God,” said he, “would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” He regarded all as dead, dead in trespasses and sins, but he knew, too, that “One died for all;” and therefore, without any restraint on his own feelings, or any limitation in the form of his address, he besought men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. A design this, worthy of the universal Father and Friend, and plainly declaring the kindness and philanthropy of God our Saviour.

Now, of Mr. Wesley's ministry, this was one unfailling characteristic:—He bore witness to the boundless love of God, and to the unrestricted merits of Christ, and continually laboured to bring men to believe. We may take one of the hymns which he published as aptly describing this:—

“Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;  
Let every soul be Jesu's guest;  
Ye need not one be left behind  
For God hath bidden all mankind.

“Sent by my Lord, on you I call;  
The invitation is to ALL.  
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou,  
All things in Christ are ready now.

“Come, all ye souls by sin opprest,  
Ye restless wanderers after rest,  
Ye poor, and maim'd, and halt, and blind,  
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

“This is the time, no more delay;  
This is the acceptable day:  
COME IN, THIS MOMENT, AT HIS CALL,  
AND LIVE FOR HIM, WHO DIED FOR ALL.”

And, blessed be God! Mr. Wesley may be said still to bear witness, in the ministry of his sons in the Gospel, on whom his mantle descended when he was translated, and who, in the spirit and power of this Elias, now proceed throughout every quarter of the world, and in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, call on men of every clime and colour to believe and be saved. O the mind glows as it expands in the enumeration of these successors and their successes! The number of itinerant ministers being 2,355; and the number of members of the Wesleyan Methodist societies, 611,580. To these add the numbers who have died in the Lord; and forget not the many in all the protestant churches within and without the Establishment, who have de-

rived their beams from our burning and shining light. O what an immense family will he be honoured to present in the general assembly, when he will say, "Behold me, O my Divine Lord, and the children thou hast given me."

Such was this "man, sent of God to bear witness to the light." We will not forget that "he was not that Light;" but we will remember he was a faithful, splendid, and successful "witness" to it. And we firmly believe, that, in the order of God, he prepared the way, that ultimately all the world may believe and be saved, and thus the mystery of God be completed.

And now, in conclusion, I address,—

1. In the first place, those who bear his name. And I ask you, Have you truly received his testimony? Have you personally embraced it? Have you been led to Christ by it? Our Saviour said of John the Baptist, that he was a burning and shining light, and that many for a season rejoiced in that light. Even Herod "heard John gladly, and did many things." So may we. We may rejoice in our external privileges; we may honour the instrument through whom we are possessed of them; and yet remain short of that obedience to the scriptural testimony which is necessary to put us in possession of that free and present salvation which it exhibits. Have you admitted the light which discloses your guilt, corruption, and helplessness? Have you, like many poor publicans and sinners in the days of the Baptist, felt that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and that the violent take it by force? Have you pressed into it? Have you struggled with your self-righteousness and unbelief, and rested not till you have been enabled spiritually, appropriatingly, to behold the Lamb of God? What avails the clearness of the testimony, unless it be admitted by you?

2. I address, secondly, those of you who are inhabitants of Kingswood. Consider what a region of dark-

ness and death was Kingswood, when the voice of the Lord's messenger was first heard crying in this wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Your ancestors saw the great light. They said with rapture, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" "The wilderness and solitary place were glad." What grateful remembrance is due from you to the memory of this great benefactor of your ancestors, yourselves, your children, and children's children yet unborn! How were you interested in his labours for your benefit! How peculiarly did he judge himself to be sent hither, and how qualified for the ministry here! Such was he who loved you well and loved you long; and left provision for continuing his love to Kingswood to this time, and to future ages. See that you improve your privileges, or they will all turn to your condemnation.

3. I address, thirdly, the sons of his associates and successors. His object in founding this edifice, was to form a school where sound learning and piety might be united; this was his precise and important design. He began to build at an early period in the name of the Lord, seeking the auspices of Divine Providence; and the inscription on the west front informs us, that it was erected for the glory of God, and the benefit of Church and State. It was opened June 28th, 1748, and the sacred motto from the Holy Language contains his endowment, one which has not failed hitherto, and which we believe never will fail: "JEHOVAH JIREH, The Lord will provide." This prophetic inscription now goes far beyond his own enlarged faith. How has the Lord provided for Kingswood school, even from his own household! A Governor and Governess, Masters, and, to crown all, God owns yon house for

his residence. He pours out his Spirit upon the pupils, and verifies his own word, "The promise is to you, and to your children." May you be a seed to serve the Lord! Mr. Wesley once said to me in an early day of my life, "I honour youth, for they will be serving their generation, by the will of God, when I slumber in the dust." My dear young friends, remember that you are the children of Christian ministers, and let your whole conduct be suitable to your family connexions. Improve your time while here. Industriously seek for that knowledge which you have now the opportunity of acquiring. But, above all, "remember now your Creator in the days of your youth." Your fathers, your friends, the Connexion which kindly supports this school, all desire and expect that you would

"Unite the pair so long disjoin'd,  
Knowledge and vital piety."

4. I address those to whom our venerable father committed the charge of the sanctuary. Be faithful in the preservation of that doctrinal deposit which he derived from the word of God, and has transmitted to you. Preach the whole testimony and counsel of God, repentance, justification by faith, the witness of the Spirit, Christian holiness, obedience, both of heart and life:—preach a free, present, and full salvation, and thus bear witness to the true light, that, through you, many may believe. Be faithful, likewise to that scheme of wholesome discipline which he was led to form, and whose value we have, as a body, so long experienced.

I close the whole with a brief reference to his general character; from which we may all derive improvement.

In youth he was affectionately dutiful to his parents, and continued so to the end of their lives. Even in childhood he feared the Lord; and though much obscurity rested on his earlier religious views, yet it

pleased God to remove all the mists, and to bring him into the full light of the Christian dispensation. To learning he was strongly attached, and possessed a fine literary taste. The academical honours which he attained were but precludes of those that were before him, had he not counted them all loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Throughout the whole of his long and laborious life, his single aim appeared to be that of finishing the work God had given him to do; and to this he made everything subservient. He was diligent and regular; always employed, and always properly employed. He rose early, and performed every thing in its time, so that he filled every day with work. His maxim was, *Nulla dies sine lineâ*. He was indefatigable. He spared not himself: he was never subdued by the love of ease. I may venture to quote the remark of our blessed Lord respecting John the Baptist: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" O no! An oak of Bashan, a cedar of Lebanon. "A man clothed in soft raiment?" No: he was a man who counted neither ease, comfort, nor even life dear, that he might finish his course with joy. And then he was disinterested. He said, "If I die worth ten pounds after my funeral expenses and debts are paid, count me for a thief and a robber," and he kept his word. Nor was this at all intermitted. His life was prolonged beyond the common years of man, but to the end he sought no rest, and at last, almost according to words he had often sung, did he

"His body with his charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live."

Let us, my brethren, be faithful to our trust, and as far as our venerable father followed Christ, let us follow him. So both in the success of our labours, and the joyful triumph of our death, shall we realize his own dying words, "THE BEST OF ALL 'IS, GOD IS WITH US."

## SERMON V.

### JOB'S SINCERITY.

---

*The root of the matter is found in me. Job xix. 28.*

GOOD men cannot always judge of God's providential dealings. Justice and judgment are always the habitation of his throne; but he not unfrequently encompasses it with thick clouds which conceal its radiance from us, and, casting their own shadows on our path, leave us to walk for a while in entire darkness. Job's friends, wholly misconstruing the character of the afflictive dispensations with which he had been visited, supposed them to be a just punishment for his sins, and not for the trial and ultimate reward of his faith and patience. They charged him, therefore, with hypocrisy, assuming that had he not been the most heinous of all sinners he would not have been thus heavily afflicted. In vindication of himself against their censures, he remonstrates with them on their uncharitableness and unkindness, and tells them what they ought to have said, seeing that a principle, the very reverse of that which they imputed to him so untruly, was manifestly implanted in him. "Ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?" As though he had said, "I have not merely the pretence but the reality of religion; not the form of godliness alone, but its power; not the leaves of a spurious profession, but the very *root* of the matter: nor is this dependent on my own declaration; it is matter of sufficient clearness and notoriety; let it be sought for, and its evidences shall be seen; the root of the matter is

*found* in me. After the closest investigation which even your own mistaken censoriousness can pursue, you find me to be sincere: after the severest trials, God finds me to be gold in the furnace, if not without dross, still gold. You actually condemn me, and thus add to the weight of the calamities that oppress me; whereas ye rather 'should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?'"

This is pious Job's protest of the soundness of his own principles. How necessary it is that we should in this respect be like him, and that each of us should be able truly to say, "The root of the matter is in me!" Let us consider,

I. The subject of the investigation: "The root of the matter."

1. The root. And this is an essential part of the plant. It contains and conveys the very essence and nature which make the plant what it is: it supports it by connecting it with the earth; it is thus the chief organ of its existence, inasmuch as it inhales supplies of nutriment from the earth, sends them up through every part of the plant, and is thus essential to the developement of its buds, leaves, blossoms, and fruits.

The root is a natural figure employed in the Scripture to express the vital source of character in man, whether bad or good; and the conduct resulting from the principle is naturally called "the fruit," evil fruit or good fruit. Job maintains his character as a sincere pious man, by asserting that "the root of the matter," that is, the principle of religion, was in his possession. That root is a living, quickening, commanding principle of grace in the heart. If we look on the text as immediately referring to Job's preceding confession of his faith, we might specially assert that this root is closely connected with personal, saving faith in the promised Redeemer; and this more particularly if we read "the

root of the word," the great original word of promise, handed down by tradition through the patriarchal ages, and which in the fulness of times was verified in the incarnation of the Eternal Word himself, his atoning death, his resurrection, his future advent, when the dead shall be raised, and the saints see him face to face, and enjoy his everlasting salvation : all this being distinctly referred to by Job in the memorable words immediately preceding the text, and by which indeed the text is introduced. "I know," he exclaims, "that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

2. Then there is the matter ; that which springs from the root, and is produced by it ; that to which Job refers when he says, "The root of the matter is in me." True religious principle is never inactive, and never produces iniquity. So our Lord tells us, that a "good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither an evil tree good fruit." He tells us, that if we will have the fruit good, the tree must be made good ; but he tells us, too, that the tree is known by its fruits. In the case before us, the "matter" is genuine, substantial, beneficial religion. And this was possessed by Job ; for of him was it testified that he was perfect and upright, fearing God, and shunning evil : that is, he had religious principle, and religious practice ; grace in the heart, obedience in the life ; "the root of the matter," and that root supporting and nourishing those visible fruits of righteousness which are to the glory and praise of God.

And thus the Scriptures always teach us to view both the root and the matter. There must be faith in Christ, this is the root ; but then this works by love, and therefore it purifies the heart, and issues in practical holiness. Whatever be the belief of a man, if it be

alone, one with which no fruits of righteousness are connected, it is dead, "dead, being alone:" and on the other hand, whatever matter does not spring from the root, is but the form of godliness, the show of religion, not acceptable to God, because "not done as he hath willed and commanded them to be done." The scribes and pharisees thus had a sort of rootless matter; and therefore our Lord has most solemnly declared that except our righteousness shall exceed theirs, we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Job's profession was genuine and gracious; Job's principles were holy and operative: and thus must it be with ourselves; the root of the matter must be in us, and springing from the root all that it is intended to bear.

II. Let us now look at the manifestation of this in answer to various inquiries. Job not merely states that the root was in him, but that it was found in him. It was not hypocritically assumed; it was not mistakenly presumed; it was not even falsely attributed by others. "The root of the matter is found in me." The truly good man may employ the same language.

1. It is found by himself. Upon an impartial scrutiny into his heart and life, calling in the aid of the Spirit of God, and carefully applying the rules of the word of God, he finds his faith, hope, and love, to be sincere, holy, and divine. He obeys that most important injunction: "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves." He has imitated the example of the Psalmist, and devoutly said, "Search me, O, God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." And the result is,—and we again employ Scripture language to express it,—“Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,

not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." It is a fearful symptom when there is an evident reluctance to investigate our own state. It shows that we are conscious that all is not right, but that we are resolved to close our eyes to the humbling fact. Whereas, true sincerity longs to be right, and is therefore anxious to detect every thing inconsistent with it, if any thing there be. Nor is such searching in vain. Tracing obedience down to the principles in which it originates, which, in regard to his own heart, the Christian is enabled by the grace of God to do, and then, comparing those principles with the word of God, he rejoices in the testimony of his conscience, that the root of the matter is found in him.

2. It is found in him by the candid spectators of his character. They see his uniformly humble, holy, pious spirit; they hear his spiritual conversation; they are acquainted with his uprightness and benevolence; and in all this, they trace the operation of one principle. In fact, this uniformity is the great evidence of gracious principle. The Apostle said, "This one thing I do." His various actions all proceeded from one principle, and were directed to secure one great object. And when the Christian is thus seen walking by one rule, and minding one thing, it is as though the connection of fruit and leaves and branches with the trunk, and of that with the root, were made apparent. The flowers by which his profession is adorned are not artificial,—gaudy, but lifeless and unfragrant; their beauty and fragrance mark their union with the stem on which they hang, and you see that they grow there. The root of the matter is found in him.

3. Nay, it is found to be in him even by the less candid spectators, who are disposed to judge unfavourably of him. Their prejudices, their want of full opportunities of examining his mode of life, some of his

own defects and failures, may all lead to suspicion, and it may be said of him that he is a hypocrite, that he is only acting a part, and that his religious profession is the mask that he wears. Even Job had to bear these unkind, and in his case unjust, suspicions. The evil surmisings of his friends appear to have affected him more powerfully, wounded him more deeply, than all his other afflictions. The hand of the Almighty was on him, and his suspicious friends put the worst construction on the matter. "It is God," in effect they said, "detecting and exposing the hidden wickedness of his character." But, ultimately, God vindicated the cause of his servant, and attested his innocence. God brought forth his judgment as the light, and his righteousness as the noon-day, and then the root of the matter was found in him.

4. It was found in him by the evil one, who had accused him before God. He is very significantly called "the accuser of the brethren," who is permitted (though the manner is hidden from us) to accuse them before God day and night. He thus accused Job, insinuating that his religion was so closely connected with his prosperity, that if the one were removed, the other would disappear. The tempter was permitted to try him whom he had before been permitted to accuse. Trial after trial came; wave succeeded to wave, allowing the sufferer scarcely time to respire; but "Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly:" the root of the matter was found in him.

Foiled in these first attacks, he still insinuates doubts of Job's sincerity, and obtains permission for further and yet severer trial. The person of Job, exempt before, is now, with certain limitations, subjected to his violence. Fierce disease irritates and enfeebles the body as heavy calamities had before oppressed the mind. But though groans of pain were extorted from the sufferer, murmurs came not with them. "We have

received good at the hands of the Lord," he exclaims, "and shall we not receive evil?" In all this he sinned not with his lips, and thus stood the test, and the root of the matter was found in him.

And in the case of Job we may see illustrated what are often very mysterious occurrences in the history of professors of religion. The fiery trial comes, and if their building were composed of wood, hay, and stubble, when the fire has passed away, nothing but ashes and ruins are left: but if they were indeed serving God, not as the tempter, perhaps, has been insinuating, for worldly gain, but for his own sake, the rains descend, the floods come, the winds rage, but the house stands, because it is founded on the rock; and the tempter, baffled and defeated, is forced to acknowledge, "The root of the matter is found in him."

5. More than all, it is found there by God himself. Many passages of Scripture bring before us, not the mere abstract power of the Divine Being to search the heart, but what may be termed its "solemn and judicial exercise." He is called "the Searcher of hearts," not because he can search them, but because he does. By him, actions are said to be "weighed;" carefully examined, accurately appreciated. And this judicial work is performed, not, so to speak, by the penetrating eye of the Judge; in this respect, all things are continually naked and open before him; hell and destruction are without a covering, how much more the hearts of the children of men? This judicial work, we say, he performs by the arrangement of testing occasions and circumstances: occasions which will detect the lurking evil, and give it the power of springing on its prey, if it be not well chained, and the chain itself held by a vigorous and resolved hand; occasions which will, at the same time, place sincerity and uprightness beyond a doubt, and add another gem to the diadem of him who conquers through the blood of the Lamb. In this

sense, "God did tempt Abraham," and the root of the matter was found in him. Thus did God lead the Jews in the wilderness, to humble them and to prove them, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no; and O, of how many had it to be recorded, that the root of the matter was not found in them! Thus was Job tried, and in him the root of the matter was found. And thus "the Lord trieth the righteous;" for "as the fining pot is for silver, so the Lord trieth the heart." There is a crucible which no false profession can abide, and, sooner or later, the Searcher of hearts employs it. Happy they who are faithful in the time of special trial, and who thus have the root of the matter found in them.

III. The text suggests a claim on us for personal application. "The root of the matter is found in me." Not merely the matter has a root, or, the root of the matter exists in another; but it is found in me.

I. There is the open and habitual sinner. That root of which we have been speaking is not found in him; but there is a root, not dead, but active and fertile, and it is what the Scriptures call, "the root of bitterness." The tree is known by its fruit, and evil actions proclaim beyond possibility of mistake the evil character of the heart whence they proceed. And yet this very class of persons are most accustomed to boast of the goodness of their heart. They cannot excuse their life; but their heart, they tell you, their heart is good. Be not deceived. As is the matter, so must the root be. The fountain that gives forth such polluted streams cannot itself be pure. There are the wild grapes; their source is the evil heart of unbelief which departs from God, the carnal mind which is enmity against him, and their end is death. The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and it shall burn up the wicked; the unquenchable fire is their doom. But the Judge

yet delayeth his coming. And why? That you may seek his mercy. Deceive not yourselves with vain words. "The root of the matter is in you," and it must be extirpated, or you cannot be saved into God's holy habitation. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2. There is the hypocrite; the man of showy profession, of large religious pretension. He appears unto men to have the matter, and he wishes them to believe he has the root; but neither belongs to him: the root is not in him at all, and the matter is not genuine; it is the form, without the power. God knows him already; and if exposure come not earlier, the day of judgment shall bring it, and then fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrites. O repent, if perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven you, that even you, reconciled to God through the expiation of his Son, may indeed have the true root of the true matter.

3. There is the apostate, described as being twice dead,—dead in Adam, then quickened by grace, and now,—O dreadful state,—through unwatchfulness, and spiritual infidelity, dead again; twice dead; plucked up by the roots; the root was there, but is now there no longer. Hear, O ye backsliders, the word of the Lord. It is a word of warning: "Ye are nigh unto cursing, and your end is to be burned." It is a word of merciful admonition. Return unto him, he will heal your backslidings, and love you freely. The Vine-dresser pleads for you, and you are spared yet a little longer. Seize the opportunity, before it be too late for ever.

4. There are those truly described by the text. "The root of the matter is found in them." Suffer ye the word of exhortation.

(1.) Even the root is not independent; it takes hold of the earth, extracts nourishment from the soil, and thus transmits life, vigour, and growth to the whole

plant. Let your faith take firm hold of God, that so you may be steadfast and unmovable. Let it prompt you to much prayer, that God may pour on your soul his heavenly grace, whether as the dew, the soft shower, or the mighty torrent; that so your faith may send grace through the whole tree,—trunk, branches, leaves. Abide in Christ; receive from Christ; so shall you bear much fruit.

(2.) Let this be your consolation, even should your foes exult, and your friends reproach and desert you, and you walk in darkness and have no light: Your heavenly Father knoweth the way you take, for he is leading you in it; and when he has tried you, he will bring you forth as gold. Only hold fast your integrity. Mind the root of the matter. While you keep right with God, all is right with you. The hours of darkness are passing away; the storm is dispersing; you are approaching the wealthy place. Leave it to God to dispose of you as he pleases; still trust in him, and do good; yea, though he slay you, trust in him. What are the trials of time to the enjoyments of eternity? and these shall be yours for ever.

## SERMON VI.

### MISSIONARY EXERTIONS CONSIDERED IN THEIR OBJECT AND OBLIGATIONS.

---

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isaiah xl. 3—5.*

MISSIONARY exertions contemplate the conversion of the whole world to God. What a stupendous object is this! Not less than from eight hundred to a thousand millions of human beings, (taking only the inhabitants of the world at any one period,) with all their passions and prejudices, all their errors and all their vices, all the evil fruit of an evil nature, to be brought to know and acknowledge God, to fear, and love, and serve him, to bring them all to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing! It would seem a mere chimera, the wild dream of some enthusiastic imagination, if we had not the sure word of prophecy. But, great as the object is, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and the zeal of the Lord shall perform it. And it is an object as benevolent as it is vast. With the sins of mankind, their miseries also shall be removed. With the establishment of holiness, there shall be the establishment of peace, and love, and joy. The reign of God is a reign of mercy; and the kingdom of God in the world, as well as in the heart, is "righteousness, peace,

and joy in the Holy Ghost." The most enlightened philanthropy cannot go beyond this,—that the tabernacle of God should be with men, and that he should dwell among them.

In the promotion of such an object, my brethren, we should all of us feel deeply interested. Are we human beings, members of the great family of mankind? Are we Christians, partakers ourselves of the blessings of the Gospel? If human sympathy and love dwell in our bosoms; if Christian zeal and devotion animate our souls; then shall we feel a deep and lively, yea, a personal interest in seeking to secure this great and benevolent object. We shall stand prepared to watch every movement of providence, every dispensation of grace; to wait for the opening of the door, and promptly to enter in by it; to hear every summons to duty, and unhesitatingly to obey it.

I have now to beseech you to listen to the call from heaven,—may it indeed be an effectual call!—which I have read as my text. Hear these beautiful strains of ancient poetry. Attend to this divinely prophetic admonition. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness."—The world is, as to God and good, a wilderness: voices are heard there, but they are voices of the ravening beast; voices of the destroyer; voices as of Rachel weeping for her children; the voices of the suffering and destroyed. But hearken: another voice is heard: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness." And what is the proclamation? "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." He is the King of the world, and he comes to rescue man from his enemies, and to conquer the world back again to himself. The proclamation refers to the coming and triumphs of Him of whom it is said, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through

him might be saved." Let us seriously and devoutly consider its import.

I. Let us first consider the GLORIOUS REVELATION spoken of:—"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall behold it together."

1. And here, the object, to which, in this revelation, all eyes will be turned, first calls for our attention:—"The glory of the Lord." This is, generally, the display of the divine perfections, through whatsoever medium they are made known. Thus, the heavens are said to declare the glory of God, because, as the firmament showeth his handy-work, his eternal power and godhead, as their first and almighty Cause and Upholder, shine forth from them. Thus, too, was the Mosaic dispensation made glorious, because, in some important respects, the light of the divine character was exhibited by it. But it is in the Gospel chiefly that this display of the divine perfections is to be found. We may say of the visible creation, when compared in this respect with the Gospel, what St. Paul asserts of the Mosaic law, that that which was made glorious had yet no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. God in the Gospel is seen sitting on his throne, and making all things new; creating the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. To the Son it is said, "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." His kingdom, therefore, is an everlasting kingdom; nor shall the new creation perish, but eternally shine forth, exhibiting the praises of Him by whom it was called from darkness into marvellous light. In the Gospel all the glory of Jehovah's goodness passes before us. Moses

might see only his back parts; "but we all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" the glory of the Lord in the face of Christ Jesus. The types and shadows of the law presented encouraging intimations of this, but the Gospel unfolds it. In Christ, in his divine person and redeeming work, we see the brightness of the divine glory, because we see how God can be just, and the justifier even of the ungodly. The prophet stated the problem: "A just God and a Saviour," to whom "all the ends of the earth" are to "look, and be saved;" the Gospel explains and solves it, first of all pointing to the atonement of Christ, in which we see the righteousness of God vindicated against the impeachments of sin, and the love of God proved in the salvation of sinners.

" Here the whole Deity is known,  
Nor dares a creature guess,  
Which of the glories brightest shone,  
The Justice, or the Grace.

2. Consider, secondly, the revelation of this glory.

As compared with its manifestation in the Gospel, it had been hidden from past ages and generations. To the heathen world, who had sunk into gross darkness, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, it was not made known at all. They sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death. The faint ray proceeding from the primitive tradition, they so mixed with the lights of their own kindling that it could not be distinguished from them; while the light which shone from Mount Zion they laboured to obscure, and even to quench. And as to the Jews, through their own sinful neglect, the intimations which their types and shadows gave were in too many instances unheeded, so that when Moses was read, the veil was upon their hearts, and what of glory was to be seen in their dispensation was, as to the bulk of the people, unnoticed, and therefore unknown.

The veil was partly removed by Christ in his personal ministry. They who were privileged with access to him, saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. His mighty works, and the wonderful wisdom of his sayings, drew many to him, as "to the brightness of the rising" of the Sun of righteousness. And then, there was his atoning death; an event which indeed asserted the glory of the Lord, but which was, for a time, as the sun behind dense and black clouds, which cast a deep shadow on all beneath them. It was, even to the disciples themselves, the wisdom of God in a mystery. The day of Pentecost was the day of unveiling. The mighty rushing wind came, and the clouds were dispersed, and the shadows fled. The sun had risen, but his rising had been obscured by clouds; now the heavens were to be seen in their brightness; the "day of salvation" was fully come, and the apostles, early awake, and catching the first beams of the glorious effulgence, lifted up their voice among the careless, and cried aloud, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Yes, my brethren, in the events of that day, whether in the truths revealed, or in the open proclamation of them, the words of the prophet were indeed fulfilled: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

3. The text calls us to consider the prophetic promise of the universal revelation of this glory. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall behold it together."

Wherever the apostles went forth they preached the Lord Jesus; and thus preaching Christ crucified, such were the effects produced by the blessing of God upon their doctrine, that, though many rejected, and some blasphemed, their doctrine was "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Wherever they went they brought light to those who sat in darkness; light

on all those subjects which it most concerns man to know. The character of God, the way of salvation, the nature, rule, and obligations of virtue, a future state of rewards and punishments, were all distinctly unfolded: in a word, by their faithful preaching, the glory of the Lord was revealed, and men gazed on it, and were enlightened. But more than this is evidently comprised in the prediction. "All flesh shall see it together." To this the apostolic commission is plainly related: "Go into all the world; preach the Gospel to every creature." It is by preaching the Gospel that Divine light is to be spread; this is the instrument: and the commission shows how universally that instrument was to be employed. The ministers of Christ are bound to keep this in view, that the Gospel is to be taken into all the world, and preached to every creature. With the foresight of this, the prophetic Spirit thus describes the results:—"All flesh shall behold it together."

There has been already a partial fulfilment of this. In every quarter of the globe, among people of every colour and condition, from savage to cultivated life, the glory of the Lord has been revealed; and every where have proofs of the power of God been connected with it. The glory of the Lord has been revealed in the faithful exposition of his truth; men have been pricked to the heart, and "have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them," and been collected into the apostles' fellowship as well as doctrine: and being then associated, they unite in the testimony,—“We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory into glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

And we are cheered when we see what is doing, and about to be done, in the prosecution of the same holy enterprise. Missionaries are gone forth almost wherever openings have been presented to them. The Scriptures are translated into languages never before so

honoured, and are circulated to an extent to which, a century ago, we should have thought it impossible that in so short a time it could have been carried. The zeal of Christians is excited to desire and to attempt even yet greater things than these. And whither does all this tend? Blessed be God, we know not merely the direction of the present movement, but its final results. We have consulted the oracle, and we have obtained the reply. Not such a reply as was to be had by such as consulted the Delphic oracle, ambiguous, deceptive, false,—but such as was to be expected from the “lively oracles,” “the oracles of God;” one full of truth and goodness, and at once calculated to animate and direct. Hear some of the answers which are given:—“There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” Yes, my brethren, these oracles assure us that Messiah’s dominion shall be “from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth,” and that “the isles shall wait for his law:” that “incense shall be offered unto him, and a pure offering, in every place,” for that “his name shall be great among the Heathen,” and great “from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.” “The fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved.” These are the oracles which support our faith and excite our hope. The subject we consider may not be free from mysteries; and, when compared with the strength of man, the progress of which we speak may be attended with difficulties. We attempt not to remove the mysteries, nor to deny the existence of the difficulties. There stands the “great mountain.” By all the “might and power” which man can bring, it is not to be

removed. But shall we therefore despond? No! We call upon the name of the Lord. To him we say,

“Our utter impotence we see,  
But nothing is too hard for Thee.”

And because he hath said it, so we believe it shall be. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall behold it together.”

But the text is to be considered not only as exciting hope, but as directing and encouraging diligence and effort. There is not only a delightful object to be contemplated in the glorious revelation which is predicted and promised, but there is a duty to be performed, and the text calls upon us to engage in its performance.

Let us, then, consider,

II. THE IMPERATIVE CALL TO DUTY. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

The voice of the Holy Spirit crieth unto us. The Scriptures are his word; and all that he has said in prophecy implies that it is our duty to seek the accomplishment of the prediction by employing all those means which are lawful and suitable. So the Apostle understood it. When he “turned to the Gentiles,” he justified his conduct by quoting the inspired declaration, that the Messiah was to be “for salvation to the ends of the earth,” and this he thus interprets into a declaration of the will of God as to man, as well as of his purpose respecting Christ. “For so hath the Lord commanded us.” Whosoever, therefore, you read these sacred predictions, understand them as pointing to the path of a present duty as well as to the final issue of it. The Spirit calls you to “prepare the way of the Lord, and to make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

And just now the voice of Providence addresses us in the same manner. The temple of Janus is shut. Peace prevails universally. Men even seem tired of war. Commercial activity sends our ships to every port. Geographical enterprise sends explorers and discoverers into every region. Facilities of communication with distant lands are multiplied. Foreign parts scarcely seem strange to us. And, by a wonderful concurrence of events, the British empire is larger than ever. The loss of America is followed by the gain of India. And even in America, British literature, both ancient and modern, will, through identity of language, exert a powerful influence. And why all this? What do these events say? Is the language of Providence at all mysterious? written in hieroglyphics? O no! All points to the wants of the world, as exhibited by every communication from every part; and all points to the only and all-sufficient remedy. I will not say, "which we and our Anglo-American descendants alone possess," for other nations have it,—but I will say, "that remedy which we alone so possess as to have it more efficiently than others, and to have it so as that we have it in our power to make the most efficient use of it." Does not all this say, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God?"

Then there is the voice of the church. Its general cry bespeaks its proper temper, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The church catholic says to all its particular members, "Ye that make mention of the name of the Lord, keep not silence; give him no rest till he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." And just now, the whole church in our own land, as well as among our American brethren, seems awakened from slumber, and with renewed earnestness to desire the coming of her Lord and Saviour to deliver, and govern, and bless

mankind. Never was the subject more considered, and more desired; and it is felt, that, in whatever way the prophecies shall ultimately receive their accomplishment, Christians are to wait, not in supineness, but activity; not indeed the activity of self-confidence, but that of hallowed obedience: the activity that seeks the end by the use of the means, and, having used the means, refers the event to God,—God all-mighty,—God all-sufficient. The church prays earnestly that God would hasten his universal kingdom; that his glory may be so revealed as that all flesh may behold it together: and coming from the sanctuary where such prayers have been addressed to God, to the people at large the voice of exhortation is addressed. They that pray are to work. They that desire the coming of Christ's kingdom, must seek to make all ready for its establishment. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

And to the same effect is the voice of the Heathen world. Yes; in what is most emphatically, "the wilderness," is a voice heard crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." It was a most remarkable vision which Paul saw: "A man of Macedonia stood and said, Come over and help us." Come over the boundary; come over into Europe; come over, and help us,—for we are Heathen, ignorant of God, ignorant of futurity, and unable to help ourselves; therefore, come over and help us. My brethren, look at any part of the world you please; only look at it as Christians. Look to the North, the South, the East, the West. Look to continents, look to islands. Classify mankind on any principle you may choose to adopt. Make them pass in review before you, or survey, in your spirit, their countless multitudes spread over the globe. As you gaze, a cry comes forth from the whole. You listen, and though the sound is loud as ten thousand thunders, vast as the rushing of many waters, there is no confusion: the

voice, to the believer, is as distinct as it is audible; the groaning of creation speaks of the bondage of corruption, of the glorious liberty of the children of God, of the coming of the Desire of all nations: the voice of the world is the echo of the voice of the church; the wilderness of earth reverberates the address of heaven, and the cry is, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

2. Let us examine somewhat more particularly the duty to which we are thus summoned. We are to prepare the way of the Lord. We are to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. We are to announce his approach, and to prepare for his coming. We are, in fact, to seek to bring the whole world to a believing submission to Christ. We are to aim at the conversion of mankind.

This, however, may be met by an objection:—"It is not in our power to convert a single soul; much less, then, the whole world." Very true. Conversion, in the sense in which the term is generally used, is indeed God's work. Only He can justify the ungodly; only He quicken the dead in trespasses and sins. Conversion is God's work, and so far as it is his, we are not called to perform it. It may be likewise objected,— "But even as instruments, how little can we do towards a work of such almost incalculable magnitude!" This also is true. But what then? If you cannot do everything, does it follow that you are to do nothing? Something we can do, and therefore something we ought to do, both towards the conversion of one soul, and towards the conversion of mankind; something towards the establishment of the kingdom of Christ in the heart, and something towards its establishment in the world. St. James makes no scruple of using this very impressive language:—"He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." We can speak of Christ

to our neighbours ; we can assist in sending Christian missionaries to speak of him to the Heathen ; truth, in a word, is the great instrument which God employs in saving men, and in various ways, we can be instrumental in spreading the truth.

And let us not overlook one clearly revealed fact,—that the believer has power with God by prayer. Much mystery may be connected with the fact, but none rests on this, that it is a fact: “The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.” God will do that for prayer which he will not do without it. Even to his Son he saith, “Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance.”

By prayer, then, we take hold of the strength of Omnipotence ; and our means and instruments, when connected with prayer, assume a new character, and possess an influence and efficiency which raise them far above the order of mere human agencies. God is with us, and the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God. Both his Providence and his grace are, so to speak, set at work by prayer ; and before the providence and grace of God what hinderances shall not give way ? When suitable means are employed, and when, in answer to the prayers that acknowledge that all the help that is done in the earth is done by Divine power, the means are connected with an influence from above ; the valleys shall be exalted, every mountain and high hill shall be brought low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places straight. Look at the ancient times. The church of old had her difficulties and oppositions ; but God was with her, and they were all overcome. Now, “whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning ; that we, through patience and encouragement of the Scriptures, might have hope.” The church in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, on the banks of Jordan, shows what is possible to obedient industry, and

depending prayer. Let us not then be afraid. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Following our great Captain, we climb and surmount the loftiest ridges. We want not Hannibal, and his vinegar and fire. If it be needful that the mountain be removed and cast into the sea, our faith shall remove it. And why? because our faith is mighty in itself? No: but because it apprehends the power of Him who "toucheth the mountains and they smoke, and who taketh up the isles as a very little thing." See the apostles, the fishermen of Galilee; and witness their success. They spoke with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: their word was the ministration of the Spirit; God made them always to triumph in every place. And if we, my brethren, go forth in the same spirit of zeal for God's glory, and of compassion for the souls of men; in the same spirit of aggressive labour, and depending, believing, self-renouncing prayer; if we make not our weakness an excuse for an indolent self-indulgence, nor our zealous obedience a pretext for self-confidence and self-seeking; He who was with his servants of old, shall be with us also.

And this we expect; and because we expect this, we look for the extirpation of error, falsehood, ignorance, idolatry, and even sin. The veil of the covering spread over all nations shall be taken away; the idols be cast unto the moles and the bats; and all nations shall worship and serve the Lord.

III. Let me briefly call your attention to the ENCOURAGEMENT which the text supplies to your faith and hope. "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." To which we may add another form of expression, by this same prophet, and in reference to the same great subject:—"The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." God hath said it, and God will do it. Here, then, we have the absolute certainty of the subject.

By the prophetic Spirit, a page of the otherwise unknown future is opened to our view. We want to know in what the convulsions and revolutions of this world of uncertainty and sin shall issue; and here we have our wish gratified. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." By what means, or through what series of events, all this shall be done, we are not particularly informed; but it shall be done, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it;" and this shall be the issue, the consummation so devoutly to be wished,— "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

We are taught by the apostle, that the "heirs of promise" have "strong consolation" in all that refers to their own personal salvation, arising from the "two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie." So in reference, likewise, to the spread of the Gospel, and its triumphs through the whole world, we may say that "God, willing more abundantly to show the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath," and has given us the "two immutable things in which it is impossible that he should lie." Here is, first, what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken:—"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall behold it together;" and then, elsewhere, you have this "confirmed by an oath," for it is written by this same prophet, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." There shall be a universal acknowledgment of God, and he shall be universally adored: and this is shown to be the immutable counsel of God, because it is spoken by his mouth, and then confirmed by an oath:

“By myself I have sworn, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return.”

And He who has thus condescended to open to us these cheering prospects of the future, is the Lord God omnipotent. All means and instruments are at his disposal, and he can raise up such as are best fitted for the work he intends to accomplish by them. Even the wrath of man he can make to praise him; nay, even the malice of Satan. Human ambition may break down the barriers which prevented the admission of truth: human cupidity may penetrate into remote regions, and bring to light a people before unknown. But especially is the residue of the Spirit with him. An earnest of what the outpourings of this mighty influence could accomplish, was afforded at the day of Pentecost. The seemingly powerless and unbefriended disciples of Christ spoke to their own enemies, and the enemies of their Master, whose blood they had just before shed; and behold the astonishing effects! The weapons of their warfare were indeed mighty through God. Multitudes were pricked to the heart; sought help from him whom they had crucified; and two thousand prisoners were taken at this very commencement of the sacred contest. And He who then caused his own work to triumph, has hitherto sustained it. There have been times when the enemy has come in as a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard against him; the battle has been turned to the gate, the seemingly decayed cause has revived and flourished, and captivity has again been led captive. And thus is it now. Christianity has resumed its aggressive character. The standard-bearers have lifted up their banners in the name of the Lord; and we see the ensigns waving, not merely on the long-occupied citadels of the church, but waving in the midst of the enemy. It is astonishing how rapidly and widely the cause of our Immanuel has advanced and extended,

even in our own times. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

But, to conclude. Let us not forget that we personally need that work which on a larger scale is to be wrought in the earth.

“ Hark ! the glad sound, the Saviour comes,  
The Saviour promised long :  
Let every heart prepare a throne,  
And every mouth a song.”

My brethren, have we submitted to him ? Have we received him ? His glory has been revealed ; but have our hearts turned to the Lord, that the veil might be taken away, and that we “ all with open face, beholding in a glass the glory of the Lord, might be changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord ? ” In vain do we profess zeal for the cause of Christ in the world, if we do not seek the establishment of his kingdom in our own soul. That kingdom “ is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” by the setting up of that blessed kingdom within you ; and the kingdom of heaven in your hearts shall prepare you for the inheritance of everlasting glory.

And be zealous for the Lord of Hosts. Live in the spirit of the Lord's prayer. You are taught and commanded by Christ never to pray without remembering before God the interests of religion in the earth, and you have ground for your faith to rest upon. These dry bones shall live, because the Spirit of the Lord shall breathe upon them. Therefore relax not in your endeavours ; be discouraged by no unpromising circumstances ; and by liberal contributions in aid of Christian missions, show your faith in God, inasmuch as you are thus, as it were, paying the purchase-money for land as yet overrun by the enemy, but which you believe shall be redeemed by the power of God, and made as the garden of the Lord, even as Eden.

# SKETCHES OF SERMONS.

---

## SKETCH I.

### DEVOUT SOLICITUDE FOR A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

---

*O Lord, revive thy work.*—Habakkuk iii. 2.

To be feelingly, powerfully, and zealously affected for the interests of religion, considered as the work of God, having for its object the glory of God in the salvation of immortal souls, has ever been the character of his faithful servants; especially when they have had awful views of his displeasure against sin, and have apprehended a sudden display of his wrath. Thus felt Moses, the man of God, as appears in Psalm xc. 13—15: “Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.” And thus felt the prophet Habakkuk in the contemplation of God’s judgments, denounced against the Jewish nation; and he earnestly prayed, that in the midst of the years of their adversity in Babylon, the Lord would graciously “preserve alive” (margin) the interests of religion among them, that their calamities might be sanctified so that religion might revive and flourish. Religion, then, is the work of God; and it is most,

desirable to see its important interests maintained, and its sacred influences revive and predominate. I mean to call your attention to

I. The work of God,—

II. To the means of obtaining a revival of religion ;—

III. And then to urge the use of those means, by presenting some motives, which, by the blessing of God, may be influential in calling forth your exertions for its attainment.

I. The work of God. “O Lord, revive thy work!”

“Great and manifold are thy works, O Lord ; in wisdom hast thou made them all.” The work of God in the visible creation, is a magnificent display of his wisdom, power, and goodness. But it is to be remarked, that this work was soon effected, even in six days ; and the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had made : and this work is doomed to destruction : “The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Peter iii. 7.

Not so the other work of God to which we allude. It was not finished in six days, nor six years, nor six hundred ; it has been going on nearly six thousand years ; it will proceed till time shall be no longer ; and even afterwards it will extend its grand results through the interminable ages of eternity.

The general description of this work may be given in one word, “religion,” which has existed under every dispensation since Adam’s time. Under our complete dispensation of the Gospel, it is the religion of Christ ; what he calls, “the kingdom of God,” existing in the heart, and extending its sacred influence on the life and conduct of every one who is its subject.

1. In its essential nature, it is a work of grace in the soul. The Scripture describes it by terms which

imply wonderful energy, operation, and effect: "A new birth," the "opening the eyes of the blind," "the quickening and raising the dead;" and its process is a "new creation after the image of God," "in righteousness and true holiness."

2. Its efficient agent is the Holy Ghost, by whose sacred influence it is wrought in the soul; not being merely natural, of spontaneous growth, nor affected by reason in any of its actions, nor accomplished by our own unaided moral effort. Hence a Christian is "born of the Spirit;" is "renewed in the spirit of his mind;" is "the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" "He who hath wrought us to the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit;" "He worketh in us to will and to do;" "Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our works in us." It is not, then, by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that this great work is wrought.

"What are our works but sin and death,  
Till thou thy quick'ning Spirit breathe?  
Thou giv'st the power thy grace to move;  
O wondrous grace! O boundless love!"

### 3. Means employed.

- (1.) The inspired word—read or heard.
- (2.) The ministry of the Gospel.
- (3.) His appointed ordinances.

But whatever instruments or means God is pleased to employ, the Holy Spirit is the only efficient and effectual agent. It is his divine influence that renders them successful; and not only evidences the work to be his production, but secures the glory of it to God himself. "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Our sufficiency is of God; that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

4. The work of grace in the soul is variously described in Scripture, as "the kingdom of God which is

not meat and drink," (external acts and forms, rites and ceremonies,) "but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." But there is a particular characteristic given by the text: it is possessed of vitality. "O Lord, revive," give renewed life to "thy work." Vitality, life, is the emphatic Scripture character of true religion; the life of God in the soul of man. "He that hath the Son hath life." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Of his own will begat he us, by the incorruptible seed of the word, which liveth and abideth for ever."

In the work of God upon the soul of a Christian believer, all refers to life, or springs from it, from first to last. Has he repentance? it is a "repentance unto life." Has he faith? it is a living faith. Has he hope? it is a lively (living) hope. Has he the Christian graces? they are the fruits of the Spirit, living in him and growing to ripeness and maturity. Every metaphor employed to describe the work of God in the soul is fraught with living power and life. It is a grain of mustard-seed; it is leaven that ferments the whole mass; it is a fountain of living water springing up unto everlasting life. If Christians be denominated "stones," they are living stones. It is life emphatic, life everlasting, life divine. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

## II. The means of obtaining a revival of the work of God.

By a revival is meant, in an individual, an increase of spiritual life in the soul; and generally, an extension of religion in the church of Christ, by the awakening of souls, the justification of penitents, &c. For

the attainment of this blessing, let us take the example of the prophet.

1. We should humble ourselves under the afflictive conviction, that, because of the declension of religion "the wrath of God is gone forth." He heard the threatening of the Almighty denounced, and was filled with fearful apprehension, which led him to sue for mercy. "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid; in wrath remember mercy." Thus Moses, Daniel, &c.

2. We should fervently pray to God with humble dependence on his blessing. "O Lord, revive!" In this course there are two things implied:—

(1.) The consideration that the work is God's. "O Lord, revive thy work!" He is the author of religion. He is the great worker in individual and in general cases. Its interests are His; and His glory is its end. Convinced of this, let us fervently pray as the Psalmist: "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." Psalm lxxxv.

(2.) The consideration that He can, and that He only can revive his work. Hence he is sought unto, "O Lord, revive thy work!" All instruments and means are his. If he do not work by them, they can effectuate nothing, be the instruments ever so well qualified, and the means ever so appropriate. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 5—7. But in his hands, be they never so weak and insignificant, they can effect wonders. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the

weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty." 1 Cor. i. 27.

3. In our supplications to God, we should pray for, and expect, a present revival: "in the midst of the years." If we be indefinite in time, it is nearly as bad as being indefinite in terms. Jacob said, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." The angel Gabriel told Daniel, "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee." And it is said, "While the disciples prayed."

4. We should each, like the prophet, inquire into his own state, to find whatever may be in himself to obstruct and impede a revival. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower; and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Habakkuk ii. 1. God complained by Jeremiah, "I have heard what the prophets said that prophesied lies in my name," &c., "Let us search for the accursed thing," &c. Jer. xxiii. 25. If Christ says, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," let us "repent and do our first works, and strengthen the things which remain," &c.

But all the preceding would be enthusiasm, did we not attend to what He requires of us to do, besides praying to Him.

5. We should employ all the instruments and means in our power.

(1.) We should seek the Lord for ourselves, in our own closets, in the means of grace, searching the Scriptures, and prayer.

(2.) We should further the preaching of the Gospel God's chief instrument in saving men, and spreading his work.

(3.) We should wisely and zealously combat error, impiety, and infidelity; never associating with them, always discountenancing them; and opposing them at every proper opportunity.

(4.) We should encourage young converts, and the rising generation.

(5.) We should animate the zeal, and encourage the talents, of others; be like Aaron and Hur on the mount.

(6.) We should sanctify the unrighteous Mammon, and make every sacrifice. What is the silver and the gold, to the salvation of souls?

(7.) And even if we should not see the effect desired in others, we should labour to secure our own interest in the mercy of God. If we really desire a revival of religion, there is nothing to prevent it in ourselves; and if we do not desire it for ourselves, we do not truly and properly desire it for others.

III. Reasons to induce us to seek for a revival of religion. There are many. I will only mention a few general motives at present.

1. Sacred regard for the cause and work of God. Reflect on its value and importance in reference to the salvation of souls, and the honour of God. How felt the Psalmist for the church of God? "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Psalm cxxxviii. 5. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee." Psalm cxxii. 6. How felt Isaiah? "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Isaiah lxii. 1. How felt St. Paul, Romans ix., x.? How felt the blessed Redeemer? He wept over Jerusalem, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Luke xiii. 34. He said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." John ii. 17.

For the sake of this great work he became incarnate, lived, laboured, suffered, bled, died. To carry it on, he arose from the dead, ascended to heaven, received gifts for men. To support and consummate this great work, he administers the kingdom of heaven and earth; and the glorious result of this work is to accumulate glories on him to all eternity. If these considerations impress us with the value and importance of this cause, we may find,

2. Encouragement in a grateful retrospect of God's former interest in his cause, as the prophet Habakkuk did.

(1.) Let us recall to memory how God, in times past, appeared for his cause, and the wonders he wrought to maintain it. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise." Habakkuk i. 3. And all this terrible display of his power was for the salvation of his people: "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah." Verse 13. Thus likewise the Psalmist: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." Psalm xlv. 1. And thus Isaiah: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?" Isaiah li. 9.

(2.) Let us exercise faith on the promises of God, respecting the glorious work he will yet accomplish. Thus, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk ii. 14. By Isaiah: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah

xl. 5. And predictions innumerable, to the same effect.

(3.) Let us then pray with the church, and employ all the means in our power, in accordance with our prayers: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us." "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children." Psalm xc. 16.

"Then, then, let it spread,  
Thy knowledge, and dread,  
Till the earth is o'erflow'd,  
And the universe fill'd with the glory of God."

(4.) And let us not neglect religion, as it is personal. If it revive around us, and we do not admit its sacred power into our own hearts, what better are we? We may see many come, perhaps through our instrumentality, and enter the kingdom of God, and we ourselves be cast out through personal negligence and sin. Seek that this work may be begun, if you have hitherto resisted. Seek for its revival, if your negligence has allowed it to decline; seek that God would fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. Herein is he glorified; even in your bearing much fruit.

## SKETCH II.

### SANCTIFIED BEREAVEMENT.\*

---

*But he knoweth the way that I take : when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job xxiii. 10.*

“WHAT I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” With this assurance from the lips of the true and faithful Witness, the genuine Christian should be satisfied. Religion, which is the converse of the believing soul with God in Christ, initiates (so to speak) the soul into the council of God, where, if he be not fully informed of all the immediate operations, he is taught how to appreciate the ultimate design entertained by infinite Wisdom and Goodness, the design for ever kept in view in God’s providential dealings with the faithful. This design is so remote from the ordinary means to accomplish it, that many who are pious do not perceive the process ; they misunderstand, they doubt, they conclude that consistently with the holy, gracious, and righteous character of God, the present operation of his hands is by no means to be expected to effectuate a beneficial result. Thus Job’s friends beheld not, in his extraordinary afflictions, any demonstration of God’s ultimate design. But when eminently pious persons are sometimes brought into a perplexing labyrinth, where they perceive no footsteps of Divine Providence, as Job v. 3—9 ; yet here is their hold, the spring of their confidence,—that though they cannot clearly perceive the course God takes, he knows their course ; the way they had taken previous to the

\* These are the notes of the first sermon Mr. Roberts preached after the death of his beloved son, Thomas Randolph.

season of extraordinary trial, and the manner in which they conduct themselves during its continuance, and are satisfied, with David, "Though many are the afflictions of the righteous, yet the Lord delivereth him out of them all;" and with Job in the text, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Let us examine,

I. The way to be taken by the pious in seasons of affliction.

Here let it be remembered, we speak of pious sufferers. God, indeed, is frequently pleased in love to the souls of sinners to visit them with judgments, that they may think of their ways and turn their feet to his testimonies, and be led to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." But the pious,

1. Should still persevere in the general course of faith and obedience in which they had previously walked. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." A beautiful climax. "My foot hath held his steps:" I have maintained my position.—Nay, I have done more, I have advanced, gone forward, and persevered in the way.—More even than that, I have loved the way: not even my necessary food has been so comfortable and valuable to me.

It was thus Job persevered. In trial, he held fast his integrity, and still said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." So the good man, whatever he suffers, he is not to decline from the testimonies of God; but to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

2. But there is a particular way to be taken in seasons of affliction, such as Job took.

(1.) The way of humble submission. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly;" but said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

(2.) The way of undeviating confidence in the faithfulness of God, and the sufficiency of grace. So St. Paul: "I know whom I have believed;" and so St. Peter admonishes: "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." So did our blessed Saviour in the moment of his expiration: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

"Though waves and storms go o'er my head,  
 Though strength, and health, and friends be gone;  
 Though joys be wither'd all and dead,  
 Though every comfort be withdrawn:  
 On this my steadfast soul relies,—  
 Father, thy mercy never dies."

II. The assurance that when the trial ends, they shall come forth with beneficial results. There is a progress in this assurance.

1. They now perceive that the dispensation is from God, either immediately, or permissively, whatever agency effects it,—natural evil, wicked men, or Satan; still he says, "When he hath tried me;" thus confessing that afflictions do not spring from the ground.

2. They are convinced their sufferings are a trial, an ordeal. "When he hath tried me." Designed, first, to prove the genuineness of personal religion, as gold stands the fiery test; and secondly, to improve the quality of their religion, as the furnace detaches the dross.

3. They are fully persuaded the trial will terminate, and the final result will be most beneficial: "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

(1.) "When he hath tried me." The period must be left to God. The church in Hosea's days said, "After three days he will revive us." To the church of Smyrna it was said, "Ye shall have tribulation ten days." It may be ten months or ten years, but they shall be brought out sooner or later, when the assay shall be completed. They are not in the furnace of unquenchable fire, to be tormented for ever.

(2.) They shall come forth with beneficial results: "I shall come forth as gold."

(i.) Purified thoroughly in the furnace.

(ii.) Greatly ennobled; their piety having proved sterling, they shall come forth as gold from the mint, stamped with the Divine image of Christ, the Royal Sufferer, bearing, in legible characters, his accrediting inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord."

III. The satisfaction and consolation meantime arising from the conviction that God is acquainted with the manner in which the pious conduct themselves during the season of affliction: "He knoweth the way I take."

1. He knoweth the general way I had taken previously, and persevered in during this dispensation; my personal faith and imitative obedience. He knows so as to approve, as the term so frequently signifies. Here is satisfaction and consolation,—“The God of all grace accepts and loves me!”

2. He knows the particular way I take now in the season of affliction,—of submission to his will, and confidence in his truth and love.

(1.) His eye sees, is privy to my inmost thoughts, my emotions, my motives, my ends. He views the whole, and every part. No matter what others think: "My witness is with God, and my record on high."

(2.) His heart approves. He pities my sorrows, in my afflictions he is afflicted. Jesus is touched with the

feeling of my infirmities. My loving Father chastens me for my profit, not his own pleasure.

“ Behind the frowning providence,  
He hides a smiling face.”

Let me then be patient in tribulation and rejoicing in hope.

“ Jesus comes in my distress,  
And agony is heaven.”

Let me now suffer ; the Son of God is with me in the burning fiery furnace, and the smell of fire shall not be on me. I walk unburned amidst the flames. “ He knoweth the way I take”—Is himself my conductor and guardian ; and “ when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Let all, before affliction comes, take the general way ; enter on the path of true piety. We are then prepared for all events. We know how to be full, and how to be empty ; fit for active and pleasant duty ; fit for painful suffering, and agonizing bereavement. When affliction comes on the pious, God is a refuge for them ; they run into this tower, and find shelter from the storm, safety from their foes. “ The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”

In affliction, let the people of God attend to the solemn call to duty thus addressed to them. They are to glorify God in the fire ; they are to obtain profit from the trial. They are especially called to prayer, in which they take hold of the strength of God, and become strong themselves.

Are any of us suffering ? Let our prayer be,—

“ With me in the fire remain,  
Till like burnish'd gold I shine ;  
Meet, through consecrated pain,  
To see the Face Divine.

## SKETCH III.

### EVANGELICAL OBEDIENCE REWARDED.

---

*He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil : he shall dwell on high ; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks : bread shall be given him ; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty ; they shall behold the land that is very far off. Isaiah xxxiii. 15—17.*

THE Scripture, like a beautiful picture, is completed by lights and shades. (Introduce, from verse 10, God's threatened vengeance against the wicked ; the open and the secret sinners ; that is, the profane and the hypocritical.) But here is a distinct character, minutely delineated by the discriminating hand of God,—the truly pious man. While tremendous ruin shall be poured out on the former, the latter shall be preserved from the dreadful overthrow ; be secure, be happy, be honoured. Our design is to describe the character and the privileges of the pious man.

#### I. The character of the pious man.

1. The Scripture sometimes describes character by principles, and sometimes by practice, not as independent of principles, but their essential result, as the tree yields fruit according to its nature, and the fountain its congenial streams.

2. It is to be observed, this description of character regards the duties of the second table of the law, and contemplates the pious man in his social relations. But it implies acquaintance with the duties of the first

table, and the ruling influence of the love of God, on which alone the legitimate and scriptural love of our neighbour is founded.

3. Examining this description, we shall find it clearly illustrative of the exercise of the two grand passions exhibited in every man's conduct,—complacency and displacency,—and these, according to their objects, characterize the man. Now the pious man is known by these, as displayed in his social conduct; and these are strongly marked by the Spirit of God, who searcheth, not only the deep things of God, but the things of man also; whose word is a discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and weighs actions in the balance of eternal rectitude and truth.

FIRST.—The pious man is known by his attachments.

He is steadily attached to integrity in deed and word.

1. "He walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly." There are three things included in this description:—

(1.) That he is made righteous, there being "no one righteous," till he is forgiven by the mercy, and renewed by the grace, of God.

(2.) That his course is steady and progressive; an exemplification of the actual influence of the principle within him.

(3.) The Hebrew word is indicative of two things. It is "righteousnesses;" importing, that the pious man practises every branch of righteousness; he is righteous in all things; and thus, he is eminently so, as the Hebrew plural frequently imports the superlative degree.

2. But here is, likewise, integrity in word: "He speaketh uprightly." There are also three things included in this view of his character:—

(1.) He does not lie, equivocate, deceive; thus speaking obliquely: his speech is upright.

(2.) He is sincere, correct, punctual. His yea is yea, his nay is nay.

(3.) Here, too, the Hebrew word has the twofold import; it is "uprightnesses;" denoting that he is thus upright in all that he says, and that he is eminently so. All who know him, know his word is the picture of his thoughts. What he says, he means, he will abide by, and every one may depend on.

"Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,  
Thy mind to it, thy actions to them both.  
Dare to be true; nothing can need a lie."

Now in this conduct, on all occasions, he enjoys complacency; it is his pleasure, and to it he is steadily attached, as the object he aims at, and the rule he prescribes to himself; and with the apostle, "this is his rejoicing, the testimony of his conscience, that with simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he has his conversation" (the tenor of his words and deeds) "in the world." And this, not by the measure of "fleshly wisdom," but by the influence and direction of "the grace of God."

SECONDLY.—The pious man is moreover known by his aversions.

He is averse from injuring any one in any respect whatever. Human laws, designed to regulate civil society, recognise the rights of property, and the rights of person.

Now the pious man is taught by the Divine law, and enabled by Divine grace, to do, from internal principle, what the letter of the human law enjoins as to the exterior action. Hence this description intimates superior principle: He "despises the gain of oppression." Abhorrence of wrong: He "shaketh his hand from holding of bribes." Positive determination to admit no suggestion from any quarter that shall induce him to perform a deed of violence: He "stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood." And to these is added a fixed

resolution to discountenance all sin and sinners: "He shutteth his eyes from seeing evil."

Let us examine the exercise of this aversion from injuring any in the right of PROPERTY, and the right of PERSON; followed up with this resolution to discountenance sin and sinners.

First. Aversion from injuring any in the right of PROPERTY. Such injury may be inflicted two ways:—

1. By sinful gain, derived from oppression. "He that despiseth the gain of oppressions."

This is done by cruelly subjecting servants, children, or others, to long and laborious work for the sake of greater gain; especially, if to oppressive toil be united cruel words and scanty food. Mark how God, by St. James, speaks to such oppressors. (James i. 1—4.)

Nor should we pass unnoticed the oppressions inflicted on the lower orders in the animal world, especially the noble horse and the patient ass. The whole creation travaileth and groaneth together, burthened by the sin of man.

There are some who think they make no gain except they oppress. I speak of those, who, in their dealings, take advantage of the ignorance or the necessity of others. "It is naught, it is naught," saith the buyer, in such a case.

2. This injury, as to the right of property, may also be inflicted by fraud or bribery. "That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes." Bribery is possible.

In ministers of justice, this crime is most heinous; and most thankful ought we to be that we live in times, and in a country, where the ermine of our judges is indeed unspotted.

But it is equally possible wherever a trust for others, whether public or private, is concerned. He who accepts reward for exercising his trust, and exercises it in that particular way because he is rewarded, is a bribed man; and that no pious man can be: he detests the

practice. He shakes away the bribe, as St. Paul shook off the viper.

Then there are frauds. These are Satan's bribes. What saith the Scripture? "Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such." Other sins may have their human witnesses, and be punished by human means; but fraud is a crime which the all-seeing God specially notices. He is Witness and Judge, and he will execute his own sentence. The sin was an attempt to evade his inspection; was an insult to himself; and he will fearfully punish it. "The Lord is the avenger of all such."

Secondly. The pious man is known by his aversion from injuring any in the right of PERSON.

It is scarcely necessary to say, his whole soul revolts from the horrid crime of murder; of which crime, unhappily, there have been too many instances of late, showing how far man, without God, may go.

The pious man hates blood-shedding. He cannot delight in war.

He does not, cannot, approve of the infliction of capital punishments for crimes against the society of which he is a member, unless in cases in which it is sanctioned by the law of God. Human life is, with him, sacred, as the gift of God; which none, without God's authority, may take away.

But there is a culpable "hearing of blood,"—

1. When Satan whispers revenge against any supposed, or even proved, enemy.

2. When we yield to anger, which is murder in principle: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer."

3. When we commit any act of violence, or permit any other persons to do so, if in our power to restrain them.

THIRDLY.—To the preceding objects of attachment and aversion, the pious man adds a fixed resolution to dis-

countenance all sin and sinners : “ He shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.”

1. Some look at evil with delight and approbation : “ Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

2. Some look at evil with indifference as to its vile nature, and direful effects on the holy, just, good, and gracious Being whom it insults and offends.

3. But the pious man “shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;” he has no delight in it, nor indifference about it.

(1.) He will not countenance evil in others.—Thus David.

(2.) He will guard against temptation to evil.—Like Job.

(3.) He will abstain from every appearance of evil ; shut it out, as it were, from his mind, as the closed eyes exclude all objects from vision.

Such is the character of the righteous. These are the evidences of righteousness in every age of the world, and under every dispensation of the Spirit. Samuel makes this appeal : “ Whom have I oppressed or defrauded ?” Micah inquires : “ What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?” And St. Paul maintains the design for which the grace of God is given, and the lesson it teaches is : “ To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” He that loveth not his neighbour, loveth not God ; and as love worketh no ill, he that injures his neighbour by word or deed, in person, property, or character, loves him not. Uprightness is thus seen to be most essentially one of the fruits and evidences of genuine religion.

## II. The privileges of the pious man.

First. Present. Here in the kingdom of grace.

1. Honourable elevation : "He shall dwell on high."

His character is exalted above the meanness of injustice, lying, oppression, fraud, passion.

His affections, his conversation, his habits, are all heavenly.

2. Perfect security : "His place of defence shall be the munition of rocks." Even Christ, the impregnable Rock of Ages. (Isaiah xxxii. 2.) He may have enemies, but he is secure from all injury. The eternal God is his refuge. All the munitions of the Almighty are employed for his defence and security, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against them.

3. Sufficient support : "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure."

Temporal.—This is the subject of promise.

Spiritual.—The bread of life and water of life.

This "bread shall be given him," gratis; and this "water shall be sure." It cannot be cut off by the besieging enemy, for it flows from the throne of God and the Lamb.

But great as are his present privileges in the kingdom of grace, they are but a prelibation of the future.

Secondly. In the kingdom of glory.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." Of this he has frequent delightful anticipations by faith; but he shall ere long have the perfect enjoyment of it in everlasting sight.

1. The first fair object in the heavenly world, to meet the admiring view of the glorified spirit, is, "the King in his beauty;" Immanuel, the King of glory, in his manifested beauty of perfection, in all the glory of his royal character. There will be also glorified saints, and glorious angels; but these are only stars around the resplendent Sun of righteousness. He first will attract, charm, and delight the eyes.

Once we thought of him. In heaven he will be seen.

Once he emptied himself; took the form of a servant. In heaven "we shall see him as he is,"—the image and brightness of the invisible God.

Once on this earth, he was arrayed in a scarlet robe of mock royalty; he held in his hand a reed for his sceptre, and wore on his head a crown of thorns; the summit of his throne, the ignominious cross, bore a régál inscription,—“Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.” In heaven he sits with the Father in his throne, and has the glory he shared before the world was; having a name above every name, and ravishing every beholder with the beauty of his grace, holiness, love, and goodness.

2. The second splendid object challenging the admiring view of the glorified spirit, will be the celestial kingdom; heaven itself, Immanuel's land, “the land that is very far off.”

“Very far off,” as to its moral relation with this evil world.

“Very far off,” as to sight; but, perhaps, very near as to space, had we faculties for seeing it; certainly as to time; especially with the aged and mature saints, just descending to Jordan, or rather, climbing Mount Pisgah.

“Of very far extent.” (Hebrew;) Wide as immensity, and long as eternity. What a Canaan will heaven be! The “inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away!”

And mark how these are to be seen. The wicked shall see him; “Every eye shall see him, and they that have pierced him.” The wicked rich man saw the land that was very far off; saw it with the vast, impassable chasm between. But the truly pious man, soon as he dies, sees the King in his beauty, and the King is his friend; sees the land, and it is his own eternal inheritance.

Have you scriptural righteousness? the forgiveness of your sins through faith in Christ?

You profess this. Is it evinced by its proper fruit,—moral uprightness? Do you abhor that which is evil? cleave to that which is good? Do you show your faith by your works? love to God, by love to your neighbour? Profession is vain without this.

Be encouraged to persevere. If you have trials and conflicts, you have blessings; blessings even now. You enjoy the favour of God:—

“ Rejoice, rejoice! The Lord is King!  
The King is now our Friend.”

And though the land is very far off, you have the good hope through grace. It is in view,—that lovely, promised land; sometimes with blessed distinctness. And then, the future, the King, and all his court. You shall see and be with him. The land; you shall eternally possess it. Be faithful to death; there is the crown of life.

## SKETCH IV.

### THE SINFULNESS AND REDEMPTION OF MAN.

---

*There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. iii. 22—24.*

I. THE condition in which the Gospel finds all mankind : “There is no difference.”

There is difference among men in respect to each other : intellectual, civil, moral.

But there is no difference in their condition before God as sinners.

First. “All have sinned.” Romans iii. 23.

1. Originally in Adam. Romans v. 12, 18.

2. Personally :—both Gentiles, Romans i. 13, 21, 29, ult. : and Jews, Romans iii. 9, 19. St. James ii. 9, 10, compared with human laws.

Secondly. But sin is not merely the actual transgression ; for, in God’s account, the not-performing his commands is sin. The former is the sin of commission ; the latter is the sin of omission ; and so far is this from being trivial, that even positive transgressions may be included in the description ; and thus it is in the text charged on all. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

1. Come short of glorifying him as God.

2. Come short of his glorious image.

3. Come short of the glorious requirements of his holy law.

4. Come short of his glorious approbation.

5. Come short of his glorious enjoyment.

Thus every mouth is stopped of pleading merit, or even not guilty, and the whole world is guilty at the bar of God.

II. The condition to which the Gospel raises all Christian believers.

In this respect, there is no difference in God's gracious design and method, as is stated in introducing the text: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." Romans iii. 21, 22. The condition to which the Gospel raises believers is justification: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans iii. 24. Justification is a law term, denoting generally a state of innocence. But, in the evangelic acceptance, it means the "forgiveness," or "remission of sins;" or, as in the margin, "the passing over;" as the destroying angel when he saw the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the door posts, Exodus xii. The causes and means are all held forth in the comprehensive passage.

1. Efficient cause.—An act of grace in pardoning and releasing the guilty. "Being justified freely by his grace."

2. The meritorious cause.—The Lord Jesus Christ's atonement. "Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" his blood being the price of their redemption from the penalty of the law.

Now this redemption is the only admitted and accredited cause and meritorious means allowed of God; who not only allows, but himself has "set forth Christ to be a propitiation." In Him he is propitious. He is the sacrifice, and the mercy-seat sprinkled with His blood. God set Him forth anciently in the promises and types,—now in the Gospel-covenant, and the ministry of the word.

Wares are set forth for sale in the public markets;

but this redemption is without money or price; yet offered most freely.

3. The instrumental,—“faith;” which  
Acknowledges the justice, and accepts the grace.  
All self-dependence is renounced.  
Christ the propitiation is trusted in.

### III. The improvement of the subject.

In this passage there are three points to be kept in view, which we shall urge in conclusion:—

1. To convince sinners of sin.

This efficiently indeed is the office and work of the Holy Spirit; but he ordinarily employs instruments and means; as the apostle, his ministry, and his writings. O may the Divine Spirit shine on his word and into your hearts! All the world, it is here said, are guilty before God; but it is peculiarly stated that God's design is, “that every mouth may be stopped.” Let, then, conviction arrest thee! Art thou self-condemned, like the publican, the three thousand, the Philippian jailer? sensible of thy transgressions by sins of commission, and of thy coming short of the glory of God? Thou canst not plead “not guilty.” Thou art condemned. Dost thou see and feel that thy sentence is just?

2. The second point is to direct the convicted sinner to the only means of pardon.

Art thou justly condemned at the bar of God by his law? and at the bar of thy own conscience?

Hear, then, the proclamation of thy Sovereign's royal clemency: “God hath set forth Jesus Christ,” &c. Rom. iii. 25, 26. God makes a public exhibition, and a universal declaration, of his righteousness.

- (1.) To declare his righteousness.

God's own righteous method of redeeming and pardoning sinners.

- Christ's righteous and availing atonement.

God's righteous regard to his character, law, and will; not depreciating, nor in the least degree lowering, himself, or abating his righteous demands.

(2.) For the remission of sins that are past.

Those before Christ suffered, and those repented of and forsaken; not past, present, and future; but all that are past, of whatever kind or degree, during the forbearance of God, who suffered long, and through his mercy now bestowed on the guilty sinner.

(3.) "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness."

There is a repetition making it emphatic and absolutely certain, for the veracity of God, and the comfort of man. And all this to maintain and illustrate this grand, and stupendous, and wonderful mystery,—“that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:” a mystery which philosophy never devised, and which angels desire to look into, filling all heaven with endless wonder, and eternity with adoring love and praise.

Do you acknowledge the righteousness of God?

Do you see your own utter helplessness?

Do you see the fulness and sufficiency of Christ?

Are you seeking for the pardon of your own sins? not contenting yourselves with seeing how sin may be pardoned; how wonderfully God hath solved the difficult problem, and reconciled his own justice and mercy; but looking for forgiveness as a personal blessing, of indispensable necessity? But dost thou fear that God should punish thee, for the honour of his government and law? Then,

3. See this secured. “That he might be just, and the Justifier of them who believe in Jesus.”

No impenitent sinner has indulgence to trifle with sin, or to delay application to the Saviour.

No unpardoned sinner to abuse the grace of the Gospel.

He is the justifier only of them that believe. But He is the justifier of all that believe.

Dost thou deeply feel thine ungodliness? thy need of mercy? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" The curse of the broken law, the more dreadful curse of the slighted Gospel, shall come upon us.

Fly to Christ without delay. Let not the sense thou hast of thine own sinfulness hinder thee. Come to Christ, not as saved already, but in order to be saved. And why not now? All things are ready. "To him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly,"—mark that, and thou feelest thyself to be ungodly,—“his faith is counted to him for righteousness.”

Abide in Him: receive out of his fulness; but let thy language still be,

“This all my hope, and all my plea,  
For *me* the Saviour died.”

## SKETCH V.

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

---

*Emmanuel.* Matthew i. 23.

THIS is one of the names of the Messiah, given by Isaiah in the spirit of prophecy. Personally, his name was Jesus. Still he was to be called by other names, descriptive of his official character and work. This is one of them. The anointed Saviour was to be called, "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

For what does God thus come on earth? Sion, behold thy King cometh!" For what purpose? To condemn the world? No. "Having salvation." So the angel to the shepherds,—“I bring glad tidings of great joy,—unto you is born—a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “Without him was not any thing made that was made;” and, again, he comes to be the world’s Saviour.

Let us meditate on this precious name.

#### I. EL, “The mighty God.”

1. Christ bears the divine name. Here, Isaiah ix. 6, Psalm xlv. 6, 7, compared with Hebrews i. Thomas saw the truth when he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” It was conviction, not surprise.

2. Christ possesses the Divine attributes;—Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence.

3. Christ performed Divine works.—Creation, John i; Colossians i.

4. Christ has Divine honours paid to him: is wor-

shipped, prayed to, trusted in. And who may worship a creature? or trust in an arm of flesh?

## II. EMMANUEL, "God with us."

And first, we apply it to the personal appearance of Christ in the flesh. He was in the world, though it knew him not. God was manifest in the flesh.

1. The motive of this visit. This was nought of merit in man; nor even desire. It was his own love; his pity for his fallen and most miserable creature. Not that we loved him, but he loved us. Thus: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

2. The manner of the visit. God comes down. How? clothed with light? attended by the hierarchy of heaven? When he comes, what sign is given? "Ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Thus he visits us:—

Humbly, in the form of a servant.

Benevolently, for our eternal good.

Holily, in opposition to all sin, to promote and establish all virtue, to restore man to the moral government of God, and to bring human nature to the obedience of truth, purity, and love.

3. The design and object of the visit. It was to save man, to save him by bearing his curse, that so man might have access to God for the mercy he needed. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And by reconciliation, to bring man to fellowship with God, conformity to his will, and participation in the blessings of his favour here and hereafter.

But, secondly, the text has reference to the spiritual presence of Christ.

To be with man personally was much. Plato's supposition was realized. Virtue was embodied and made visible. But to be with us spiritually is likewise great,

and the other was in order to it. Christ promised his disciples he would "come again;" and the apostle speaks of Christ being in us the hope of glory, and dwelling in our hearts by faith. He was God with us, personally, that he might be God with us spiritually.

1. When does he come to us spiritually? When we come to God by him; believe in his name; personally and exclusively trust in him. The careless sinner may be said to be awfully Christless. The penitent sees this, bewails it, and seeks to remedy it by coming to Christ; and by faith he is pardoned, and the Spirit of Christ dwells in him.

2. Why does he come to us spiritually?

(1.) To make us happy; sprinkling his blood on our conscience; removing the sense of guilt.

(2.) To make us holy; subduing our sins; conquering the love of the world in its various forms. He sits on his throne in the heart, claiming and receiving the homage of our whole nature. He enlightens, strengthens, purifies the soul by his sacred presence.

We have here,

First. A subject for admiration.

Consider Him who visits; then, them who are visited. Look at the personal visit; "in great humility," "for the suffering of death." Look at man: sinful, guilty, worldly, thankless man. O wonderful love! Creation is wonderful; stupendous: but this mystery of holy love greater than all.

Secondly. A subject for examination.

Of his personal coming there was a design. We are concerned in it. As much as if we were the only ones. Is it accomplished in us? Have we seen the evil of sin in the light of Christ's coming? Have we come to the cross? Self-condemned and self-aborred, have we come to God by him for a present pardon, to be sealed on our conscience and to be followed by his spiritual indwelling?

If it be so, do we sufficiently prize his spiritual visits? Do we seek for the full indwelling of Christ? Are we willing all should be abased and excluded, not consistent with his exaltation in our heart, his constant presence there?

See your privilege. Let Emmanuel always remind you of it. All you want is here. With Christ in the vessel, it shall not sink, though the storm rage. Go on in the warfare against sin. You may do all things through Christ strengthening you. Your happiness,—your fuller preparation,—your heaven itself,—is all suggested by this blessed word, “Emmanuel, God with us.”

But see your duty. His presence consecrates as well as comforts. The temple of God is where he is. Let no idol come there. Let no spiritual service be neglected.

Look, too, for the full effects of his presence. He comes as the refiner and purifier of silver: let him take away all the dross. Believe that he can do this; believe that he will; seek to him in earnest and constant prayer, that by his manifestation in you he may destroy all the works of the devil.

## SKETCH VI.

### GOOD FRIDAY.

---

*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*  
Zechariah xiii. 7.

THE spirit of prophecy is the witness to Jesus. Moses, and all the prophets testified of him, showing that he must first suffer, and then enter into his glory.

This day the church commemorates his dying for us,—his suffering to bring us to God. The consideration of the portion of Scripture I have read will be suitable to the occasion. The Lord of hosts gives a commission to the sword, and directs it against the man that is his fellow: and when the sword has fulfilled its charge, there is a succeeding promise.

#### I. The commission.

1. The person against whom it is directed, has a two-fold description.

##### (1.) Personal.

He is human, "the man." Such is our Messiah; made of a woman; in the likeness of sinful flesh. This by his incarnation.

He is Divine, "the man that is my fellow." Possessed of the *nature* of God, he exhibited Divine *perfections*; received Divine *worship*. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.

##### (2.) Official. "My shepherd."

The shepherd of God's appointment.

He comes to seek and to save the lost sheep.

He gathers those whom he saves into his fold, saving them fully,—to the utmost.

2. But let the tenor of the commission be likewise noticed. "Awake," &c.

Not the providential, chastening rod, with which God visits his people, correcting, and even, in a certain sense, punishing them.

But the sword; the sword of justice; that which can wound even to the death, and whose keenest edge sinners have deserved to feel.

The sword is to awake; as though it had slumbered; its object not being present.

The sword is to awake *against* the shepherd. The innocent shepherd is, strangely, to be the object of what smites the guilty.

It is to smite. Not to be waved and brandished, but used. And thus it was:—Christ stood as our representative. He consented to bear our sins. And he was smitten. Wicked men, malignant devils, were permitted to increase his sufferings. But the smiting was, the sins of the world laid on him; he was made to endure a sense of the Divine wrath against sin. The blow that was to cut down the sinner fell upon the sinner's surety.

We see, in the Gospel narrative, the mysterious, awful character of the sufferings endured, when the sword awoke, and the shepherd was smitten.—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful," &c. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And what became of the flock which he had collected? They were scattered; "they all forsook him, and fled." Scattered like affrighted sheep.

But there is a succeeding promise. To the shepherd, behold the severity of the Lord: to the flock, goodness.

II. "I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

Jesus, the chief shepherd, was brought again from the dead; and then, he thus turned his hand on his little ones, visited his disciples, and again gathered the flock into his fold.

This is still his employment. He is the shepherd and bishop of souls. Delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, he looks on the wanderers, to reclaim them; on them who have yielded to his call to return, and are crying after him, to bring them to God;—on all his sheep, to fulfil all the purposes of his redeeming love. His work still goes on. It was not atonement merely; but intercession, and saving power. The shepherd is pasturing his sheep here, and leading them to the heavenly fold.

1. Behold the displeasure of God against sin. The sword was not to be thrown away. It was not to be proclaimed—"He beareth the sword in vain."

The shepherd condescended to allow himself to be smitten, to declare God's love to man, God's hatred to man's sin.

2. See the wonderful constitution of the Redeemer's person. He was fitted to be a vicarious sacrifice: As man, to suffer, and in the sinning nature. As incarnate Deity, he could suffer voluntarily: As holy, not for his own sins.

3. Is he God's shepherd? Let us be thankful we have such a keeper. He gave his life once for the sheep, he now employs it for them. Let us come to him to be admitted into the fold of his reconciled and saved ones.

4. Dread the consequences of neglect. The sword is laid by his side. It is not dead, but sleepeth. You will not have a saving interest in Christ; you live, you die without it; you go to the judgment-seat, condemned by law and Gospel. The sword shall awake. You shall then be smitten; smitten to the eternal

death ; cut down, never to rise. Flee from the wrath to come.

5. Have the arrows of the Almighty wounded thee ? Does a sense of his wrath drink up thy spirit ? Turn to the strong-hold. He who bore your sins in his own body on the tree will not reject you. He died for you, being in enmity ; he will meet you now you desire to be reconciled. Come and welcome to Jesus Christ.

6. Commit yourself to him of whose love such a proof has been given. Remember his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion ; plead them ; he will not forget them ; what will he withhold that you need ? Seek, and expect great things, but ascribe all glory to him. And follow him as your suffering Lord. Die to sin ; take up your cross daily ; live on Calvary till you are called to Sion.

“ O that we at last may stand  
With the sheep at his right hand :  
Take the crown so freely given,  
Enter in by Him to heaven.”

## SKETCH VII.

### THE REST OF THE SOUL.

---

*Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. Psalm cxvi. 7—9.*

THE Psalms have been referred to in all ages as exhibiting the character and exercises of the spiritual people of God.

This Psalm expresses the conflicts and deliverances of its pious author, and is well calculated to afford encouragement and consolation to all who are similarly exercised.

I. The believer's grateful review of the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul.

The soul is here addressed as being particularly the object of God's bountiful regard.

He provides bountifully for the body. All these subordinate and inferior blessings are from him.

But the soul is here specially referred to ; the better, nobler part of our nature : Derived immediately from Him who breathed into our nostrils the breath of life : Designed for happiness in fellowship with its Maker.

Several blessings mentioned.

1. Deliverance from death ; judicial, spiritual, eternal ; by the merit and intercession of Christ, and the power of the Spirit of life in him.

2. From sorrow ; tears of grief, anguish, shame, regret, fear, almost "dark despair" itself : By sending

the Comforter, the Spirit of adoption, the witness of pardon.

3. From the power of prevailing temptation. "My feet from falling;" by upholding, guiding, strengthening. "When my foot slipped, thy mercy held me up." God is "able to save us from falling;" and, if we rest on him, he will "make us to stand;" giving us firmness, victory.

## II. The sentiments resulting from the review.

1. Consolatory. "Return unto thy rest." God is the resting place of the soul; its gracious rest; its glorious rest. Here, in the favour, love, peace of God: hereafter, in his immediate vision, and endless communion with him. The great privilege of the soul is to rest in God. This rest alone suited to it. Vast, permanent. The Psalmist excites his soul to renounce all doubt and fear; all unbelief, and to repose unhesitatingly in God.

2. Practical. "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

To walk before the Lord is, to act as in his presence, live in his will, obey his commands, seek his glory, supremely value his favour. This to be persevered in to the end; "in the land of the living:" In this world; among living people: so the apostle: "live righteously," &c, "in this present world;" with all its trials, temptations, difficulties.

These two sentiments are founded on legitimate principles; are quite rational.

(1.) A principle of gratitude. Benefits require return; all acknowledge this: God "has dealt bountifully with his people." They acknowledge the fact and the obligation.

(2.) A principle of truly enlightened reason. Where should the soul rest but in its proper rest? Even nature, original nature, is followed in religion. We were made for God; our misery comes from departing

from him ; that is the real nature of sin. In religion we come to our proper rest ; what alone can properly support and support ; what alone is suited to our nature. The dove found no rest while the waters were high. Man finds no rest in earth. He must come to God, his rest ; and, by faith, and hope, and love, repose in him.

(3.) A principle of just reciprocation. Has he delivered the soul from death ? Right that its quickened energies should be employed for him. Gaze on his perfections as he has "opened the eyes of the blind !" Walk before him, as he has saved your feet from falling. In a word, he has redeemed you ; give yourself to him who hath bought you with a price.

(i.) If you do not seek deliverance, you are undone for ever. There is the eternal death. There are the bitterest tears, unavailing, despairing. Now there is mercy. Seek for it.

(ii.) If you desire it, be encouraged to seek earnestly ; in expectation, God deals bountifully. He has done so with countless multitudes. Come, by Christ, for yourself.

(iii.) Persevere in well doing. There is another world ; yet more especially "the land of the living," of eternal life ; life in perfection, and for evermore. This a land of death ; that, of life. To walk there before God, the very summit of happiness ; the blessedness for which man was made. To walk *now* before God, the sure the only way, to walk before God *then*. Walk before him in grace and obedience. You shall walk before him in recompense and glory.

## SKETCH VIII.

### BELIEVERS THE SUBJECTS OF DIVINE ILLUMINATION.

---

*For ye were sometimes darkness ; but now are ye light in the Lord ;  
walk as children of light. Ephesians v. 8.*

THE New Testament always speaks of Christians as persons on whom a very great and gracious change has passed ; not merely of religious opinion, as from Jew or Gentile to Christian : but such a one as might be called, “a new creation,” and the subject of it, “a new creature.” (Quote texts.)

In the text the apostle both shows the nature and the greatness of the change ;—“from darkness to light.” No contrast can be more perfect ; no change more real or evident. And this is an exact description of all true Christians ; as the former condition was one of darkness, so the present is one of light ; and the change involves most important obligations.

I. The former condition and character of the believer “Ye were sometimes darkness.”

This is the scriptural description of unrenewed man.

The true Christian not so by birth. Was unregenerate.

Darkness is blindness of mind. Not in *natural* things. Reason, judgment, imagination may be strong and clear. The children of this world may be wise in the things that relate to them.

But in *spiritual* things. Thus :—chapter iv. 18 ;  
1 Cor. ii. 14.

These descriptions will be seen not to be too strong, if considered in reference to three objects.

1. God. His nature, perfections, will. His character. Relations to us, as Ruler, Judge.

2. Themselves. Not physically, but morally, as sinners; guilty, enslaved, polluted.

3. Their situation.

Alienated from God.

Obnoxious to his wrath.

Hastening to endless ruin.

On all these subjects, how great, how fearful, man's ignorance! If no external light, ignorant totally. If external light, some rays of truth in the mind; a sort of obscure head-knowledge: but a real ignorance as to moral perception, affections, and conscience. Not merely dark, but darkness.

II. The present condition and character of the believer. "But now are ye light in the Lord."

Not merely "light," but "light in the Lord."

It is not the mere influence of intellect; the illuminations of philosophy. These, sparks of man's kindling.

1. The Spirit of Christ is the author of the illumination.

2. This, generally by means of his own word.

3. He dispels the shades of darkness from the mind, and presents God,—ourselves,—our condition. Exhibits truth to the inmost soul.

4. He sheds abroad the divine love in the heart; lifting up the light of God's countenance.

5. He leads them in the path of holiness; that is, of practical truth. So that the way, that of the just. Prov. iv. 18.

III The consistency of character enjoined. "Walk as children of the light."

“Children of the light.” An Hebraism. Light the very vital principle. “The light was the life of men.” And this their characteristic. All believers in Christ—whatever their subodinate differences—have spiritual light.

1. It were inconsistent for you to do now what you did in so different a state.

2. The light only preserved by obedience.

3. It is given, not for speculation, but practice.

4. Only thus are its prospective advantages secured.

(1.) There are those who are yet in darkness.

Your sin.

Your misery and danger.

It is not necessary you should remain in this state. Christ is the light of men.

“Awake, thou that sleepest.”

There is the blackness of darkness for the disobedient; and the punishment will show the sin.

(2.) Address the children of light.

(i.) To preserve light, you must maintain your fellowship with God. It is spiritual, scriptural. Pray much. Read the Scriptures.

(ii.) Consider your character, and one design of it as to others.

It is the property of light to shine; and, therefore, to shine is your duty.

The world is to be enlightened, and ye are “the lights of the world.” Your duty is to shine.

This is by “good works.” Practical holiness is the visibility of Christian light.

(iii.) Rejoice in your prospects.

Heaven is the inheritance of the saints in light.

Be obedient, faithful; and then shall ye “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.”

## SKETCH IX.

### THE GOOD MAN IN AFFLICTION.

---

*I am very much afflicted ; quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word. Psalm cxix. 107.*

THESE were the words of one who had himself suffered much and often. They show us not only that afflictions are the lot of men, even pious men, in all ages; but that, in their afflictions, they who fear God will have recourse to God by prayer. The text only expresses the regular practice of the Psalmist.

I. A pathetic lamentation. "I am very much afflicted."

To lament that we are afflicted would prove great ignorance and inconsiderateness—

1. In respect of ourselves. As of,

What we are ;—and

Where we are.

Sinful men, in a sinful world, must expect suffering.

2. In respect of God. As,

Who he is :

What he is to us :

Why he afflicts.

The text, then, not properly the lamentation which refers merely to the fact of affliction ; but to some high and extraordinary degrees of it. These may be,

Extreme bodily suffering :

Extreme mental anguish :

Pressing distress as to circumstances.

Most painful bereavements.

Such peculiar circumstances may draw forth the exclamation now before us. We may perceive in it,—

1. An acute sense of the affliction.

We find this often in the Scripture saints : Nay,—in the great Captain of our salvation.

2. An examination of it. It is made the subject of reflection.

It is I that am afflicted. There must be some reason for it ; some design in it ; and this respects myself.

The degree of the affliction. “Very much.” This heightens the former reflections.

The reference to God. He speaks to him ; breathes out his soul before him ; to him he says, “I am very much afflicted.”

The man without God, makes the creature his God, both in prosperity,—when he delights in it ;—and in adversity,—when he seeks to it for comfort and refuge. Mark the sin of this ; idolatry. The misery ; neither comfort nor refuge.

But the piety of the good man’s spirit, as seen in the time of extreme suffering, will be still more apparent if we consider,—

II. The fervent prayer. “Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word.”

The throne of grace is a sure refuge. The Saviour intercedes for us there. The Spirit excites to prayer.

1. There is a prayer for life. “Quicken me.”

We may lawfully, though submissively, pray for natural life ; that it may be lengthened ; that we may get good, recover our strength, and that we may do good.

But, and chiefly, for spiritual life ; for renewed vigour, for the sanctification of trouble and pain, for external adversity to be the means of even a high state of inward prosperity.

2. Look at the manner and form of the prayer.  
 “According unto thy word”

Revelation intended to guide in all circumstances, specially in affliction. “Quicken me,”—

(1.) According to the sweetness of thy word. Apply its promises. Let its consolations revive me.

(2.) According to its faithfulness. I rest on it. Let me experience how sure it is.

(3.) According to its extent. Let me have all the inward life it describes, promises, enjoins.

(4.) Quicken me for the verification of thy word. Let men see that thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me; in pursuance of thy designs of saving mercy. These thy word describes. In my quickening, they will see the truth of the word itself.

Conclude by addressing chiefly the subjects of affliction.

1. Do not judge of your spiritual condition by your present external circumstances. You may not be in affliction. Have you secured the favour of God? That is your first concern. If all is right here, be thankful for health, ease, friends. You are called to active service. “Go work in his vineyard,” in some department of pious usefulness. You know not what is before you: Affliction, death. Work to-day. Leave to-morrow.

2. If you suffer, see that yours is the common lot. Not merely of mortals, as mere heathen philosophy would tell you; but of the people, the children of God, as the word teaches you. What son is there whom the heavenly Father chasteneth not? Faint not, despond not. Nay, rejoice. You drink of a sacred cup. There is a sense in which it was put into your Lord’s hands. The Captain was made perfect through sufferings; truly his followers may be content to walk in the same path.

3. Improve a season of suffering. It has its respon-

sibilities. Get all the good from it you can. Let your graces be invigorated ; evils subdued, mortified.

4. Reflect on the providential character of the affliction. See the hand of God in it ; and in its suitability and design, his wisdom and love ; while you seek for comfort, support, and deliverance, seek too that its object be secured.

5. Think on your Saviour's past sufferings and present sympathy, and expect succour.

6. Look to heaven. See them in white robes. They came out of "great tribulation." They are now before the throne of God ; they hunger no more, thirst no more, weep no more. Faint not in the day of adversity ;

" To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And all that to the end endure  
The cross, shall wear the crown."

## SKETCH X.

### THE SEASON OF HARVEST IMPROVED.

---

*They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest. Isaiah ix. 3.*

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens. I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time.” So then, it is the design of God that we should behold the beauty he puts on every thing. To admire and appreciate the excellence of his works, is the pleasing travail, the delightful labour God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it. The appearances of nature in the different seasons afford varieties of beauty; and to the observant and pious spectator, every season lectures in terms most striking and edifying.

The winter tells him of the decay of human life, that he must expect the days of darkness, and must return like the vegetable to the cold earthy bed. The spring succeeding tells him, he shall not remain in the earth for ever, but revive with ever-during bloom; it admonishes him to employ his spring that he may have a pleasant summer, and a profitable autumn. The season of harvest suggests to laborious men and pious Ministers, that the Gospel season should be improved; and when they hear the shouts of “harvest home,” the saints have greater cause for joy, “according to the joy of harvest.”

I. The joy of harvest is reasonable ; being the acquisition of real good, after long labour and ardent expectation.

The husbandman, through all the preceding seasons of the year, had bestowed constant care on the land, which now amply repays him for all his labours, and satisfies his ardent expectations.

“Ye are God’s husbandry,”—his Ministers are his husbandmen. At his call they put their hands to the ministerial plough, to break up the fallow ground of sinners’ hearts. They go forth to sow the seed of the word: oftentimes they go forth weeping, bearing precious seed ; weeping at their own infirmities, at the soil they have to cultivate, at the ill prospect of a future harvest. They weep more afterwards when they behold the fowls of the air pick the seed by the wayside, the sun scorching the springing blades on the stony ground ; the thorns springing up with others, and choking them ; and still more, when an enemy comes into the enclosure, and sows destructive tares, or foxes with firebrands, &c. Their toil is hard, unremitting ; and requires not only strength and industry, but prudence. In the morning they must sow the seed, and in the evening withhold not their hand. They are sensible they need the instruction of their all-wise Master ; nor does he withhold it from the weakest of them. He has ardent expectation, hence he ploughs in hope. He knows all depends on his Master’s blessing, when he has done all his duty. A “Paul may plant,” &c. Mark him through the seasons ; he beholds with pleasure and with fear, “first the blade,” &c ; at last the fields “white unto harvest.”

II. The joy of harvest is general.

It is felt by all classes throughout the whole land ; for all are interested, all are alike interested, for the life of each depends on the produce of harvest ; “the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the

field." One man was born the heir, and is now the possessor, of a great estate ; so few are interested, that even his nearest connections consider themselves injured. Another acquires great property by trade,—how few are benefited ! Many have suffered by his overgrown and overbearing monopoly. But the blessings of harvest are general. The rich man, who lives sumptuously every day, may eat the fat of the kidneys of wheat. The humble peasant, if he be not fed with the finest of the wheat, has an appetite quickened by labour, not needing to be pampered ; he eateth his coarse meal, and is content. If he be a Christian, he cateth it to the Lord, and is thankful, for he sees himself unworthy of the crumbs that fall from his heavenly Master's providential table.

The joy is proposed to all. Thus the harvest of grace is necessary for all. The Lord is no respecter of persons ; his blessing is to all, and upon all, that believe. "In Christ Jesus, there is neither Greek," &c. Indeed the great, the mighty, the noble, in general despise these blessings ; to the poor they are often welcome. But all may partake. Many, however, come from the east and the west, &c., and "they joy," &c. He that soweth, and they who reap, rejoice together ; and even they who neither sow nor reap share the joy. "And likewise there is joy in," &c., from the Lord of the harvest to the meanest gleaner.

### III. The joy of harvest is sacred.

At least it ought to be sacred. Thus it was with the Hebrews, and here those who rejoice are said to "joy before God." The idolatrous Heathen had their harvest joys ; the drunken bacchanals performed their impious orgies to Bacchus when they gathered their vintage. Ceres was adored as the goddess of corn, and her worship was a revel rout. One might suppose, when we see the conduct of many in our Christian country,

that Bacchus and Ceres were still believed on, and duly adored in all their abominable rites. What voluptuousness, drunkenness, &c. do we witness!

The Hebrews had a Divine institution. When they first put in the sickle, they brought immediately the first sheaf to the sanctuary of the Lord, which the priest presented to God, waving it to and fro before the Lord. Therefore it is called the "wave sheaf," or "wave offering."

1. It was sacred acknowledgment to God, who was the proprietor of the land.

2. It was sacred hope; the wave offering was the first fruits, the earnest of the general harvest.

3. It was sacred dedication. They signified that all the crop was God's, and was thus sanctified to him, and had his blessing.

How sacred was the joy from all these considerations! Thus in the harvest of grace, is acknowledgment, hope, and dedication, and all before God in his sanctuary.

#### IV. The joy of harvest is final.

Here meet the results of the former seasons and former labours.

To this point the husbandman looked forward when he ploughed in the cold of the winter, when he manured the soil, fenced the hedges, gathered out the stones, plucked up the weeds, and when through the spring he watched the clouds dropping down fatness, and beheld the sun beaming prolific heat. He says to his God, "Thou didst water the ridges, thou didst settle the furrows, thou didst bless the springing thereof, thou wateredst it abundantly with the river of God which is full of water;" and now after all "thou crownest the year with thy goodness." Psalm lxxv. 9. Thus we joy when we are permitted to see the fields white unto harvest, by people flocking to the Gospel; and when souls are converted to God, and bringing forth fruit,

some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold. Then we weep with joy before God. The joy partakes still more of the final, when we see saints like shocks of corn fully ripe, gathered into the heavenly garner. The joy will then be properly final, when the general harvest occurs. The end of the world is the harvest. Then saith the Lord of the harvest, I will say, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is nigh." "The reapers are the angels. They shall gather the tares," &c.

"Angels shout the harvest home," &c.

### Improvement.

1. Let all be admonished to examine their moral and religious state. What seed is sown in your hearts? What expectation of a gracious or a glorious harvest? Ministers have done much, have toiled season after season; now do something for yourselves; "sow to yourselves in righteousness, that you may reap in mercy; for it is time to seek the Lord," &c.

2. Let the ignorant and careless be cautioned against deception and against delay. Let no man deceive you. Let no man deceive himself! Do you expect a harvest of wheat, where you sow tares? "Do men gather figs of thorns, or grapes of thistles?" Be not deceived, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap: he that soweth," &c. Be cautioned against delay. The husbandman must improve the sowing season. If he will not plough in winter because of the cold, he will beg in harvest, and none will give to him. "Behold, now is the accepted time," &c. Let youth particularly attend to this business, now in the spring of life. "Remember now," &c. It will be a melancholy season for those hereafter who procrastinate. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended," &c.

3. Let the pious be encouraged. You have joyed once at the harvest of grace; you shall soon be pre-

sented at the harvest of glory with exceeding joy. You may have some days of foul, as well as fair, weather; but you will ripen by all. Prepare for it. Not only by being careful always to sow to the Spirit,—never to sow to the flesh, but by carefully remembering the rule, “he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously.” In this spiritual husbandry, it never faileth that “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” Guard against the “slack hand” in religion. And look forwards. The final harvest will come. “He reserveth the appointed weeks,” &c. “Be patient therefore,” &c.

## SKETCH XI.

### PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN PREACHING.

---

*And preached unto him Jesus. Acts viii. 35.*

THE nearer we approach toward the fountain head, the purer shall we find the stream. To know the purity and excellency of the religion of Christ, let us go where this water of life issues clear as crystal from the apostolic fountain. The history of the acts of the apostles exhibits a faithful record of the primitive manifestation of the truth and power of Christianity. First, among the people anciently favoured of God.—That nation generally rejected the Messiah; but thousands among them were, at the day of Pentecost, visited from on high, and, through the ministry of reconciliation, were converted to God, and obtained remission of sins through faith in Christ.

Soon was the door of faith opened to the Gentiles; and we are in this chapter presented with a most important historical account of the conversion to God of a distinguished individual, through the ministry of an evangelist. (Read the narrative.)

I. Observe the subject: "Jesus."

The Lord Jesus was the subject of the wonderful prediction of Isaiah recorded throughout chap. liii., which the Ethiopian officer was reading in the Septuagint version, and which has been the means of the conversion of many Jews to the Christian faith; also of some infidels, among whom may be mentioned the celebrated

Earl of Rochester, who, on his death-bed, earnestly and repeatedly desired Dr. Burnet to recommend it to the reading of every infidel, as an unanswerable proof of the truth of Christianity.

The chapter bears the appearance of a history of the past, rather than a prediction of the future. Were we merely to read it to you, it would be a sermon, of which Jesus would be the grand subject, where his person, doctrines, conduct, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and triumph, are plainly and minutely described.

1. On this subject, "Jesus," the apostles were minute and definite; they carefully separated it from, and treated it in opposition to,—

(1.) The cavils of the proud Jews, and philosophic Greeks. "The Jews require," &c.

(2.) All personal pride and ostentation, and motives of aggrandisement in the preachers themselves: "We preach not ourselves, but," &c. They also treated it,—

(3.) Eminently and absolutely, "There is no other name," &c. "Other foundation," &c.

In a word—as "Jesus," the Divine Saviour. Matt. i. 21.

"Jesus! transporting sound," &c.

2. More particularly, to preach Jesus is to,—

(1.) Explain his character as the sufficient Saviour and Redeemer, in terms that each may understand. "I am debtor," &c. "Therefore having received this ministry, we use," &c. "The spirit of convincing speech," &c.

(2.) Recommend him with all his great salvation, to be now believed on, and received by faith. "Believe on," &c. "The word is nigh thee," &c.

"O believe the record true," &c.

(3.) Assure every person that by thus believing on and receiving Jesus, they shall now, hereafter, and for ever, reap all the blessings of redemption, procured

and promised by Jesus, agreeably to his commission, Mark xvi. 16.

Thus the evangelist preached Jesus unto him, and thus would we say to you,—

“See him set forth before your eyes,  
That precious bleeding sacrifice;  
His proffer'd benefits embrace,  
And freely now be saved by grace.”

“To thee, with that dear name is given,  
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.”

II. The striking effects attending the evangelist's ministry. His hearer,

1. Obtained the blessing of faith, and made immediate profession of his embracing the truth. “Faith cometh by hearing,” &c. “With the heart man believeth unto,” &c.

2. He devoted himself to Christ and his cause, by submitting to the initiatory rite of Christianity.

3. He experienced the comforts of the Holy Spirit. “He went on his way rejoicing.”

Subsequently, as Eusebius informs us, this convert became a successful preacher of the Gospel in Ethiopia.

The ordinary course in which the great Head of the church forms, leads, qualifies, and sends forth his own accredited preachers, whom he is pleased to succeed in their ministerial labours.

### III. Improvement.

1. Jesus is now again, as many times before, preached unto you, to each of you.

You are not at a loss to know of whom Isaiah spoke. You know that to Him all the prophets give witness, “that through,” &c. Do you, will you, believe in him? devote yourselves to him? Rejoice in him as your Redeemer and portion. Why not? Look at the Redeemer and his great salvation. Behold the prophetic

portrait, &c. See him in the judgment-hall, at the bar. "He is led as a lamb," &c. Do you say?—"When we see him, there is no form," &c. Has he not thus suffered for you? "Surely he was," &c.

2. To the candid inquirer, who is searching the Scriptures, let me preach to thee "Jesus."

Now there is nothing to hinder thy accepting Jesus, professing his name, and from henceforth going on thy way rejoicing. If thou shalt "believe in thy heart on the Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

3. Let the believer go home, "and tell how great things the Lord hath done for him." Thou hast found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, even Jesus! He has proved himself thy Jesus, having saved thee from thy sins.

"Jesus, I bless thy gracious power,  
 And all within me shouts thy name;  
 Thy name let every soul adore,  
 Thy power let every tongue proclaim,  
 Thy grace let every sinner know,  
 And find with me their heaven below."

## SKETCH XII.

### THE READY PREACHER, AND THE DEVOUT HEARER.

---

*Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Acts x. 33.*

THE dispensation of the Gospel was designed for the whole world, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; and is admirably fitted to the case and condition of all mankind, in every age, and every clime.

The book of the Acts, or actions, of the apostles, gives us in the preceding pages an account of the introduction and early progress of the Gospel among the Jews, to whom, by the command of the Lord Jesus, it was first preached. And in this chapter is given a particular account of its introduction among the Gentiles, beginning in a singular manner with an individual. We, in this day, are the fruits of St. Peter's ministry at Cæsarea. (Refer to the narrative.) We shall, by the Divine blessing, reap the benefit of St. Peter's visit there, if "like people, and like preacher."

I. The proper character of a congregation, assembled for religious instruction. "Now therefore are we all here present before God."

Ready and prepared for the coming of the preacher, denoting,—

1. As to themselves.

(1.) Their previous prudent arrangement of their domestic, civil, or temporal business, before attending public worship.

(2.) Their duly guarding against hurry and dissi-

pation of thought, by having the mind collected, in a tranquil, solemn, devotional frame, in the house of God, to commence worship, and obtain all the good to be derived from the ministry of the word. "Keep thy foot," &c. "My heart and my flesh," &c. "One thing have I desired," &c.

2. Denoting as to others,—respectful behaviour,

(1.) Towards their fellow worshippers; not discomposing their devotions, by offending their ears or eyes.

(2.) Towards the messenger of God, the ambassador of Christ, who appears in his stead to negotiate his affairs with immortal souls.

3. Now this conduct exhibits the principal characteristic of a congregation assembled for religious benefit. They are devoutly met together, "before God!"

Let us review these words, each of which is emphatic.

(1.) "Now." This is descriptive of the time—the present time. Not the future, as Felix.

(i.) With God "this is the acceptable time."

(ii.) For us, "the day of salvation," when it is offered to us, and may be accepted by us.

(2.) "Now therefore." Seeing God sends his servants, and we are favoured with the opportunity of hearing the word,—“therefore” we are come hither.

(3.) "Now therefore are we all here present." A general concurrence of the whole assembly, having one, and only one, design.

(4.) "Now therefore are we all here present before God,"—"Before thee," as some manuscripts read the word, but before a greater! Intimating,—

(i.) Reverence of God's perfections and special presence.

(ii.) Dependence upon his grace.

(iii.) Expectation of his blessing.

II. The conduct of the minister who is qualified to administer the word beneficially.

Many are the Scripture characteristics of a minister of Christ,—his endowments of mind, his spirit, his fidelity, his zeal for Christ, his love to souls, and labour in the ministry for their present and everlasting welfare. But, passing over all others, we shall at present look only at the characteristic conduct exhibited by St. Peter, which is promptness, and for which there can be no substitute. St. Peter states this promptness as his ready obedience to the call both of God and of man,—“God hath showed me, that I should not call any man common or unclean; therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for.” Acts x. 28, 29. See also 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

1. The preacher is ready to obey the intimation of the will of God, however made,—by his ordinary providence, or in an extraordinary manner. St. Peter was instructed in the will of God by an angel. St. Paul was called into Europe by a vision—went with Barnabas to visit the churches as a matter of prudential arrangement, supposing it to be the best duty they could perform at that time. These were various: and a preacher should be ready for every call, however repugnant to his preconceptions. Thus in this promptness to obey the intimation of the Divine will, Peter renounced his former prejudices, which had been stronger than we can well conceive.

Thus the preacher lays his judgment, his will, his wishes, at the feet of his Divine Master, and is ready to go whither, when, and to whom, God is pleased to send him. “Here am I, send me,” Isaiah vi. 8; which is a case not quite dissimilar to Peter’s.

2. The preacher is ready to attend the call of his fellow-men.

But this, let it be noted in the second place, in subservience to the intimation of God’s will, as is so clearly expressed by St. Peter: “God hath showed me: there-

fore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for."

(1.) The preacher sees that Providence has by his instruments opened a door, into which he rejoices to enter.

(2.) He sees that Divine grace has prepared a people for the Lord, who are disposed to hear and receive his message, and meet together for this very purpose, and no other.

(3.) He is glad to find such a congregation in any place, and at any time; in a temple, by the sea-side, in the market-place, in a school-room, or (as here) in a private dwelling, or in his own hired house. He rushes into every opening door. He makes it "all his business here below,

"To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'"

Such is the preacher, prompt to obey the call of God, and the call of his fellow-men.

III. The solemn transactions between the preacher and the congregation.

1. This is introduced by a plain inquiry: "I ask therefore for what intent ye sent for me?" Acts x. 29. Is it merely to hear him, for the gratifying of vain curiosity, as the Athenians, Herod, Agrippa? Is it merely to be entertained, as Ezekiel's congregation? or is it to receive him as the messenger of God, and God's message by him?

2. This inquiry is answered by a plain and explicit reply. "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

(1.) Mark the congregation, "Now therefore," &c.

(i.) "To hear"—attending with candour and solicitude.

(ii.) "To hear all things"—not like the seventy.

(iii.) "To hear all things commanded thee of God : " Receiving the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God ; therefore true and authoritative ; and therefore to be believed, accepted, experienced, and practised—sembled for this express purpose, and no other.

(2.) Mark the preacher, who brings before his congregation all the things God has commanded him to announce.

The grand subject of his ministry is to be that which St. Peter on this occasion presented to his audience. Acts x. 34—36, 43. In the Gospel are all things God ever commanded his apostles and ministers to preach. " We preach Christ crucified," &c.

(i.) As to God. He has given a full and final dispensation of himself. " The God of gods."

(ii.) As to mankind. All they are to believe, experience, and practise.

So St. Paul speaks to the Colossians concerning his ministry : " Christ in you the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning," &c. And likewise to the Ephesian elders, " Wherefore I take," &c. Acts xx. 26, 27. The Gospel furnishes calls, motives, and principles, to prepare for glory. This must be maintained by every faithful preacher.

How solemn this transaction !

The human mind cannot conceive any thing more momentous ! Methinks malignant fiends, as in the days of Job, obtrude into the assembly, to try their envious efforts so as to defeat the object ; at least, crowd around the place, like devouring birds waiting to destroy the seed of the word, soon as the congregation departs. Are not the benevolent angels of God present ? that " to the principalities," &c. Some waiting to carry to their brethren in the presence of God in heaven, &c. Nothing concerning states and empires can equal this. Not all earthly interests combined are to

be compared to the important concerns of a congregation, and am ambassador of God transacting this solemn scene. A whole eternity of bliss or pain hangs dependent on this important business! A sermon is either the savour of life or of death, to every individual!

Such is the solemn transaction. What is the improvement?

1. This subject is calculated to point out to a preacher,—

(1.) His commission to speak “all the things commanded him of God.” “He that taketh away,” &c. “He that addeth,” &c. “If an angel,” &c.

(2.) His duty to be prompt to the call of God when he sends, and of the people who willingly receive him as God’s messenger.

(3.) His comfort to behold his labours eminently blessed among those to whom he is sent: the only true consolation of a preacher.

2. This subject is also a true directory to hearers. Who—what—how to hear.

(1.) For their present spiritual profit. “While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” Acts x. 44. “God granted unto them repentance unto life, and set open to them the door of faith.”

(2.) For their instruction in their future walk and progress.

(3.) For their everlasting benefit and their preacher’s reward. “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

## SKETCH XIII.

### THE DOER OF THE WORK BLESSED IN HIS DEED.

---

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James i. 25.*

THE design of St. James in this epistle is to counteract antinomianism. The text is a persuasive to practical godliness, connected with an illustration of the treatment the Gospel meets from two different characters,—the mere hearer of the word, and the real doer of the work; James i. 21, 22. The mere hearer is “like a man who beholds,” &c.; James i. 23, 24. The word (particularly the ministerial) is a mirror in which a man may discover his spiritual state. Some glasses flatter, some give distorted reflection, but not so the word of God. Rom. viii. 9. The mere hearer perceives his state, is informed and moved transiently. But he goes his way, and forgets his conviction through want of meditation, prayer; and by giving himself to worldly concerns, like the wayside hearers. Such deceive their own souls by a false logic. But dismissing the mere hearer, let us behold the genuine doer.

- I. In his view of the Gospel.
- II. His exercise in reference to it.
- III. The blessed result.

I. The doer of the work in his view of the Gospel.

1. He contemplates the Gospel word as a law.

(1.) A prescribed and promulgated rule of faith and practice. Rom. xvi. 26.

(2.) Administered by Christ as the Sovereign Head and King of his church.

(3.) Having sanctions to reward graciously the obedient, and punish righteously the disobedient. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

2. Particularly as the law of liberty or liberation.

(1.) It does not discharge from obligation to serve God, which would contradict the design of the epistle.

(2.) It gives liberty from, not to, sin; from the guilt, bondage, pollution of sin; from the tyranny of Satan; as well as from the Levitical law.

(3.) It gives liberty, power, and privilege, to serve God. Rom. viii. 2—4.

3. Eminently as the perfect law of liberty.

(1.) Founded on the harmonized and glorified perfections of God.

(2.) Its influence gives perfectibility to the moral nature, and being, and condition of man.

(3.) To which may be added, that the Gospel is God's last and perfect dispensation, to which nothing is to be added, and therefore "perfect."

II. His exercise in reference to the Gospel. "He looketh into," &c., as into a mirror.

He examines the nature, extent, privileges, and requirements, of the Gospel; its perfection, and the extent of the gracious liberty it confers; and all with a reference to his own state. This view is illustrated by—

1. Intenseness. He bows down his head to have a fair and full view of himself. See Luke xxiv. 12. Like those angels, 1 Peter i. 12. Like those cherubim, Exodus xxv. 20.

2. Continuance. He "continues" in this exercise, meditates. Psalm. i. Prays over it, and devotes time and opportunities to the search of the Scriptures.

3. Practice. He is "a doer of the work."

N.B. The term is changed, "word," to "work:"

which is the same in St. James's creed ; for instance, he does repent, does believe, does obey, as the law of liberty enjoins.

III. The blessed result. "He is blessed in his deed."

N. B. "This man," an emphatic repetition! "is happy"—in his deed—not for it. St. James is evangelical with all his earnest zeal for the authority, purity, and obligation of the Gospel.

1. He is happy and blessed in being free from the evil which ensnares too many ; who put hearing the word in the place of experiencing and practising. He does not ensnare his soul with false logic, nor is he a forgetful hearer, a "hearer of oblivion." He is thus happy in being honest, impartial, and personal, in his religious views.

2. He is happy and blessed in the accordance of his experience and practice with the word. What the Redeemer is represented to be, he is to him. So of the Holy Spirit. So of the word generally,—its doctrines, its precepts, and its promises.

3. He is happy and blessed with a progression of holiness and fitness for heaven. "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord."

Apply. The close of our Lord's sermon on the mount, and John xiii. 17.

## SKETCH XIV.

### CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE.

---

*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* 2 Peter i. 10.

I. THE subject of the admonition, “Your calling and election.”

The terms are met with in Scripture very frequently. They refer in most places to a military custom among the Greeks of calling together all the people capable of bearing arms, and electing from them such as were most fit to be sent on the intended expedition. They are applied by our Lord, in the parable of the great supper, to a general invitation of persons of all conditions, and the election of such as duly accepted it. In both these senses there is a spiritual calling and election.

1. The calling and election to military service. God is our Sovereign. He calls us to renounce our disloyalty and rebellion: to flock to the standard of the cross. Christ, the Captain of the Lord's host; his ministers blow the Gospel trumpet, and call men to come to him; receiving pardon for the past, and pledging their fidelity for the future. Many refuse to hearken and obey. They continue rebellious. Some affect a sort of neutrality. But none of these will God elect for his soldiers, by whom he will condescend to achieve the triumphs of his holiness and love. They who hear, and come, fully submitting to the mercy which saves, and the authority which claims to govern,—these he chooses, constitutes them his friends and soldiers. These he enrolls, embodies, disciplines, conducts, employs, rewards.

2. The calling and election to festival and even royal honours.

God is our Benefactor and Saviour. In the Gospel there is a rich provision, styled "a feast of fat things." Man, called by the King's servants, is invited to the feast. The message has no limitation in its terms. The servants have not only no restriction in their commission, but that is as large as it can be; it is universal. "Go ye into all the world," &c. In all this may we say, the King is sincere; what he says, (and the Gospel message is the saying of God,) that he means. Such, then, is the call, the invitation. There are who show malignant opposition to it. Too many make light of it; treat it contemptuously; take no notice of it; prefer trifles to it; or come in a wrong spirit. These, therefore, rejected. Others hear, come, receive the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and sanctification of the Spirit, and are obedient to the truth. These are received, chosen, blessed with the King's favour, accepted as his guests.

II. The admonition itself,—The calling and election are to be made sure.

1. See that you "know the joyful sound" of your calling.

2. See that the end of your calling is secured by your election to the blessings to which you were so condescendingly and mercifully invited.

3. Make all this sure to the full satisfaction of your own heart. Obtain all the evidence of it which the case admits, and which is necessary for the satisfaction and assurance of your own mind.

There is the witness of God's Spirit.

There is the testimony of your conscience.

4. Make it sure to others by the evidence of a holy life; showing that in you there is a principle of obedience yielding fruit.

5. Make your calling and election sure as to their great end and object, everlasting life. You are called to this, elected for this; live in direct and constant reference to it.

III. The way in which the admonition is to be observed. "Give diligence."

1. Illustrate by comparison.

The candidate makes every personal exertion of body and mind. The Christian is to strive, agonize, &c. The candidate employs all means and interests to promote his object. The Christian puts his cause into Christ's hands; uses all prescribed and prudential means. The candidate makes his exertions opportunely. The Christian buys, seizes, the opportunity: does what he ought to do, when he ought to do it. The candidate makes his exertions lawfully. The Christian knows that He who calls and elects has laid down the rules, and he is careful to observe them.—Such is the diligent Christian.

2. Illustrate by contrast.

They who strive on earth do it to obtain earthly objects: a corruptible crown. The Christian, heavenly objects: an incorruptible one. In proportion to superior value should be superior exertion.

Suppose the object secured, what is gained? Think of wealth, honour, pleasure, as to the world. Think of heaven,—those with whom the Christian shall sit down,—where,—what he shall enjoy.

If they obtain their object, it is not enduring; the wreath fades; death removes the crown. In heaven the crown fades not,—is not removed.

1. I once more repeat the call,—the invitation,—the command; and press acceptance and obedience.

2. To the obedient. "Hold fast that which thou hast, let no man take thy crown."

## SKETCH XV.

### THE VANITY OF MAN.

---

*The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, &c. Isaiah xl. 6—8.*

SEVERAL voices are heard in this chapter. In verses 1, 2, God speaks, and gives a preliminary address to the prophecy, which extends to the end of Isaiah; and in verses 3—5, the voice of Messiah's herald. In the text another voice is heard. Alas! this voice cries aloud through all the regions of mortality. It proclaims a truth, a serious truth, important above all others, and of universal interest to the human race.

I. In reference to mankind, it cries, "All flesh is grass," &c.

II. In reference to God it declares, "But the word of our God shall," &c.

I. In reference to mankind, the voice cries, "All flesh is grass."

1. This is a just representation of human nature; for,

(1.) All flesh has the same origin physically, being compounded of the same matter as grass.

(2.) All flesh is supported in precisely the same manner, by the same elements, the sun, rain, &c.

(3.) All flesh is alike frail and transient in its existence. "In the morning they are like grass," &c. Psalm xc. 5, 6.

(4.) All flesh must perish in like manner as the grass.

Our strength and the term of our existence are not

like those of a tree. Take a little acorn in your hand, how insignificant a thing! Cast it into the ground, it shall become a strong, massy, long-lived tree; the birds of the air shall lodge in its luxurious branches. Your descendants of the first, second, third, or fourth generation may be bending under the infirmities of old age, supporting their feeble limbs with crutches supplied by the branches, and seeking repose under the comfort of its extensive shadow; or, perhaps, after the wearying toils and cares of sated life, shall moulder into dust at its venerable foot. The storm-defying oak braves the conflicting tempests of centuries; "as for man, his days are as grass; as the flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more; surely the people is grass."

2. This is a just representation of all the excellencies that can adorn and beautify mankind. The voice cries, "And all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth."

(1.) How true of all personal excellence!

(i.) Natural beauty of person. When we would speak of the finest and most brilliant beauty, we can only aspire to the metaphor of the rose and the lily. "Consider the lilies of the field: Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." But their personal excellence, though protected, as it were, by the strength of youth and health, oftentimes fades.

(2.) How true of all mental excellence!

"The goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."  
"Were I so tall to reach," &c.

(i.) Fine natural parts, bright intellects, sparkling wit, genius.

(ii.) Learned acquirements, science and literature.

(iii.) The charms of disposition.

(3.) All the excellencies arising from external circumstances.

(i.) The acquisition of riches. "Let the brethren of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich," &c. James i. 9 10.

(ii.) The possession of honour. The crown, imperial flower, fades like the field daisy.

(iii.) The prerogative of power. The mighty monarch cometh forth to dictate to nations by his mandates; to overthrow empires by his army; but is cut down as a flower,

"And leaves the name at which the world turned pale,  
To point a moral or adorn a tale."

"Go search the tombs where monarchs rest," &c.

Now all these glories of the flesh are but,

(i.) As the flower—splendid indeed, but transient in duration.

(ii.) As the flower of the field,—not as the flower of the garden, cultivated carefully and continually,—but unprotected and liable to be crushed by the tread of every casual passenger.

(4.) How true, finally, of all spiritual gifts, and ministerial endowments! These are the greatest and most useful excellencies, "the best gifts," &c. But they are as the flower of the field; soon these flowers, though sacred, fade; even these which adorn the plants of God's planting, these flourish for a season only. The Head of the church depends not on them. Does he transplant the loveliest and most fragrant flowers into his paradise? He has the seedlings in his garden in sufficient numbers to beautify and benefit his church on earth. "The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them: the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel."

3. This is also a just representation of human nature morally; which the Scripture calls "flesh," and is ineffectual to our justification before God.

(1.) All mere moral virtues, which are the works of the flesh, proceeding from the mere efforts of an unregenerate heart; these are called by Augustine, "splendid sins;" at least they are but heathen virtues incapable of justifying us in the sight of God. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or, (as the schoolmen say,) deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."—Article XIII. of the Church of England.

(2.) All mere outward affectation of religion, as to creeds, notions of orthodoxy, Jewish, Pharisaic forms, are but as grass; the most splendid of them are but as the flower of the field; they have no vital root, no living fragrance. They wither and fade when the Spirit of the Lord, by his sin-convincing influence, bloweth upon them. Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus as described by him, Romans vii. 9; and Philippians iii. 3—7. His moral and religious condition was like a gay parterre. But our own poet, adopting the character of a person converted from this state, thus expresses himself:—

" Faded my virtuous show,  
 My form without the power,  
 The sin-convincing Spirit blew,  
 And blasted every flower.  
 My mouth was stopp'd, and shame  
 Cover'd my guilty face;  
 I fell on the atoning Lamb,  
 And I was saved by grace."

Thus, "no flesh can glory in his presence."

II. In reference to God, the voice declares: "But the word of our God shall stand for ever." That is,

saith the Holy Ghost by St. Peter, explaining this subject, "Being born," &c. 1 Peter i. 23—25.

The Gospel, then, is the living word, the vital seed; it survives mortality and death. The Gospel throws aside the sable pall of the king of terrors, rends the veil betwixt mortal and immortal being, and brings life and incorruption to light; exhibits Him over whom death had no dominion; who says, "I am he," &c. Rev. vii. 18; and thus assures his disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

"See Truth, Love, and Goodness, in triumph descending,  
And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom;  
On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending,  
And Beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

The pride of philosophy, together with Jewish ceremonies, and all the glory of finite good, wither and die; but Jesus Christ in his Gospel "is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever:" the procurer and donor of all blessings which shall endure through time and eternity. His glory is a permanent and everlasting glory, and is opposed to the fading glory of the creature, whose personal, intellectual, and moral excellence is frail, fading, and perishing.

1. The word of our God in the unchangeable principles of the Gospel.

2. The word of our God in the privileges of the Gospel: his unsearchable riches of grace and glory to all who embrace, experience, and obey the Gospel: pardon, adoption, sanctification, support, consolation, and eternal life, "shall stand for ever."

### III. Improvement.

1. The voice proclaims the mortality of all flesh, it has cried frequently, at this time it cries loudly to us! "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." "All flesh is grass; and the goodliness thereof is as the flower of

the field : the grass withereth, the flower fadeth." It has been more than declared, it has been verified with many. We behold lovely children, amiable youth, and early pious characters, falling beneath the scythe of time. We see how,

"The morning flowers display their sweets."

"So blooms the human face divine."

We behold the most distinguished ministers, with gifts, zeal, and labours, much more abundant than others, cut down as a flower. And *all* flesh is grass. You! You are frail, fading. None can plead for exemption from death. "It is appointed for all men once to die." The rich and poor lie down together in the bed of dust.

"The sceptred king, the burden'd slave,  
The humble, and the haughty die ;  
The rich, the poor, the base, the brave,  
In dust without distinction lie."

2. The voice proclaims the insignificancy of all glorying in the flesh. Seek then that salvation which redounds to the everlasting glory of the Lord. "This salvation is by the Gospel preached to you now." 1 Cor. i. 29—31.

3. The voice declares, that "the word of our God shall stand for ever." Let every believer live and depend upon every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Embrace it now, and now, and now, from moment to moment. Forget not what the blessed Saviour has said, anticipate its final fulfilment. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c., "but," &c. Then,

"Perish the grass, and fade the flower,  
If firm the word of God remains !"

## SKETCH XVI.

### THE EFFECTS OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT.

---

*Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Isaiah xlv. 1—5.*

#### I. THE promise.

1. By whom given. Jehovah in the characters of Creator, (verse 2,) the Sovereign, Former of Israel as a nation, who had given them laws and privileges superior to all other nations; eminently as their God, under covenant engagements to be their Helper, including all they needed.

2. To whom made. The church of God, described by different terms, Jacob, Israel, Jeshurun, a climax: a supplanter, Prince with God, the upright one.

3. The purport of the promise. An abundant effusion of the Spirit of God, (verse 3,) water is the usual figure employed. John, Revelation. The figure is explained in the parallelism: "I will pour out my Spirit,"—my blessing, commencing with the Gospel dispensation. Acts, "times of refreshing," &c.

II. The consequence of its fulfilment, "And they shall," &c.

This is not to be limited to one generation, as for instance to the apostolic age. "Upon thy seed, thy offspring," for "the promise is to us and to our children." Observe,

1. The precious condition of those in whose favour the promise is made—"him that is thirsty—the dry ground." Souls parched and desolated by sin, as chap. xxxv. 1, 2.

2. The effects are,

(1.) Divine vitality, evidenced by increase and vigour, as among grass—as willows, &c. Psalm i.; Rev. xxii.

(2.) Personal dedication to God and the church.

To God. One shall say, "I am the Lord's." He shall be truly, and confess boldly and joyfully he is the Lord's; born of him, and for him, who hath bought him with a price, and adopted and taken into covenant.

To the church. Professed union with the church of Christ as Providence and conscience may direct. "Another shall call himself by the name of Jacob," not ashamed of the meanest name and the lowest section of the church. "Another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel;" shall enter into covenant to serve the Lord, and to be an Israelite indeed. (Romans ii.) Or, as the passage seems to import, shall become and behave himself as a faithful and courageous soldier of the Lord, to fight against God's spiritual enemies, who are his enemies also. Anciently the soldiers had a mark on their hand, signifying what commander they belonged to. So in Revelation, the worshippers of the beast are said to have his mark on their hands, &c. At this day among the orientlists, the castes have their symbols on their foreheads and hands.

### III. Improvement. Reflections.

1. Divine influence, the Spirit and the blessing of

God are the only source and support of true spiritual religion. The earth might as well be verdant and fruitful without rain, as religion could exist and flourish without Divine influence. Prayer and all means should be employed for the outpouring of the Spirit.

2. Here is a gracious promise respecting the children of pious parents. Let this cheer the hearts of parents, not slacken but quicken their prayers and efforts; and let this be a stimulus to the young, let them early seek the Lord, and unite themselves to the people of God.

Assign some reasons.

3. The promise is general. Prayer and effort should be employed; faith, and hope, and expectation; gratitude for any measure of fulfilment. An earnest of complete fulfilment, when water, floods, the Spirit and blessing of God shall be poured out on all flesh; the distant deserts of the Heathen shall be converted into a fruitful field, &c., &c.

## SKETCH XVIII.

### FOR GOOD FRIDAY.

---

#### PART I.

*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah liii. 10.*

THE important event commemorated this day is the most awful, and wonderful, and interesting, that ever occurred; namely, the crucifixion of "the Lord of glory!" It was contemplated by the Father of eternity; for Christ was the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world;—by the ancient patriarchs: Abraham, when he offered up Isaac, saw the day of Christ:—by the prophets, for to Christ they all gave witness:—it was set forth by the Levitical institutions, which were shadows, but the substance was Christ:—the substance of the Gospel, too, is the propitiation of Christ;—and the subject of the Gospel ministry is "Christ crucified." Finally, in this striking chapter, the subject of redemption by Messiah, as completed in the awful circumstances of this day's commemoration, is minutely set forth; and the text, especially, presents it in an important aspect, being the stipulation of the Divine Father with the Messiah in these terms: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

Let us inquire,

The grounds implied; the condition required; which may be improved by

Our serious reflection on the whole subject.

The reward promised in the last clause of the verse may become a subject for future consideration.

I. The grounds of this stipulation implied.

1. The heinous demerit of sin.

We will not enter into that deep and mysterious inquiry, Whence the origin of evil? but contemplate its existence and character, so that it is absolutely necessary there should be an offering and sacrifice to God for its expiation. Sin is the transgression of the holy and righteous law of God, and is thereby an insult cast upon his Infinite Majesty—contempt of his supreme authority. Its nature is impurity itself, and the abominable thing his soul hateth. It provokes his most indignant displeasure. His eternal curse is entailed upon it. The sentence of eternal death is denounced against it, and is not to be remitted without an infinitely meritorious sacrifice.

2. There is, besides, another important circumstance, forming the ground of this stipulation. Sin cannot be expiated without due, and even supreme, regard for the honour of God; which is to be so secured and illustrated, that he may not merely be rendered placable and propitious, but have “pleasure” in the salvation of sinners.

(1.) All his attributes must be illustriously harmonized and glorified. His justice, truth, holiness, mercy.

(2.) All the penal denunciations of his holy law must be made good. “The wages of sin is death.” “The soul that sinneth shall die.”

(3.) The purity and integrity of God’s moral government must have an unqualified recognition; which perhaps will be witnessed and acknowledged by myriads, if not by all the moral intelligences, angelic, human, and diabolical, in the whole universe.

Of these two parts, forming the ground of the stipulation, there is no just recognition in any of the mythologies of the heathen world, nor in the theories of either ancient or modern moral philosophers.

II. The condition required. That Christ should be made "an offering for sin." This may be considered to be either the judicial requirement of the Divine Father, or the voluntary act of Christ himself. (Margin.) "When his soul shall make," &c.

1. As the judicial requirement of the Father. The offering must be recognised by law, that it might be obedience. This whole chapter, particularly, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief," &c. "Who being in the form of God," &c. Law demanded it. "Awake, O sword," &c.

2. And the offering was likewise a voluntary act of Messiah. If there were reluctance, it could not be a meritorious act. It must be a free-will offering. They both meet in that explicit Scripture: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me," &c. Heb. x. 5. All the circumstances of Christ's death proved it a voluntary act. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself." When he prayed in the garden, he submitted to drink the cup. He "was led like a lamb to the slaughter," &c. "He dismissed his spirit." Mark the subject offered: "The soul." The body was sacrificed, its blood was shed; but the soul of Christ, eminently the human soul, for the souls of mankind. What a sacrifice! In his agony in Gethsemane, "Now is my soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" There, as well as in the judgment-hall, and on the cross, all his intellectual faculties;—his understanding, which clearly saw the extent of the guilt and demerit of the sins of all mankind, and the purity, holiness, and justice of God; his will,

which was wholly upright and righteous; and all the affections of his soul;—all was placed upon the altar of the cross, and consumed, as it were, by the exquisite and inconceivable sense he had of the Divine wrath and indignation against sin, in the total withdrawment of the light of the Divine complacency, figured by the supernatural darkness of that dreadful period, when he cried, “Eloi, Eloi, Sabachthani!” Mark; this was nothing less than a vicarious sacrifice. So the whole chapter declares, and was the antitype of all which preceded. The sin-offering of the ignorant offender,—the paschal lamb,—the great sin-offering on the day of atonement, according with the very time when Christ suffered, “the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

III. Recommend this important subject to serious consideration.

1. Messiah has minutely and completely fulfilled the stipulation! “An offering and sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour” to God; such his zeal for the glory of God; such his love to precious souls!

“O Lamb of God, was ever pain,  
Was ever love like thine!”

“Then let us sit beneath his cross,  
And gladly catch the healing stream,” &c.

2. This is the only sacrifice for sin. “Christ was once offered: there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” What of those who pretend to offer him daily in sacrifice? What of infidels, who deny the sacrificial death of Christ? What of antinomians, who make the death of Christ an occasion of sin? What of apostates, “who count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing?”

3. This is the accepted offering. God requires no other. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.” Having

therefore boldness to draw nigh to the Holy of holies, through the the blood of the Lamb, &c.

(1.) How cheering to poor penitents: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man lifted up." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "If the blood of bulls and of goats," &c.

(2.) How establishing to humble believers! Let them thus be crucified to the world; glory in the cross; their motto be, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," &c. "Live by faith in the Son of God," &c., and look for the glorious result of this mystery of godliness in the presence of God and the Lamb, when all the redeemed shall join in that heavenly and endless song: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

## SKETCH XVIII.

### GOOD FRIDAY.

---

#### PART II.

*He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah liii. 10.*

WE have seen the sacrifice offered, &c. Let us now contemplate the glorious reward.

I. Messiah shall obtain an abundant progeny. "He shall see his seed."

The corn of wheat fell into the ground, &c. Even while offering his soul. The penitent malefactor. Immediately after, the centurion,—soon, thousands,—since then, millions. His true progeny partakers of the Divine nature; his spiritual likeness. Real wheat,—not tares.

But the extent of this promised reward is not yet obtained: it will be. The handful of corn has been sown on the tops of the mountains, &c. In many places the fields are white unto the harvest. Fallow ground is being broken up. Himself has declared, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." We begin to see the increasing progeny like the numerous dew-drops. Psalm cx. 3. The apocalyptic scene shall be unveiled. Rev. vii. 9, 10.

II. Messiah shall long enjoy the fruits of his sufferings: "He shall prolong his days." He was soon cut off, before he had measured half the short span of

man's life. He was dead and buried, but soon arose to life. He has triumphed over death. "O death, I will be thy plague," &c., and he shall have a long mediatorial reign." Psalm xxi. 1—6; lxxii. 15—17; Isaiah ix. 6, 7; Daniel ii. 44.

The greatest of earthly monarchs die, but not the King of glory, who hath the keys of death and the grave, and exults, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore!"

III. Messiah shall succeed in his mediatorial undertaking. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

1. The salvation of sinners is the pleasure of Jehovah.

(1.) His heart was long set on it. From before the foundation of the world he had provided the sacrificial Lamb; in Eden gave his gracious promise, renewed it to the patriarchs, symbolized it in the Levitical institutions. The long series of prophecies all terminated in this object. He made the most wonderful arrangement for it in his providential government of the nations of the world, in the successive general empires, as seen in Daniel.

(2.) To prove how great his pleasure is in the salvation of sinners, "He gave his only-begotten Son." John iii.

(3.) And he has given his own testimony, and even ratified it by oath. "Have I any pleasure," &c. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure," &c. Matter of fact confirms the whole. The conversion of only one sinner gives him pleasure, and raises the rapture of heaven.

2. The work of salvation is confided to the hands of the Messiah.

(1.) He had a prophetic investiture to his mediatorial government: "Jehovah said," &c. Psalm cx. 1.

(2.) The government of his kingdom he avowed to have been given him by the Divine Father. "All power in heaven and earth is committed to me." He hath entered upon the administration. "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity," &c.

(3.) And he is made "Head over all things, to his body the church," whose affairs he administers; "the government is upon his shoulders." He makes laws, appoints officers, directs all means, carries the stars in his right hand, walks among the golden candlesticks. The work being confided to him, salvation is in good, sufficient, holy hands.

3. The work of salvation, Jehovah's pleasure, shall prosper in Messiah's hands. To make this good,

(1.) There are many predictions; Psalm lxxii. 5—8, where we see by what means the work of salvation shall prosper, by the copious outpouring of his Spirit, "like rain," &c. And it is this which shall give effect to Psalm lxxii. 16, "Then shall be a handful of corn on the top," &c., and to what a wonderful extent the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands, may be inferred from the verse following the text: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" for all his labours and sufferings.

(2.) There are many promises made to Messiah. For instance, the text, Isaiah xlix. 6; Psalm ii. 8; and cx. 1, 2.

(3.) There are anticipations made by Messiah himself. Dan. vii. 13, 14; Heb. ii. 13; and xii. 2. To all this may be added, that,

(i.) No oppositions have hitherto prevented it. Psalm ii. 1—3.

(ii.) Nor ever shall. "No weapon formed against it shall prosper." "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(iii.) If opposition can ever impair his energy, or

cause him to relax his efforts, we might then fear for the success of his cause. But thus saith the Almighty, "Behold my servant whom I uphold," &c.

Application.

Are we his progeny? Does he live in us? Does the Lord's pleasure prosper in us? That pleasure is, that we should be saved, now, fully, everlastingly.

Engage in his cause. Promote the salvation of others. It is a work of religion and of humanity; and you shall not labour in vain.

## SKETCH XIX.

### PREACHED IN CONNEXION WITH THE FORMATION OF A BIBLE SOCIETY.

---

*Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified. 2 Thessalonians iii. 1.*

I. THE character of the subject matter. “The word of the Lord.”

The Scripture is not a cunningly-devised fable, like the mythology of the Pagans, and the Koran of the Mohammedans. It is not a series of absurd figments, like the traditions of the Jewish Rabbies; it is not like the ethics of the moralists; it is “the word of the Lord.”

1. The Lord is the author of the word. He inspired it. This is evident from its nature, which is holy;—its prophecies, its harmony, its grandeur, its importance, its discoveries, its undecaying energy and influence.

2. The Lord is the subject of the word. It begins with him as the Creator of heaven and earth; it is the history of his providential government of the world, and of his gracious dispensations to his church; and most eminently of the nature, benefits, and glories of his work of redemption. Psalm xl. 10; John v. 39.

3. The Lord is the end of the word. It tends to illustrate the glory of all his perfections to the whole universe throughout all eternity. It well merits the appellation of “the Bible, the Book!”

How truly desirable is it to witness

II. Its more rapid progress, and more eminent glory!

“That it may have free course and be glorified!” that it may glide on magnificently, swiftly, copiously, like a mighty river! This is “the river of God which is full of water.” It is “the river of the water of life.” How much is it to be wished that it may soon be like those waters which the prophet Ezekiel saw in vision, widening and deepening, and dispensing wherever it glides its satisfying, cleansing, invigorating, and fructifying effects! The Scripture is more beneficial than the Nile; and a real Pactolus, flowing on sands of gold; a healing Jordan, better than Abana and Pharpar, and all the rivers of Damascus. The word *τρέχῃ* may be rendered as in the margin, “may run,” and alludes perhaps to the applause given to those who made a speedy progress in the Grecian races. The word of the Lord has, indeed, a noble course to run, and a glorious prize to obtain.

1. Let us inquire what is intimated in regard to its more rapid progress, “that it may run.” That obstacles be removed out of its course, such as infidel opposition and antichristian prejudices;—that the course be remarkably cleared by the finger of Providence, and proper instruments and means be brought forward by him; which has most eminently been the case of late.

(1.) As to means: the invention of printing, the commercial communication we have with so many countries in every quarter of the world, and our extensive foreign dominions.

(2.) As to instruments: God has raised men of piety and zeal to stir up the Christian world,—men of authority and influence to patronize the great work of spreading the Scripture,—men of learning, who have acquired the knowledge of many languages, and are laboriously employed in translating the word of God,—men of property and others, who can do a little, if not much, to contribute their money for the purchase of the Scriptures for the poor,—and finally, what is per-

haps more effectual than either or all of the former, men of piety, who are engaged in fervent prayer for the spread of the Scripture.

2. Let us inquire what is the purport of its more eminent glory: "That the word of the Lord may run and be glorified." It is properly glorified, when it accomplishes the saving effects for which it is sent forth; though, in a certain sense, it will be glorified in other than saving effects, becoming the savour of death to those who reject it. But it may be said to be glorified,—

(1.) When it vanquishes the prejudices of Pagans, Mohammedans, Jews, and nominal Christians; when its truths are admitted.

(2.) When it is the instrument, through the Divine agency, of awakening, enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying those who admit its truths, and directs and aids them to adorn the doctrines of the Gospel by their holy and useful walk. The accomplishment of these things is the distinct and peculiar glory—the great and abiding glory of the Scripture, the Word, the Book of God, when all other words and books shall for ever vanish away. If such be the desirable rapidity of its course, and the eminent glory of its triumphs, what is

### III. The duty of Christians towards effecting them?

1. It is to be fervent in prayer, that God may extend his providential and gracious aid. This point is especially pressed in the connexion of the text.

2. It is to extend whatever pecuniary help they can, that the Scriptures may be translated, printed, and distributed abroad and at home.

3. It is the duty of every Christian to make his utmost personal exertion to distribute the Scripture among the ignorant, and to adorn it by his own example, exhibiting the power and utility of Divine truth. What considerations of the greatest importance must present themselves to every person! Let us examine,—

IV. Some motives to excite us to help forward this glorious work.

1. The importance of the sacred Scripture,—

(1.) Seen in its design to manifest God to his creatures in this world, to show them who he is, what he is to them—their moral Governor, Judge; to manifest mankind to themselves—as fallen, guilty, polluted sinners—as manifesting a Redeemer, a Sanctifier, and bringing life and immortality to light.

(2.) Seen also in their past influence on the Pagan world, and in their present influence on the individual character, on domestic habits, social life, civil life, laws, public morals.

2. Notwithstanding these blessed effects, the general state of the world, at home and abroad, is an inducement to duty.

3. The opposition of the enemies of truth should rouse Christians to zealous efforts to maintain it. The all-wise Governor of the world, once left, as it were, the Gentile nations to the dictates of their imaginations, who gave most ample proof that they knew not God. He has been pleased very lately to try the Christian nations; they, too, “did not like to retain the God of the Bible in their thoughts.” He let them alone, and our eyes have beheld the rage and the momentary triumph of philosophy, falsely so called. We have seen what none could previously have imagined: [allusion to the French revolution.]

4. We are sure of success, for God has promised it, and the Bible has been tried, &c.

5. I mention but one more; it is that grand, general, and essential motive which should always stimulate and govern us in every act of Christian benevolence, the love and duty we owe to God and our fellow men.

I conclude with impressing the conviction of the necessity of our making a proper use of the Scriptures, making them the rule of our faith and practice, lest the

Pagan nations, unvisited with this light of life, should rise up in the judgment and condemn us. May we love the word of the Lord more than gold, yea, than much fine gold! May it be sweeter to our taste than honey or the honeycomb! May we hide the word in our hearts, that we sin not against God! May the word of Christ dwell in us richly! "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them!" &c.

## SKETCH XX.

### THE WORK AND THE EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

---

*And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah xxxii. 17.*

THE ancient inspired prophets foretold a bright and glorious era, which should open upon the world at a subsequent period of time. The Jewish nation, in consequence, expected that worldly acquisitions and transcendent honours would be attained by the universal triumphs and reign of Messiah. They were right in their expectation of a blessed era, but they were mistaken as to the nature and quality of the blessings to be introduced by the reign of Messiah. They supposed them to be temporal, but they were to be spiritual;—they supposed them to be human, but they were to be Divine. The prophet points out their source and nature: “Until the Spirit,” &c., (verse 15,) and in the text he mentions the principle that was to produce the mighty change, which is, “righteousness.” Righteousness is to work and to produce “the effect.” “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.”

We contemplate a subject which brings before our view the progress and connexion of all the parts constituting the economy of redemption. Let us then behold,

I. A righteousness wrought for us, by Messiah, the

Lord Jesus Christ, in his incarnation and obedience unto death.

This is not his mere personal righteousness as man, for that was required from him in common with all men, the obedience he owed to the law of God.

Nor is it the Divine righteousness which he possessed as God, and which cannot be said to be for any finite being, because it is essential and infinite.

But it is his mediatorial righteousness, which paid the penalty of the broken law incurred by the sins of a guilty world. Hence he was represented in prophecy as saying, "Sacrifice and burnt-offerings," &c. Hence Isaiah says, "The Lord laid upon him," &c. And thus the Apostle, "He suffered for sins," &c; "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness;" and "He, who knew no sin, was made," &c. This work was a work indeed! It required to accomplish it all the energies of the Almighty Redeemer; it required days of toil, and nights of prayer,—conflicts with cruel persecutors, contradiction of sinners, and repeated combats with the powers of darkness;—it required sweat, and tears, and blood;—it required the exhaustion of the bitter cup, and the baptism of blood.

This work required the sacrifice of his body and soul, made by the Divine Father an offering for sin, when he was pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief. But he did achieve the work, and on the cross exclaimed, "It is finished!"

This work he accomplished alone, without the help of any, either men or angels. See him, after its accomplishment returning from the territory of death, his final foe. "Who is this that cometh from," &c.

If we look at this meritorious righteousness of our blessed Saviour, we shall see how, in reference both to heaven and earth, to God and man, its work is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance for ever.

1. In respect to God, it works peace by harmonizing

all the Divine attributes,—truth, justice, holiness, mercy. In God's acceptance of the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son, mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. God is herein a just God and a Saviour. All his perfections, reflected as it were by Him who is the brightness of his glory, look down placidly on the world of sinners. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing," &c.

The effect is "quietness." The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, he is satisfied and delighted in the Son of his love. The whole manifestation of the Divine perfections is serene, gentle, propitious. God is "the God of peace," "the God of love," "the God of all grace," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"And assurance for ever." The honour of the Divine law is for ever secured. The atonement of Christ is perfect and perpetual for ever. "There remaineth no more," &c. "This man when he had," &c. "And ever liveth to save," &c.

2. In respect to us, this righteousness works peace. It is the foundation, the footing, the meritorious cause, and the only basis on which we can obtain peace with God. Peace is preached to them that are afar off, and to them that are near, through the blood of the cross. "Him hath God set forth, a propitiation for sin, declaring his righteousness," &c. "For he is our peace." "Therefore being justified," &c.

And its effect in the believer is "quietness." Reconciled unto God, the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience: no clamours of guilt, no terrifying apprehensions, no dread of the curse, or accusations of the law. "And assurance for ever." The assurance of the reality of this peace with God, by the witness of the Spirit, and that this grace and circumstance are designed by the covenant of redemption to be the por-

tion of every faithful believer through his life, in his death, and in the kingdom of glory for ever!

This righteousness wrought for us, in every instance in which it is attained and retained by the believer, is attended by,

## II. A righteousness wrought in us.

This is the gracious work of the Spirit of Christ wrought in every believing soul, to whom is imparted the Spirit of adoption, and who is brought under the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost. This righteousness is a great work, a supernatural work, a divine work; a new birth, a new creation; and it is ever found to be in nature, if not in degree, in every child of God; it is God's restored image, for a believer is made after the image of him who created him in righteousness and true holiness. He has obtained the kingdom of God and his righteousness, is partaker of a Divine nature; for, whom God justifies, them he also sanctifies. This righteousness wrought in us has its work, it works peace in the soul; keeps it in a condition to maintain its former blessing, the assurance of its peace with God. It keeps the mind, the thoughts, the heart, with its passions and affections, through Jesus Christ, in the peace of God which passeth, &c.—Keeps it from stumbling through the power of temptation. "Great peace have they," &c., "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," &c.

And the effect is "quietness," as it subdues the unquiet, unruly, and outrageous passions and tempers; so it introduces and matures all the fruits of the Spirit; "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." Gal. v. 22, 23.

"Soft Peace she brings," &c. PRIOR.

And a further effect is "assurance for ever." The immediate witness of the Spirit obtained in justifica-

tion, is hereby maintained, and still more confirmed by the evidence of those genuine fruits; and the assurance becoming strengthened and infallible, constant, permanent, pure, and for ever! This is attended by,

### III. A righteousness wrought by us.

This is an essential concomitant of the preceding works of righteousness. This righteousness is expedient and necessary. Are believers justified and sanctified? Let them consider,

1. Why Christ redeemed them. "Who gave himself for us, that he might," &c.

2. Why the Spirit of God renewed them. "For we are his workmanship, created," &c.

3. Why the grace of God appeared, and what it teaches. "The grace of God which," &c.

4. What is the apostolic injunction? "This is a faithful saying," &c.

5. What is their blessed Master's command? "Ye are the light of the world: let your," &c.

If we look at this righteousness, how does it adorn the Gospel, how does it diffuse blessings on all around! We shall see how it works peace. Once before their conversion to God, these persons, not even apostles, their previous unregenerate state excepted, were "foolish, disobedient," &c. Titus ii; but now they enjoy that beatitude, "blessed," &c. See the work of peace in their domestic life: "Behold how good and pleasant," &c.; in the church of Christ. "Pray for the peace of Zion," &c.; and in their commerce with the world, influenced by that sound advice, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with," &c., and "Follow peace," &c.

And the effect is "quietness," a state of tranquillity within the sphere of Christians, and even beyond it. It silences the clamorous prejudices of enemies when they see this righteousness in full operation. They own the truth, power, and influence of religion. How can they

do otherwise, when they behold Christians leading their peaceful lives in all godliness and honesty? And its further effect is,

“Assurance for ever;” a perpetual and even increasing assurance to Christians themselves, to the church, and to the world, of the truth and benefit of religion. This rolls away the stumbling-stone which stands in the way of sinners around us, and of the Heathen abroad; were it fully and universally manifested, one might even almost expect to hear again “a multitude of the heavenly host” in the air, singing, “Glory to God,” &c.

#### Improvement.

1. This subject affords instruction in the economy and order of redemption.

We should acquaint ourselves with the difference between each of the preceding kinds of righteousness, their absolute distinctness, though essential connexion; mutual dependence, and consecutive order. It is a threefold cord which cannot be broken. The foundation of all personal holiness is found in our cordial acceptance of pardon by Christ; and pardon by Christ rests on his own atonement.

2. But this subject especially demands our personal inquiry.

Are we convinced that a righteousness is wrought for us? Are we brought to relinquish our own righteousness, and to submit to the righteousness of God by faith? If so, have we the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, working to will and to do, and renewing us in righteousness? Have we the work of righteousness,—“peace,” and the effect,—“quietness and assurance?” If not, seek it now.

3. This subject, if we have been savingly acquainted with it, lays us under obligation to promote, as much as is in our power, its influence in the world.

How would it change the moral face of the earth, as intimated in verses 15 and 18. It would put an end to bloody wars, massacres, tyrannies, oppressions, profligacy, licentiousness, and all the millions of evils that afflict the world. Nothing but religion can repress them: but religion can even annihilate them, and introduce an influence which shall work and produce effects of the noblest kind. This is the transcendent excellence of religion, righteousness in principle and operation. It is a working principle, the *primum mobile*, the lever which can lift off the incumbent mass of evils so direfully oppressing the whole earth; which can divinely revolutionize every nation, tribe, and people; which can effectually accomplish more than philosophers, moralists, and legislators ever conceived. It is a vital principle, producing effects essential to its own nature. It makes the root good; therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. It purifies the fountain, and all the issuing streams are pure.

Shall it not then employ all our exertions to promote its influence among mankind? Then may we hope that moral and Divine change will speedily be seen in the character and condition of all mankind; that beautiful and beneficial, that blessed and Divine metamorphosis: "Instead of the thorn," &c., chap. lv. ult. "The wolf shall dwell," &c. chap. ii. 5—9.

HYMNS

AND

OTHER POEMS.



# HYMNS

AND

## OTHER POEMS.

---

### MATTHEW XXV.

WRITTEN FOR A FAVOURITE TUNE, COMPOSED BY THE  
REV. C. W. MILLER.

AWAKE! awake! His chariot wheels  
The listening watchmen hear;  
The Saviour comes, the heaven reveals  
The Prince of glory near.  
Ye holy virgins, wise, discreet,  
(For hark! his chariot rolls!)  
Awake! arise! go forth! and meet  
The Bridegroom of your souls!

#### CHORUS.

Hosanna! faithful is the Lord;  
Hosanna! be his name adored:  
The Bridegroom comes to claim his bride,  
To place her spotless by his side.  
Ye virgins rise! no more delay!  
Attendant angels chide your stay;  
The Bridegroom calls you, "Come away!"

We watch, obedient to his voice,  
 Let foolish virgins sleep ;  
 We daily in the Lord rejoice,  
 And nightly vigils keep :  
 We trim our lamps with fresh supplies  
 Of sanctifying grace ;  
 We watch, we pray, look forth, and rise,  
 The Bridegroom to embrace !

## CHORUS.

Hosanna ! welcome is the Lord ;  
 Hosanna ! be thy name adored !  
 Immanuel, come to claim thy bride,  
 And place her spotless by thy side.  
 From heaven descend, no more delay,  
 While now the bride and Spirit pray,  
 " O Jesus, quickly come away ! "

---

WRITTEN AT HIS LODGINGS IN BANDON, IRELAND,  
 IN 1787—8.

HAIL, gentle stranger ! welcome thou  
 To all these barren walls allow,—  
 An homely fire and easy chair,  
 The lonely pilgrim's daily fare.  
 No sumptuous sideboard strikes thine eye,  
 Thy sight or taste to gratify ;  
 Nor luscious viands here convey  
 Temptation, as in Adam's day ;  
 In vain the brutal epicure  
 Would seek delights within my door ;  
 But if a friendly neighbour wish  
 To share an almost empty dish,  
 Here motives are to bid him come,—  
 Example, and an empty room.

But what are all the joys of sense  
 To intellectual excellence?  
 Would you be holy, happy, wise,  
 Partakers of celestial joys?  
 Here good advice is (gratis) given,  
 To point the sacred way to heaven;  
 And Christian love is here, to share  
 Your every burden, every care:  
 So Christ's ambassadors should show  
 Th' example of their Lord below.  
 Thankful when on the "plain of ease,"  
 Careful their Lord alone to please;  
 But willing, too, to suffer loss,  
 And never shrinking from the cross.  
 In fulness wandering not from God,  
 Nor murmuring at affliction's rod;  
 Thus to their flock the pattern give,  
 How they in every state should live,  
 And glorify their Lord below,  
 Whether they pass through weal or woe.

---

### ON THE DEATH OF MR. WESLEY :

SUNG AT THE CHAPEL, CARMARTHEN, THE DAY THE  
 FUNERAL SERMON WAS PREACHED THERE, 1791.

#### I.

ETERNAL King, thy potent hand  
 The keys of death sustain;  
 Who dares dispute thy dread command,  
 Or thy decrees arraign?  
 To thee we lift the streaming eye,  
 While prostrate at thy throne,  
 And fain our bleeding hearts would cry,  
 "Thy righteous will be done!"

Wide scatter'd through the wilderness,  
 Thy wand'ring people see ;  
 On Nebo Moses dies in peace,  
 Retires to heaven and thee.

Secure from sorrow, sin, and pain,  
 He takes his seat above,  
 To' enjoy the everlasting reign  
 Of happiness and love.

But ah ! no more his faithful voice  
 Directs our devious way,  
 Nor bids our happy souls rejoice,  
 Nor wakes the tuneful lay.

O Thou, our Joshua, bow thine ear,—  
 To whom shall we apply ?  
 Attend the praying remnant's prayer,  
 And hear thine Israel's cry.

O may thy fiery pillar stay !  
 And never leave us more,  
 Till cleaving Jordan yields a way  
 To Canaan's heavenly shore.

## II.

Now, now let every tear be dry,  
 Let every tongue hosannas raise :  
 " Amen," let every heart reply,  
 And every soul dilate with praise.

Escorted up the shining way,  
 With rapid steeds of heavenly fire,  
 Our honour'd father tow'rs away,  
 To join the bright angelic choir.

While now he gains Jehovah's throne,  
 And bows before his gracious Lord,  
 The royal Master cries, " Well done,  
 Come and receive thy great reward ! "

The victor now obtains the prize,—  
Behold the crown of glory given,  
While raptured seraphs shout their joys  
Through all the spacious vault of heaven.

There, there! among the saints in light,  
His song proclaims the bleeding Lamb;  
And all his blood-bought powers unite  
To magnify the Saviour's name.

'T is there, in lofty strains we all  
Shall gladly bear a humble part;  
O may Elijah's mantle fall!  
His ardent zeal fill every heart!

While travelling life's uneven road,  
Thou, faithful Lord, our steps attend!  
In death be thou a present God,  
Our best, our never-failing Friend.

Soon, through the unopposing air,  
Our struggling souls shall soar away,  
And join our waiting father there,  
In realms of everlasting day.

---

### A WANDERER.

How slowly lag the lazy hours  
That creep from time's expansive womb!  
In sullen gloom all nature lowers,  
And seems to mourn me—far from home.

The golden-boasted moments danced,  
When I enjoy'd my favourite dome;  
And all those cheerful scenes advanced,  
Which now forsake me—far from home.

Ah! could I realize those scenes,  
 While through the dreary shades I roam!  
 One moment fancy takes the reins;  
 I wake, next moment—far from home.

What joyless face each object wears,  
 Distasteful all where'er I come!  
 They cannot dissipate my cares,  
 A wretched exile—far from home.

Ah! were I always thus enthrall'd,  
 I fain should ask a speedy tomb!  
 Say, wherefore should I live, when call'd  
 To wander lonely—far from home?

But brighter scenes are yet before,  
 And brighter moments yet shall come;  
 I soon shall give my sorrowing o'er,  
 And spend my happy days at home!

---

### MISSIONARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

WHY do you assist the Mission?  
 Why your weekly penny spend?

“Hand should sanction tongue’s petition,  
 Each to each assistance lend.”

Why do you assist the Mission?  
 Why your monthly shilling pay?

“Heathens sinking to perdition  
 Cry for succour, ‘Help, I pray!’”

Why do you assist the Mission?  
 Why let yearly sovereigns go?

“Heathens need the good Physician,  
 And the sovereign balm of woe.”

Why do you assist the Mission ?  
 What can your donation do ?

“ Mend, perhaps, one slave’s condition,  
 Help then, peradventure, two.”

Why do you assist the Mission ?  
 Why give all you can afford ?

“ Mine a mite, poor composition !  
 All I have, I owe my Lord.”

Why hereafter serve the Mission ?  
 Why a legacy bequeath ?

“ For the cause to make provision,  
 After I have ceased to breathe.”

Why do you assist the Mission  
 What do you at last expect ?

“ At the last dread inquisition,  
 I may suffer for neglect.”

Why to aid the Christian Mission  
 Should the Christian world combine ?

“ In this Christian coalition,  
 Hands, and heads, and hearts may join.”

QUERY *versus* PLEA FOR MISSION,

Questions and solutions eight :

Truth pronounces her decision,—

“ Plea for Missions,—thou art right !”

## HYMN.

CHRIST, THE PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING OF HIS  
PEOPLE.

CHRIST, my Prophet, Priest, and King,  
While thine offices I sing,  
Deign, in thy exalted sphere,  
Deign to lend a willing ear ;  
While I sing thy praises, be  
Prophet, Priest, and King to me.

Thou, whom Wisdom's treasures fill,  
Dost declare the Father's will,  
Dost proclaim to Adam's race,  
Burning wrath, and bleeding grace ;  
Wrath, the guilty sinner's due ;  
Grace, to pardon and renew.

Still procures the speaking blood  
Pardon, and the peace of God ;  
Gracious pardon, perfect peace,  
Hope, and faith, and love's increase ;  
Every blessing God bestows,  
Through thy intercession flows.

Humbly, at my Sovereign's feet,  
Would I all-submissive sit ;  
Learn, and do, and bear thy will,  
All thy royal law fulfil ;  
As the heavenly hosts above,  
Live but to obey and love.

Christ, my Prophet,—every hour  
On my soul thy unction pour ;  
Priest, all-prevalent with God,  
Sprinkle me with hallowing blood ;  
Every moment, King divine,  
Rule this ransom'd soul of mine.

## HYMN.

## ENCOURAGEMENT.

WHY art thou cast down, my soul?  
Whence is thy disquiet?  
God can winds and waves control,  
Who form'd them by his fiat.  
See whose onward steps appear,  
Firm He treads the stable flood;  
God thy countenance shall cheer,  
And show himself thy God.

Why, my soul, art thou cast down?  
Bid adieu to sadness:  
Know, thy Father wears no frown,  
His are smiles of gladness.  
Hope's bright star shall shed a beam,  
Suns of joy dispense their rays;  
God but now prepares a theme  
For His immortal praise.

Cease thy sorrows and alarms,  
And let thy harp be sounding;  
Feel the everlasting arms  
Beneath thee and surrounding.  
Sweetest, seeming most severe;  
Kindest, when he takes the rod;  
He shall wipe off every tear,  
And prove himself thy God.

Wherefore droops thy languid head,  
Like the rush declining?  
See thy noon's effulgence spread,  
Brightening and refining:  
Soon shall Glory's wide expanse  
Full upon thy vision shine,  
Radiate on thy countenance,  
And God be ever thine.

## TWILIGHT.

THE city, haunt of noise and care,  
 Her vassals may detain ;  
 Escaped, I breath a purer air,  
 And human feel again.

Her golden locks in ocean green,  
 The Star of beauty laves ;  
 And Twilight, o'er the glimmering scene,  
 The wand of silence waves.

The labourer quits his daily task ;  
 And, as he seeks his home,  
 He seems to hear his prattlers ask,  
 " When will our father come ? "

And when the voice of praise and prayer,  
 Is heard within his cot,  
 The slaves of luxury and care  
 Might envy him his lot.

Now Night upon each earthly scene  
 Her darkening shadow throws :  
 But upwards, solemn and serene,  
 All heaven with brightness glows.

Thus often man in darkness moves,  
 And has on earth no light ;  
 He looks to heaven,—the heaven he loves ;—  
 And all in heaven is bright.

---

 JOB XIX. 28.

" The root of the matter is found in me. "

AUTHOR of each perfect gift,  
 Lo, to thee my heart I lift !  
 All my blessings come from Thee,  
 Plant a living faith in me.

Fain would I thy goodness prove,  
 Fount of Jesu's dying love ;  
 But can my salvation be,  
 If the root is not in me ?

Specious though my fig-leaves are,  
 Gay, and flourishing, and fair,  
 Vain must all professions be,  
 If the root be not in me.

Let thy grace in me abound,  
 All my fruit from thee be found ;  
 In thy courts a favour'd tree,  
 Let the root abide in me.

Planting of thy righteous hand,  
 Sov'reign Lord, thine own command ;  
 Let my words and works agree  
 With the vital root in me.

When the angel in the skies  
 Bids the slumb'ring dead arise,  
 May the Saviour say to me,  
 "Soul, the root is found in thee."

---

### CHRISTMAS DAY.

MY soul, to hail the new-born King  
 Thy noblest powers employ ;  
 For hark ! the heavenly mansions ring,  
 The morning stars together sing,  
 The angels shout for joy.

Yet not for them was Jesus given,  
 He pass'd the angels by :  
 The Prince of glory comes from heaven  
 To fallen man, from Eden driven,  
 And lifts him to the sky.

Ere Morn awakes her infant beam,  
 Lo ! Peace to earth descends ;  
 Let men and angels swell the theme,  
 Glory to God, the great Supreme !  
 Since heaven and earth are friends.

Now let the joyful tidings flow,  
 And all the globe embrace ;  
 Let all the people hear and know  
 That God is manifest below,  
 To save a ruin'd race.

Arise, my soul, and join the choir  
 Of seraphs in mid-air,  
 Since God's good-will a theme inspires,  
 Let human tongues and cherub lyres  
 The glorious rapture share.

---

### SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

How happy are Salvation's heirs,  
 Though doom'd along the vale of tears  
 Their homeward course to bend !  
 If now the burthen'd pilgrims groan,  
 Their kingdom, diadem, and throne  
 Await them at the end.

Borne down by sorrow, stung by pain,  
 The heirs of glory entertain  
 Within their meeken'd mind,  
 No murmuring, no resenting thought :  
 But into sweet submission brought,  
 Their spirit rests resign'd.

Shall man, the living traitor, mourn ?  
 Man, still on earth, his Maker spurn,  
 Unsent to his own place ?

The sin-doom'd criminal, who hears  
Of sprinkled blood, and Mercy's tears,  
Before the throne of grace ?

Behold him silent in the dust !  
He feels the punishment is just,  
Inflicted by his God ;  
Crush'd, he sustains the galling yoke,  
And, writhing under every stroke,  
Reveres the chastening rod.

I suffer, but not mine the cross ;  
I have no gain to count but loss,  
My loving Lord, for thee.  
Not mine the thorn-wreathed head to bow,  
And cry in death, " O, why hast thou,  
My God, forsaken me ?"

Lead, lead me on through flame and flood ;  
But let me feel, Thou ever good,  
Thy guardian presence nigh ;  
Let fires surround, let floods combine,  
The fiery ordeal shall refine,  
The water purify.

So, in affliction's Paradise,  
Perennial springs of life arise,  
The lonely desert blooms ;  
Fruits from the tree of life abound,  
And flowers of Eden all around  
Exhale their pure perfumes.

And is my world exchanged for this ?  
Thistles and thorns for Eden's bliss ?  
My human for divine ?  
Affliction, dear cherubic guide,  
Thy hands have drawn the veil aside,  
And Paradise is mine.

## THE SONG OF MOSES.

EXODUS XV.

TRIUMPHANT on Arabia's shore,  
 They stand, and wonder, and adore ;  
 On high their lofty odes they raise,  
 And celebrate Jehovah's praise.  
 Moses awakes the tuneful song,  
 The exulting tribes the theme prolong ;  
 While rocks and hills give back the sound,  
 Till pealing echoes roll around.

Jehovah, my Almighty King,  
 By him redeem'd, to him I sing,  
     And swell the solemn strain ;  
 Extinct the proud Egyptian host ;  
 The rider and his steed are lost,  
     Beneath the mighty main.

Jehovah's hand maintains my cause,  
 His glory, with supreme applause,  
     My raptured powers adore ;  
 He deign'd my father's God to be,  
 He shall—a present God with me—  
     Be mine for evermore.

To Him, in Canaan's promised land,  
 I will with consecrating hand  
     A holy temple raise.  
 Jehovah's name is known afar,  
 The splendid triumphs of his war  
     Confirm the Conqueror's praise.

Thy thund'ring arm, O God, was bare,  
 Thou did'st the hidden path prepare,  
     By human foot untrod.  
 Thy voice the roaring waves confess'd,  
 And back the liquid squadrons press'd,  
     Obedient to their God.

Yoked to the battle-loving steed,  
 The royal car, with fiery speed,  
     Whirl'd Pharaoh to the shore ;  
 Impetuous rush'd the sons of Nile ;  
 As quickly closed the waved defile ;  
     They sank to rise no more.

The waves, when blew Jehovah's breath,  
 Retired from ocean's bed beneath,  
     And piled themselves on high.  
 The billows in battalia stood,  
 In walls of adamant the flood  
     Upmounted to the sky.

Thy hand, Almighty, dealt the blow,  
 In pieces dash'd the impious foe—  
     (Thy people's foe is thine.)  
 Like arid stubble in the fire,  
 They vanish'd in thy flaming ire,  
     Consumed by wrath divine.

The enemy indignant spake,  
 "I will pursue—I will o'ertake,  
     I will the spoil divide ;  
 My hand shall seal their instant doom,  
 And vengeance, satiate o'er their tomb,  
     Insult their puny pride !"

The mountain waves on high uprear'd,  
 Great God! thy voice tempestuous heard :  
     Now breaks the liquid chain !  
 Rolls down the closing gulf!—As lead  
 Sinks the proud foe!—Quick o'er his head  
     Flows on the mighty main.

Who 'mongst the multifarious gods,  
 Egyptia impiously applauds,  
     Can with Jehovah vie ?  
 If Apis lows, will winds obey ?  
 If howls Anubis, will the sea  
     Obsequious hear his cry ?

What God can rival honours claim ?  
 What being boast an equal fame  
 To share Jehovah's praise ?  
 Whom when his glories they explore,  
 Heaven's prostrate seraphim adore,  
 And tremble while they gaze.

Obedient to thy voice, the waves  
 Within their gloomy coral caves  
 In calm submission bend ;  
 But when they see thy beck'ning hand,  
 Their horrid oozy jaws expand ;  
 The troops of Ham descend.

Our Consolation, Strength, and Stay,  
 Thy wisdom oped the wondrous way,  
 And forth thy people led.  
 This Palestina fill'd with fear,  
 Moab and Idumea hear  
 With palpitating dread.

To Canaan thy protecting care  
 Shall Israel guide, and plant him there,  
 And raise thy holy fane :  
 Jehovah on his throne sublime,  
 Beyond the bounds of space and time,  
 For evermore shall reign !

CHORUS OF WOMEN, LED BY MIRIAM.

WHILE the virgin dance ye lead,  
 Sisters, sing the glorious deed ;  
 Bid the timbrel's tuneful chime  
 Mingle with your lofty rhyme.  
 'T was Jehovah's thund'ring arm  
 Fill'd the foe with dread alarm.  
 Down beneath the booming blast,  
 Down the enemy he cast.

O'er the rider, billows ride ;  
O'er the the courser, currents glide ;  
Sinks the champion, sinks the steed ;  
Sisters, sing the glorious deed !

---

## MORNING HYMN.

## PROVIDENCE.

'T is morn—I slept the silent hours  
Beneath Jehovah's wing ;  
And rise, renew'd in all my powers,  
My guardian God to sing.  
Now solemn night, with all her train  
Of sable shadows, flies ;  
And morn's ethereal beams again,  
Illume the op'ning skies.  
O may no ill my mind annoy,  
No guilty gloom infest ;  
But innocence, and peace, and joy,  
Inspire my cheerful breast !  
My kind Preserver watch'd my bed,  
When through the night I lay ;  
O, be thine arms around me spread,  
To guard my path by day !  
Whate'er I have, whate'er I am,  
Thy bounteous hand affords ;  
I consecrate it to thy name,  
And call myself the Lord's.  
This morning be the theme begun,  
Which ne'er shall be withheld ;  
I sing my all-enliv'ning Sun,  
My all-protecting Shield.

When ends the mortal night with me,  
And dawns the eternal day,  
My soul, redeem'd, O Lord, by thee,  
Shall still prolong the lay.

---

## EVENING HYMN.

'T is eve—around the silent skies  
Night's sable curtains close ;  
And slumber, stealing o'er my eyes,  
Invites me to repose.

But ere to gentle sleep's embrace  
My body I resign,  
My soul, adore thy Saviour's grace,  
And sing the power Divine.

Thy love, O Lord, renew'd each morn,  
Attends me every day,  
And claims at ev'ning's sweet return  
The tribute of my lay.

Be thine the lay, my life be thine,  
To thee my all is due ;  
The benefit, O Lord, is mine,  
Of mercies ever new.

The powers of darkness may not dare  
My humble dome infest ;  
Nor pain, nor peril, foe, nor fear,  
Can violate my rest.

## SOME PERSIAN VERSES IMITATED.

DEAR cup of woe, I welcome thee,  
 Whose bitter sweets impart,  
 With healing influence mild, to me  
 The medicine of my heart.

What, though my anguish'd spirit be  
 Tormented with thy smart,  
 I make, by sorrow taught, to thee  
 The offering of my heart.

The holy pages, honouring thee,  
 Affliction's fame assert,  
 The word inspired, wherein I see  
 The health-spring of my heart.

Deep drank the Word incarnate, he  
 Maintain'd thy sov'reign art,  
 The Man of sorrows, Friend of thee,  
 The name that charms my heart.

---

 NEW YEAR'S DAY—1819.

YON orient sun, through heaven's refulgent sphere,  
 Perform'd erewhile the circuit of the year ;  
 The flower-enamell'd spring, and summer bright,  
 Autumn's rich harvest, winter's dreary plight,  
 Month following month, and day succeeding day,  
 As glides the liquid current, sped away.  
 Old Time shook down his sands, until at last  
 The final moment fell—The year was past !  
 No human wisdom can recall one grain,  
 Or bid the sands remount their glass again ;  
 Again the seasons will their produce yield,  
 Spring deck the garden, autumn crown the field :

Kingdoms will rise, and empires will decline,  
 Wealth will insult, and penury repine,  
 Proud ones will sink, and mean ones mount on high.  
 And some be born, and some be doom'd to die :  
 All this, and more, the ensuing year may be ;  
 But what is this, and all besides, to me ?  
 I, who am born to die, can only say,  
 Last year was mine, mine is the present day ;  
 The future may be, or may not be, mine ;  
 My Father, God, my New Year's Day be thine.  
 O, for his sake on whom I still depend,  
 Son of thy bosom, and the sinner's Friend,  
 In life, in death, thy blessing may I share,  
 A child of grace, and glory's blissful heir.

---

A HYMN FOR A CHILD, ON NEW YEAR'S  
DAY.

ANOTHER year has flown away,  
 And I behold a New Year's Day ;  
 My life was spared to me the past,  
 But this new year may prove my last.

Should I not then this year begin,  
 By shunning every path of sin,  
 And give to God my future days,  
 And walk henceforth in Wisdom's ways ?

He bids me in the word of truth  
 Seek my Creator in my youth ;  
 Invites me to his kind embrace,  
 And promises his helping grace.

He tells me of redeeming love,  
 Reveal'd by Jesus from above ;  
 Who shed his blood upon the tree,  
 To ransom sinners such as me.

And am I then, my Lord, my God,  
 The purchase of a Saviour's blood?  
 Then, O accept this heart of mine,  
 And make, and keep me, ever thine.

---

### HYMN TO THE SPIRIT.

HOLY Source of true devotion,  
 Sanctifier of the heart,  
 Set our sluggish souls in motion;  
 All thy quick'ning powers impart!  
 Let us now from earth's delusions,  
 Pride and vanity, be free,  
 And receive the bright effusions  
 Of eternal truth from thee!

While we tread this vale of tears,  
 Strengthen us with inward might;  
 Press'd with troubles, pains, and fears,  
 Be thy comforts our delight.  
 Holy, holy Sanctifier,  
 Make us glow with heavenly love;  
 Higher raise our souls, and higher,  
 Till we reach the realms above.

---

### THE SLUGGARD.

COME, Tyro! the clouds of the orient on high  
 Begin to be 'broider'd with gold;  
 The lark at his matins is heard in the sky,  
 And the shepherd, call'd up by the rooks as they fly,  
 Is driving his flock from the fold.

To' improve the best moments, come quickly away,  
 For, quitting his couch of repose,  
 A monarch (no less!) is our tutor to-day,  
 Let us follow his steps without further delay,—  
 To visit the sluggard he goes.

We enter his dome, we approach to his bed,  
 Where, sunk in oblivion, he snores ;  
 The life intellectual appears to be fled,  
 And the animal life, not entirely dead,  
 Is floating away through his pores.

Through night's silent season, led on by their queen,  
 The stars in the azure expanse,  
 By him all unnoticed, had glided serene,  
 And now, at the morning's enrapturing scene  
 The slumberer gives not a glance.

The king, to awaken his senses from sleep,  
 To' awaken his bosom to shame,  
 To' awaken his spirit, instruction to reap,  
 Takes through the drawn curtains a soul-loathing peep,  
 And summons the sleeper by name.

“ Arouse thee O sluggard ! go visit the ant,  
 ‘ Consider her ways, and be wise ;’  
 Foreseeing the season of wintry want,  
 She, fearing provision might prove to be scant,  
 In summer collects her supplies.

“ No human preceptor to point her aright,  
 No reason to guide her machine,  
 In summer, in harvest, from morning till night,  
 From toil and discretion deriving delight,  
 The provident insect is seen.

“ How long, O thou sluggard ! how long wilt thou sleep !  
 When wilt thou arise from thy lair ?

Imbibe the philosophy taught thee so cheap,  
 The ant will inform thee how shameful to keep  
 In slumbering idleness there !”

As backward and forward, slow creaking, the door  
 To turn on its hinges is known,  
 To the right, to the left, to the right, as before,  
 With dull oscillation, and horrible snore,  
 He turns on his pallet of down.

His mouth he scarce opens, not one of his eyes ;  
 “ A little more sleep,” he would say,  
 “ A little more slumber !” then speechless he lies,—  
 “ So want, the grim giant,” the monarch replies,  
 “ Shall seize upon thee for his prey !”

The king the apartment abandons in haste ;  
 Attendant, the wretch we forsake ;  
 We pass by his garden ; his garden, a waste !  
 No flowers for beauty, no fruits for the taste,  
 A wild and disorderly brake.

Unheeded, unturn'd, unreplenish'd with seeds,  
 The fence fallen flat on the ground,  
 Each hateful and poisonous reptile it breeds,  
 And briars, and brambles, and nettles, and weeds,  
 Sloth's plentiful harvest, abound.

“ O learn thee, my Tyro !” advised the good king,  
 Addressing my juvenile friend,  
 “ O learn thee a lesson from this very thing !  
 Would'st thou cultivate life ? then commence with the  
 spring,  
 And certain success will attend.

“ But if, like the being that sicken'd our sight,  
 Sloth's infamous vassal thou lie,  
 Adorn'd with no flowers of learning so bright,  
 No fruits of religion the taste to delight,  
 A wretch thou wilt live, and wilt die.

“ Remember thy Maker, remember him now,  
 Thy youth in his service engage ;  
 Before, unapprized, the dark season of woe  
 Come rapid upon thee, or, certain and slow,  
 The days of unhappy old age.

“ When dim are the stars, and the moon, and the sun,  
 And the clouds return after rain ;  
 The keepers shall tremble, the strong men bow down,  
 The few grinders shall cease, nor the light shall be  
 known  
 To' illumine the crystalline pane.

“ The doors shall be shut ; and dull, languid, and pale,  
 The daughters of music become ;  
 And fears shall appal thee, and terrors assail,  
 The almond-tree flourish, and desire shall fail ;—  
 Man goes to his permanent home !

“ Or ever the cord of bright silver be loosed,  
 Or broken the bucket of gold,  
 The pitcher no more at the fountain be used,  
 No more to the cistern the stream be transfused,  
 Incapable longer to hold.

“ Then the dust to its primitive earth as it was,  
 The spirit to God shall return,  
 The Judge shall thy sentence impartially pass,  
 For ever to triumph with saints, or, alas !  
 With sinners eternally mourn !

“ Then hear the whole sum of the matter betimes,  
 God's great and immutable plan ;  
 Whatever the ages, wherever the climes,  
 To fear and obey him, exalts and sublimes,  
 'Tis the end and perfection of man !”

## THE FORGET ME NOT.

INSCRIBED TO A LADY WHO HAD PRESENTED TO MR.  
ROBERTS A SPECTACLES' FURBISHER, BEAUTIFULLY  
EMBROIDERED WITH THAT FLOWER.

THEE, tiny flower, From fragrant bower  
Beside the woodland cot,  
I value more Than Flora's store,  
Thou dear Forget-me-not.

Let others boast Their liveried host  
In garden and in grot,  
I more admire Thy plain attire,  
Thou dear Forget-me-not !

Thy portrait nice, My friend's device,  
So elegantly wrought,  
Illumes my sight With vision bright,  
Thou dear Forget-me-not !

May bliss attend My charming friend,  
Where'er be cast her lot !  
While for the donor, I ever honour  
The dear Forget-me-not !

---

 NUNC DIMITTIS.

“ Now, sovereign Lord of life and death,  
I yield, at thy command, my breath,  
Dismiss'd in peace by thee ;  
By seers prophetic long foretold,  
Thy great salvation I behold,  
Thy own Messiah see.

“ O'er nature's universal night,  
Divinely dawns the welcome light  
Of thy redeeming grace.  
The Heathen hail the rising ray  
The world's wide empire owns thy sway,  
With Israel's honour'd race.

"As down the vale of life I pass'd,  
 My soul (and not in vain) was cast  
 Upon thy faithful word ;  
 That soul into thy hands I yield,  
 For lo ! the promise is fulfill'd,  
 Mine eyes have seen the Lord !"  
 So pious Simeon said, and press'd  
 The infant Saviour to his breast,  
 And long'd for his release :  
 Thus may I hold him to my heart,  
 Until his mandate says, "Depart !"  
 Then let me die in peace !

---

"WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF."

WE all do fade, as fades a leaf,  
 When summer is gone by ;  
 At longest, human life is brief,  
 And all are born to die.  
 In childhood opes the vernal bud,  
 In youth it gaily blooms ;  
 But oft disease, like tempest rude,  
 The beauteous tint consumes.  
 The vital sap is soon repress  
 By Autumn's chilly hand,  
 The leaf declines on parent breast,  
 And ceases to expand.  
 It quivers, withers, droops, decays,  
 Beneath the fatal blast ;  
 Awhile contends, adheres, delays,  
 But down it drops at last.  
 So do we fade, so must we fall,  
 No matter what we be ;  
 The mortal chill will wither all,  
 Save life's immortal Tree !

## GAUDILLA AND LAVINIA.

THE tulip flings her fetid scent,  
 On gaudy tints presuming ;  
 The violet sits in sweet content,  
 The ambient air perfuming.

My uncle's tale :—Two girls there were,  
 Residing in one city ;  
 Gaudilla, beautiful and fair ;  
 Lavinia, wise and witty.

Gaudilla was by some admired,  
 Because she was so beauteous ;  
 To love Lavinia all conspired,  
 For being good and duteous.

Too soon Gaudilla heard, well-pleased,  
 The voice of admiration ;  
 And vanity her bosom seized  
 For fitting habitation.

Ah me ! how oft pernicious pride,  
 The female heart assailing,  
 Has turn'd each better thought aside,  
 And let in every failing !

Yet some, through power Divine, have been  
 O'er vanity victorious ;  
 And some plain faces have we seen  
 By goodness render'd glorious.

But, ah ! Gaudilla never gain'd  
 A conquest o'er illusion ;  
 While wise Lavinia well maintain'd  
 The post against intrusion.

They grew ; and as they grew, the root  
 Whence character arises,  
 Was soon discover'd in the fruit  
 No circumstance disguises.

Gaudilla, pert and proud, despised  
 All wisdom and all goodness ;  
 The worthless were esteem'd and prized,  
 The worthy met with rudeness.

No book, no conversation charm'd,  
 Her mind imbibed no learning,  
 Her heart no beam of virtue warm'd,  
 Her soul had no discerning.

“ My beauty,” cried the scornful maid,  
 Her friend's advice despising,  
 “ My beauty is my boast,” she said,  
 “ And wants no moralizing.

“ Go lecture in Lavinia's ear,  
 And tell that frightful creature,  
 How books and friends *her* heart may cheer  
 For lack of handsome feature.”

She seized the taper in a trice,  
 To gaze into her mirror,  
 And thus disdaining good advice,  
 To crime converted error.

Her crime,—for pride will have a fall,  
 And, when too late, awaken,—  
 Gaudilla's crime, in view of all,  
 Was quickly overtaken.

The taper, held in heedless hand,  
 Her graces to discover,  
 Instant becomes a burning brand,  
 And fires her dress all over.

Her cheeks, where beauty proudly reign'd,  
 The flames vindictive ravage,  
 And turn the face, by pride profaned,  
 To features of a savage.

Long time she languish'd ; people thought  
Pale death had pass'd his sentence ;  
She lives, and may she soon be brought  
To wisdom and repentance !

Lavinia not insults, but mourns,  
The maiden's dire affliction,  
And each unkind expression turns  
To pious benediction.

But mark the ways of Heaven ! by sin  
Gaudilla lost her beauty ;  
And now Lavinia's charms begin,  
The offspring fair of duty.

Her heart, where grace and goodness dwell,  
To passion is a stranger ;  
No tempers, like the Furies fell,  
Her peace of mind endanger.

And daily as she better grows,  
Her natural plainness ceases,  
And supernatural beauty blows,  
As she in grace increases.

This tale was by my uncle writ,  
And sent me in a letter ;  
I better had recited it,  
If he had told it better.

## ST. MATTHEW VI. 33.

“ BUT seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

---

YES, Lord, thy promise I believe,  
 And bid my unbelief depart;  
 Now let me seek, e'en now perceive,  
 Thy righteous kingdom in my heart.

No more thy providential sway  
 My doubting bosom shall disown,  
 My passive powers shall hence obey,  
 Submissive at my Father's throne.

Thy mercy's bounteous boon,—on me  
 Wilt thou eternal life bestow?  
 Then will I trust, my God, to thee,  
 For every blessing here below.

Paternal love, with kindest care,  
 Thy charge, where'er I am, defends,  
 And watches every number'd hair,  
 And every strengthen'd step attends.

From anxious fear for ever freed,  
 Food, raiment, life, I leave to Heaven:  
 My Father will supply my need,  
 And bless the child he hath forgiven.

Hence, then, distrust and dark dismay!  
 A' kingdom, grace, and glory mine!  
 What! shall the worm, the flesh, the clay,  
 Usurp my interests Divine?

Who crown'st the soul with sacred love,  
 Wilt sure thy meaner gifts impart;  
 My soul and body thus shall prove  
 How faithful and how good thou art.

## JOSHUA VII. 19, 20.

“GIVE, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him ; and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me.”—“Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.”

---

At last, O holy God and true !  
 At last, O God of pardoning grace !  
 In thy own light our crimes we view,  
 And seek, with contrite hearts, thy face.

We give thee glory, we confess  
 The hidden, loved, accursed thing ;  
 Our camp, defiled with wickedness,  
 Is cursed by Israel's holy King.

We tremble at thine awful frown,  
 We put the' accursed thing away ;  
 O Lord, thy humbled people own,  
 Who sigh and mourn, who weep and pray.

Let Mercy's interposing hand  
 Now turn the flaming bolt aside,  
 And spare, O spare, a guilty land,  
 Which would at last in Heaven confide.

Say to the' uplifted sword, “ Return,  
 And sleep within thine idle sheath ;  
 My people their transgressions mourn,  
 I have no pleasure in their death ! ”

Accepted, saved, in this our day,  
 Thee shall our thankful souls adore ;  
 Thee shall our willing hearts obey,  
 And grieve our gracious God no more.

## PSALM XXIII.

My Shepherd's mighty aid,  
His dear redeeming love,  
His all-protecting power display'd,  
I joy to prove.  
Led onward by my Guide,  
I view the verdant scene,  
Where limpid waters gently glide  
Through pastures green.

In error's maze my soul  
Shall wander now no more ;  
His spirit shall, with sweet control,  
The lost restore ;  
My willing steps shall tread  
The paths of righteousness ;  
His power defend, his bounty feed,  
His mercy bless.

Affliction's horrid gloom  
Shall but thy love display ;  
Thou wilt the vale of death illumine  
With living ray.  
My failing flesh thy rod  
Shall thankfully adore ;  
My heart shall vindicate my God  
For evermore.

Thy hands an unction shed,  
Whose balmy sweets abound ;  
It honours my devoted head,  
With gladness crown'd.  
While hid from every ill,  
From each infernal foe ;  
My cup ten thousand comforts fill,  
And overflow.

Thy goodness ever nigh,  
 Thy mercy ever free,  
 Shall while I live, shall when I die,  
 Still follow me.

For ever shall my soul  
 Thy boundless blessing prove,  
 And, while eternal ages roll,  
 Adore and love.

---

MESSIAH.

HAIL Messiah ! Prince of Glory,  
 Thee while ransom'd sinners own,  
 Heaven's angelic powers adore thee,  
 For thy love to mortals shown ;  
 Hallelujah !  
 Glory to the incarnate Son !

Wide thy banner waved victorious,  
 When, beneath thy thundering hand,  
 Rebel angels sank inglorious,  
 While proclaim the faithful band,  
 " Hallelujah !  
 All submit to thy command."

When redemption was achieved  
 By the Lamb for sinners slain,  
 Angels saw thee, men believed,  
 Saints and seraphs sung this strain,  
 " Hallelujah !  
 Over all triumphant reign !"

Lift, ye pearly gates of heaven,  
 Lift your lofty heads on high ;  
 Let immediate way be given ;  
 Lo ! he re-ascends the sky.  
 Hallelujah !  
 See the King of glory nigh !

Who is he,—the King of glory ?

He who death and hell subdued :  
See the conquering King before ye,  
With his garments roll'd in blood !  
Hallelujah !

Glory to the great, the good !

Lift the golden portals higher,  
Spread the empyreal area wide,  
Farther on, ye troops, aspire ;  
Glorious King, triumphant ride !  
Hallelujah !

Sit thou at the Father's side !

Who is he,—the King of glory ?

“ Jesus,” every seraph sings,  
“ Jesus famed in heavenly story !”  
While the whole creation rings,  
“ Hallelujah !  
Lord of lords, and King of kings !”

---

### AMOS III. 1—6.

“ HEAR this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children  
of Israel.”

---

WHILE o'er our guilty land, O Lord,  
We view the terrors of thy sword,  
O, whither shall the hopeless fly,  
To whom but thee direct the eye ?

The helpless sinner's cries and tears  
Are grown familiar to thy ears ;  
Oft has thy mercy sent relief,  
When all was fear and hopeless grief !

On thee, our guardian God, we call,  
Before thy throne of grace we fall ;  
And is there no deliverance there ?  
And must we perish in despair ?

See, we repent, we weep, we mourn,  
 To our forsaken God we turn ;  
 O spare our guilty country ! spare  
 The church which thou hast planted there.

We plead thy grace, indulgent God,  
 We plead thy Son's atoning blood,  
 We plead thy gracious promises ;  
 And are they unavailing pleas ?

These pleas, presented at thy throne,  
 Have brought ten thousand blessings down  
 On guilty lands, in helpless woe ;  
 Let them prevail to save us too !

---

#### A HYMN IN PRAISE OF THE AUTHOR OF NATURE.

My God, how glorious is thy name !  
 The earth, the heavens, declare thy fame,  
 Thy footstool and thy throne.  
 "Ye heavens, exist," thy mandate said ;  
 Through ample space the heavens were spread ;  
 Thou spakest, and it was done.

The thunder's voice, the lightning's wing,  
 The splendid sun,—my God, my King,  
 The fair unfolding flower ;  
 Suns, lightnings, flowers, are full of thee ;  
 In earth, in heaven, in all, I see  
 Thy majesty and power.

Upon the whirlwind's wing, who rides ?  
 The burning bolt of heaven, who guides ?  
 What God can equal ours ?  
 Whose phials, when the forest gleams,  
 Diffusing wide the' electric streams,  
 The lightning torrent pours ?

Thine, thine, Jehovah, thine alone !  
 Ten thousand worlds around thy throne  
     Depend upon thy word.  
 Thou frownest,—see, they all disperse !  
 Thou smilest,—see, the universe  
     With all its worlds restored.

Erected by almighty hands,  
 A temple for thy glory stands  
     This universe sublime :  
 All being pours thy praises forth ;  
 The creeping reptiles on the earth,  
     The burning seraphim.

Heaven's millions hymn thy name on high,  
 Inhabitants of yon fair sky,  
     Who all thy glories see ;  
 Not less obsequious to thy nod,  
 The embryo worm obeys its God ;  
     All being bows to thee.

Ah ! what is man, frail child of dust !  
 That thou, in whom I dare to trust,  
     That thou, Immortal King !  
 Should'st call him forth thy love to share ?  
 Thy mercies how can I declare,  
     Or how thy goodness sing ?

Exalted by thy sov'reign hand,  
 Myself a sovereign, lo ! I stand,  
     And see, beneath my feet,  
 My subjects of the air, and sea,  
 Of fields and forests, bow to me,  
     And to my sway submit !

How great, how wonderful thy name !  
 Jehovah, infinite thy fame ;  
     Creation's ample round  
 Shall echo thy supernal praise,  
 And universal nature's lays  
     Eternally resound.

## PSALM XX. 1, 2.

THE Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion."

---

Now may the God of power and grace  
Attend his people's humble cry!  
Jehovah hears when Israel prays;  
Jehovah brings deliv'rance nigh.

The name of Jacob's God defends,  
Better than shields or brasen walls;  
He from his sanctuary sends  
Succour and strength when Sion calls.

Well he remembers all our sighs,  
His love exceeds our best deserts;  
His love accepts the sacrifice  
Of humble groans and broken hearts.

In his salvation is our hope;  
And in the name of Israel's God,  
Our troops shall lift their banner up,  
Our navies spread their flags abroad.

Some trust in horses train'd for war,  
And some of chariots make their boast;  
From Thee our expectations are,  
The Captain of the heavenly hosts.

Now save us, Lord, from slavish fear,  
Now let our hopes be firm and strong,  
Till thy salvation shall appear,  
And joy and triumph raise the song.

## NUMBERS X. 29.

“ WE are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you ; come thou with us, and we will do thee good ; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.”

---

CONDUCTED by Jehovah's hand,  
 We journey to the promised land,  
 From Egypt, through the desert wide,  
 With God our Guardian and our Guide.

We doubt not his almighty grace  
 Will bring us to the destined place ;  
 For God, the faithful and the true,  
 Hath promised, “ I will give it you.”

Great the solicitude we find,  
 That many more, by grace inclined,  
 Renouncing this poor world below,  
 May join our company and go.

Then come, O come without delay ;  
 Come, set ye forth for heaven to-day ;  
 Each cold objection be subdued ;  
 Come with us, we will do thee good.

For every blessing God may give,  
 You frankly shall with us receive ;  
 With Israel come, with Israel prove  
 His guard, his goodness, and his love.

To us shall all the Lord hath said  
 In sure fulfilment be display'd ;  
 Then quit this world of sinful show,  
 And on to Canaan with us go.

## THE FALL OF ANTICHRIST.

AN ODE FROM ISAIAH LXIII. 1—6.

## STROPHE.

Who, awakening quick surprise,  
 On hostile Idumea's road  
 Advancing, meets my wondering eyes,  
 Or Son of man? or Son of God?  
 Deeply dyed his garments are:  
 What mighty champion? What his glorious war?  
 Alone he marches toward the sacred coast;  
 He marches, in himself a host.  
 His mien Divine, magnificent his vest;  
 And more than man the vision well beseems;  
 Nor him, some angel, at his God's behest,  
 The minister of vengeance, fancy deems;  
 Nor man, nor angel, bursts upon my sight:  
 The vision moves a God, collected in his might.

## ANTISTROPHE.

DARTING his prophetic eye,  
 Illumed by heaven's omniscient beam,  
 That shoots through dark futurity,  
 And bids the latest embryos gleam;  
 Whelm'd the while with solemn awe,  
 The astonish'd seer demanded whom he saw.  
 Not pious wishes placid Heaven provoke:  
 The Champion heard—the Champion spoke:  
 "In flesh array'd, though late by heaven adored,  
 Me, Prince, Messiah, favour'd bard, behold.  
 Jehovah's counsels have mine eyes explored,  
 And now my lips the mystic page unfold;  
 Such is my title, such the charge I have;  
 In righteousness I speak, and mighty am to save."

## EPODE.

" WHY thine apparel red ?  
 Thy garments stain'd with blood ?  
 Than he who treads the wine-vat crimson'd more ?"  
 " Alone the vat I trod,  
 And this the life-blood shed,  
 That spots, ensanguined, my apparel o'er.  
 Stood speechless my inactive host,  
 Not a friend afforded aid ;  
 Mine be the fight, the victory mine, (I said,)  
 And thou, my single arm, the conquest boast.  
 Then Indignation roused her kindling fire :  
 Then sunk the vanquish'd foe my feet beneath ;  
 My enemies ingloriously expire,  
 And laughs my fury, while they groan in death.  
 The year is come, to seal their doom,  
 To punish an apostate race ;  
 To save my own, each ransom'd one,  
 And vindicate the work of grace.  
 Vengeance indignant dealt the final blow,  
 And tramples in the dust the antichristian foe."

---

 PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXLVIII.

## PART I.

COME, Hallelujah ! Let the lyres  
 Employ'd by heaven's harmonious choirs,  
 Begin the God-adoring strains,  
 Delighted, on empyreal plains.  
 Lead on, ye sacred sons of light ;  
 Bid echo heaven's transcendent height ;  
 Thrones, angels, cherubs, seraphs, raise  
 The song of universal praise.

Sun ! soul of nature ! like thy God,  
Emitting light and life abroad,  
Proclaim his brighter beams Divine,  
Far as thy fulgent glories shine !  
And thou, with softer smile serene,  
Enam'ring the nocturnal scene,  
While gliding through the dark profound,  
Make known his excellence around.

Prolong, ye glittering stars, the lay,  
Melodious, through the Milky Way ;  
He or your vital beams absorbs,  
Or pours sweet influence in your orbs :  
While the wide heavens, whose azure vault  
Extends beyond the length of thought,  
Through all their circling worlds declare  
How great his power and glory are.

Aërial seas, at God's command,  
Your humid bosoms ye expand ;  
He braids your fleecy skirts with gold,  
Or wraps you up in sable fold ;  
Or, when the parching earth complains,  
Dissolves you into genial rains ;  
The luscious drops profusely showers,  
And quickens all her drooping powers.

He spoke ; and Non-existence heard  
Jehovah's all-creating word :  
Up sprang the Universe sublime,  
And gave his natal hour to Time.  
Dependent, still the golden chain,  
Jehovah's mighty hands sustain,  
Still causes own, and own effects,  
'T is God who governs and directs.

## PART II.

THOU Earth, responding to the sky,  
In repercussive sounds reply :  
Let Ocean from his caverns roar,  
And clap his hands, and God adore :  
The ocean's mighty vase He fills  
With flowing rivers, tinkling rills,  
And digs the grottos of the deep,  
Where whales on coral couches sleep.

Him praise, whose hand your fury binds,  
Or power impels, ye fires, ye winds,  
Who bear through heaven, at his command,  
The scourges of a guilty land :  
Your volleys pour of rattling hail,  
And give the thunder's dreadful peal,  
And fling your arrowy fires afar,  
The Almighty's magazine of war.

Ye mountains, that sublimely rise,  
Alliance claiming with the skies,  
Pre-eminent his honours own,  
Who fills the high celestial throne :  
Whilst little hills are scatter'd round,  
With sylvan splendours gaily crown'd,  
Which own His hand by whom they are ;  
The cedar, and the fruit tree fair.

Announce, ye beasts of savage brood,  
That scour the plain, that haunt the wood,  
Announce the parent Power on high,  
Who answers your instinctive cry ,  
While ye, by man inured to toil,  
Domestic sharers of his smile,  
Revere the Sovereign Lord of all,  
Who stores the mead, and fills the stall.

Though meaner be your humble birth,  
 Reptiles, that lowly creep the earth,  
 His Parent hand regards you too,  
 Allots the teeming ground to you.  
 His praise, inhabitants of air,  
 In sweetest symphony declare ;  
 He dips your plumes in orient dyes,  
 And all your daily wants supplies.

## PART III.

WHILE thus, through nature's ample round,  
 The praises of Jehovah sound,  
 "Distinguish'd link in Being's chain,"  
 Shall man the votive hymn refrain ?  
 Arise, ye kings ! awake the song !  
 The vocal carol pour along ;  
 And all the subject people sing  
 The' Almighty, universal King.

Ye judges, God's vicegerents here,  
 The delegated rod who bear,  
 Let justice your tribunals guard,  
 And give, like him, the due award :  
 And potent Princes, good as great,  
 Display his character complete,  
 Benignly change the tyrant's chains,  
 For heaven-born Mercy's silken reins.

Let all mankind of every place,  
 Of every age, admire his grace ;  
 Let youth, with active powers alert,  
 Shout to the Lord with all their heart ;  
 And those matured by grace and age,  
 While passing off the mortal stage,  
 The theme with lisping infants swell,  
 His love in trembling accents tell.

O, be his hallow'd name adored,  
 Creation's Fount, creation's Lord !  
 To Him let pealing anthems rise,  
 To Him, the Great, the Good, the Wise !  
 Lo ! the wide universe displays  
 His glory's ever-beaming rays,  
 Reflected from this ball terrene,  
 And shining in the ethereal scene !

But milder from his mercy's throne,  
 Reflected by the incarnate Son,  
 Descend the beauteous beams of grace,  
 Effulgent, on his Israel's race ;  
 He looks 'mid circumvolving spheres,  
 Complacent, on his ransom'd heirs,  
 More dear than all his works beside,  
 Blest souls for whom the Saviour died.

---

## HORACE'S TWENTIETH ODE, BOOK II.

IMITATED.

WHAT, though oppress'd with heavy clay,  
 Though hid her high seraphic powers,  
 My soul, disdaining time's delay,  
 On wings of faith shall fly away.  
 E'en now, not earth retards her flight,  
 Now she gains the aërial height,  
 And through the liquid ether towers.

Mounted on cherubic wings,  
 Swift she soars, and sweet she sings ;  
 For happiness celestial born,  
 Spurns this nether world with scorn !  
 The bustling towns she leaves below,  
 And soars where starry beauties glow,  
 Expanding her immortal parts  
 Beyond the reach of envy's darts.

Though stripp'd of every pompous boast,  
 A transitory child of dust ;  
 Though dire mortality should spread  
 Her dead'ning venom through my veins ;  
 Join'd to Christ, my living Head,  
 My soul's eternal life remains.  
 Wing'd for bliss beyond the skies,  
 To endless being will I rise.

Not low ambition's fawning slave,  
 Nought valuing its unmeaning blast,  
 I nobler emulation have,  
 A fame that shall for ever last ;  
 Honour Divine that comes from God,  
 And lifts me to his bright abode.

Let not, my friends, the falling tear,  
 Impious, profane your ——'s bier ;  
 When ye the solemn rites prepare,  
 The doleful dirge funereal spare.  
 Essential glory shall my head surround,  
 With honour wreathed, with life immortal crown'd.

### HORACE'S FOURTH ODE, BOOK I. IMITATED.

INSCRIBED TO \*\*\*\*\*.

EXTINGUISH'D by the genial spring,  
 The last remains of winter fly,  
 And Zephyrs fan, with fragrant wing,  
 Each vestige both from earth and sky.  
 The lark, that courts the breeze, no more  
 Of winter's warring winds complains ;  
 For nature's charms, the nipping hoar  
 In cold embraces now detains ;  
 Nor cattle to the stalls retire,  
 Since food the vernal meadows yield ;  
 Nor seeks the swain the social fire,  
 But drives the toiling team a-field.

Thus life : along the enamell'd meads,  
 Juvenile fancy's fair domain,  
 See Cytherean Beauty leads  
 The lovely graces in her train.  
 Nor now sulphureous lightnings glare,  
 Nor pealing thunders rend the air.

Yes, life, like nature, has its spring :  
 And happy he whose early youth  
 (The sovereign, self-commanding king)  
 Is blest with piety and truth ;  
 With every grace whose soul is crown'd,  
 And where the Spirit's fruits abound.

'T is now the time, while youth remains,  
 To offer, first, the lamb to God,  
 Ere wintry age invade our veins,—  
 And then our all, through Jesu's blood ;  
 Present the sacrifice Divine ;  
 For know, not less is life's design.

Pale Death's impartial steps await ;  
 He knocks alike at every door ;  
 The splendid palaces of state,  
 The humble mansions of the poor.  
 O happy \*\*\*\*\* , life's little space  
 Forbids us nurse a flattering hope ;  
 Death's dismal night arrives apace,  
 And swallows all our wishes up.

But O ! what scenes shall then arise,  
 Before thy spirit's raptur'd eyes !  
 Not Pluto's gloomy house of woe,  
 Nor guilty shades that dwell below :  
 No ! heavenly visions shall appear,  
 The King of kings will meet thee there ;  
 And, bliss of heaven, Emmanuel's face  
 Illume the sweet celestial place ;

Who even now, though half conceal'd,  
 And but by glimmering light reveal'd,  
 Sets all the longing saints on fire,  
 With holy love and chaste desire,  
 Whose utmost grace we then shall prove,  
 And burn with everlasting love.

---

## ABRAHAM INTERCEDING FOR SODOM.

GENESIS XVIII.

AGAIN, tremendous God,  
 We humbly seek thy face ;  
 Again we spread our hands abroad,  
 And supplicate thy grace.

Thou heard'st the Patriarch's prayer,  
 When Sodom's day was come ;  
 And, loath to punish, would'st defer  
 The sinner's dreadful doom.

Children of Abraham's faith,  
 On Abraham's God we call,  
 Suspend awhile thy flaming wrath,  
 Thou righteous Judge of all !

True, Sodom's sins are great,  
 Their cry ascends to heaven ;  
 But many Lots are in her gate,  
 An uncorrupted leaven.

Some pious souls are seen,  
 Whom Belial's sons annoy ;  
 The righteous with the wicked, then,  
 Ah, wilt thou Lord, destroy ?

'Mongst pious and profane,  
Shall no distinction be ?  
But undistinguish'd all be slain ?  
O, that be far from thee !

Yet, be not angry, Lord,  
Though dust and ashes weak,  
Encouraged by thy faithful word,  
To thee have dared to speak.

If thou an inquest make,  
And fifty saints be there,  
Ah, wilt thou not for fifty's sake,  
The guilty nation spare ?

If only ten be found,  
Will not a gracious God  
Rejoice to make his grace abound,  
And throw away his rod ?

We still would seek thy face,  
Yet importune with thee ;  
Presenting at the throne of grace  
Our last, our only plea.

Reverse our Sodom's fate,  
For but the sake of One !  
For His, our Friend, our Advocate,  
Thy well-beloved Son !

## 2 SAMUEL XXIV. 14.

“AND David said unto God, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let us not fall into the hand of man.”

---

GREAT are thy mercies, Lord of all,  
 A fount that flow'd ere time began:  
 Into thy hand now let us fall,  
 And not into the hands of man;  
 If scourged for our iniquity,  
 Not man, but God, the' avenger be.

Lord, if thy judgments, long withheld,  
 Now gather blackness o'er the land,  
 At last may we submissive yield,  
 And bow beneath thy chastening hand;  
 While the destroying angel flies,  
 Commission'd, through the troubled skies.

Into thy hand, thou God of love,  
 Body and soul we humbly cast.  
 Ah, may thy pitying bowels move!  
 Ah, may we mercy find at last!  
 And may the angel hear thy word,—  
 “It is enough, put up thy sword.”

With willing hearts, by love inspired,  
 Then pious altars will we rear,  
 And offer, with devotion fired,  
 Our souls a sacrifice sincere;  
 While all our lives thy triumphs raise,  
 Devoted to thy endless praise.

## ISAIAH XXVI. 8, 9.

“YEA, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

---

AND are thy judgments, mighty God,  
 Extending through the earth abroad,  
 With desolating sway?  
 And is the vengeful day begun,  
 For heaven to make its terrors known,  
 The long-expected day?

Ah, whilst the lingering thunders wait,  
 Ere justice seal the sinner's fate,  
 And all its power assume;  
 Might prayer arrest the' uplifted hand!  
 Might Mercy spare a guilty land,  
 And Love reverse its doom!

Though madly we ourselves have sold,  
 Redeem'd by thy right hand of old,  
 We humbly seek thy face;  
 Lowly repentant at thy throne,  
 We deprecate thy wrath alone,  
 And plead thy sovereign grace!

With humble awe, the praying few  
 The interceding cry renew  
 In agony of prayer:  
 “Withdraw,” they cry, “thine awful frown,  
 Nor pour thy heaviest judgments down,  
 But O, thy rebels spare!

May Britain's sons thy will discern !  
 By direful dispensations learn  
     The lessons of thy grace !  
 We then should hail thy heavenly smile,  
 And goodness crown our happy isle,  
     Till time complete his race.

---

MORNING.

SWEET is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,  
 With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun,  
 When first on this delightful land he spreads  
 His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
 Glist'ning with dew. MILTON.

---

“SWEET is the dewy breath of morn,”  
 When the wide welkin's orient bound,  
 Her fulgent fingers re-adorn,  
 And shed ethereal beauties round.  
 But sweeter is the scene divine,  
 When Jesu's brighter beauties shine ;  
 His charms my ravish'd powers confess,  
 Resplendent Sun of righteousness !

“On rosy steps” advance to sow,  
 Fair morn, “with orient pearl, the earth ;”  
 And charm, while gemming every bough,  
 The infant foliage into birth.  
 But richer far the precious drops  
 That ripen my immortal hopes,  
 That glitter pendant at the tree,  
 Or fall, impearling Calvary.

Now, buoyant on the liquid sky,  
 The lark attunes his matin lay ;  
 And mounts, with ardent wing, on high,  
 To bid all hail the new-born day.  
 But faith a bolder plume supplies,  
 Pinions that dare remoter skies ;

A soul heaven-born has higher lays,  
The hymn of love, and joy, and praise.

Collect the incense nature yields,  
And gratefully to heaven ascend,  
Ye zephyrs, o'er the enamell'd fields,  
That now your fragrant wings extend.  
More fragrant is th' ethereal gale,  
Elysium's balmy bowers exhale ;  
The breath of life-inspiring love,  
From amaranthine fields above.

The lymph serene, its natal well  
Deserting, loves the hoary hill,  
And wildly wandering down the dell,  
Expands a pure pellucid rill.  
Yet purer is the precious tide,  
Fast flowing from Immanuel's side ;  
From Golgotha the currents roll,  
Immersing my delighted soul.

Fields, forests, fountains, clouds, and skies,  
Delicious ecstasies dispense,  
That press upon my raptured eyes,  
And wake to transport every sense.  
Yet faith, blest faith's interior eye,  
A nobler prospect can descry ;  
Heights, lengths, and breadths of love divine ;  
And all, in Christ, for ever mine.

But lucid light the vault of heaven  
Shall quit ; earth's beauties bloom no more ;  
Order shall, from her empire driven,  
With nature die, and time be o'er :  
Yet then, through heaven's empyreal plain,  
Glory for ever shall remain ;  
And my immortal mind survey  
Messiah's undiminish'd ray.

## NOON.

WHEN the sun begins to fling  
 His flaring beams, me [gently] bring  
 To arched walks of twilight groves,  
 And shadows brown that Sylvan loves,  
 Of pine or monumental oak,  
 Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,  
 Was never heard:—  
 There, in close covert, by some brook,  
 Where no profaner eye may look,  
 Hide me from day's garish eye ;  
 While the bee with honied thigh,  
 That at her flowery work doth sing ;  
 And the waters murmuring,  
 With such consort as they keep.

---

MILTON, *Il Penseroso*.

---

## I.

Noon her sultry sway maintains,  
 In the heavens, upon the plains ;  
 Now the skies refulgent, fair,  
 Unbeclouded azure wear ;  
 Whence Apollo's brilliant beam  
 Sparkles on the limpid stream ;  
 Near whose margin wanders free,  
 With ceaseless hum, the honey-bee ;  
 Only heard the insect quire ;  
 For the plummy bands retire,  
 Silent to the cooling bower,  
 Passing noon's too fervid hour,  
 Where in shades serene I lie,  
 Hiding "from day's garish eye ;"  
 By the world unknown, unsought,  
 Musing o'er the moral thought.  
 Round yon oak's majestic height,  
 Where the enamour'd woodbine twines,  
 And on a piercing ray of light  
 In languid elegance reclines,

I mark the scintillating beam invade  
The hallow'd cloisters of the sylvan shade.

There, dancing in the chequer'd gleams,  
Unconscious of its state,  
The mote, meand'ring wildly, seems  
(But only seems) to indicate  
A sense of being, and of mind elate.

I too, a mote, erratic, vain,  
In Folly's evanescent reign,  
Excursive, through the glitt'ring maze,  
Meridian, passion's fervid blaze,  
On vagrant wing have wildly roved,  
Virtue! though thy dear name I loved.

Yes, I have seen my summer sun,  
My glowing skies, my lucent scenes!  
How youth's mellifluent moments run,  
While grief nor anguish intervenes!

Empire this of truant joy,  
Not now can wrinkled Care annoy;  
With head of few lank hairs of gray,  
He down life's wintry vale declines;  
And heedless of the smile of May,  
With mis'ry ever pines.

Gloomy Grief, afar begone!  
And writhing Pain with plaintive moan!  
Enamell'd fields of gay delight  
Expand before my dazzled sight,  
And Pleasure on, for dalliance drest,  
Delighted trips in silken vest,  
By Fancy's fairy finger dight.

Young Hope, elated, seeks her blooming bow'rs,  
Adorned with smiles  
And witching wiles;  
Her steps conducted by the radiant hours.

While Folly, pleased with fond fantastic show,  
 The mimicry of pleasure,—badge of woe !  
 Th' ideal forms in light illusive views,  
 And paints the phantom shapes with more than magic  
 hues.

Thus clouds unbind their tinsell'd gold,  
 Tinged with the solar ray,  
 But, quickly wrapt in sable fold,  
 Obscure the face of day.

Glad to shun her harsh command,  
 Glad to flee her chast'ning hand :  
 Giddy, gay, licentious youth  
 Spurns the rigid hests of truth.  
 Fond delight, and fierce desire,  
 And bold ambition, with a soul on fire,  
 Prompt at Honour's call to rise,  
 Contemns the earth, contemns the skies.

With sanguine speed, while high the springs were  
 wound,  
 Whirl'd the swift wheels of Passion's fiery car ;  
 While Reason, slumb'ring on the enchanted ground,  
 Or lay quiescent by,  
 In tenfold apathy,  
 Or, waking, fear'd to rouse the unequal war.

Thus Passion sat in Reason's throne,  
 The empire of the Mind her own :  
 While, low the tyrant's arm beneath,  
 Reason lay bound in bands of death.  
 Now the dire anarch of the soul  
 With indignation spurn'd control ;  
 And gave, amid the drear domain,  
 With horrors ghostly smile, again  
 Old Chaos, from his pristine seat,  
 To view a second empire at his feet.

Blew the bellowing blast!  
 Roar'd the warring wave!  
 Conscience stood aghast,  
 And lost her power to save!  
 Who, who can stem the wild career?  
 Angels and ministers of grace, appear!

## II.

And see, "with measured step and slow,"  
 Advancing on the sensual foe,  
 Where Education comes, with mien sedate,  
 And boasts an early conquest o'er imperious fate.  
 "Tuition's undeclining law,  
 Must keep," he cries, "the wayward will in awe;  
 Omnipotent are Wisdom's rules,  
 Defined by Græcia's learned schools;  
 Omniscient they, to guide discreet  
 By sure, but painful steps, the wand'ring feet,  
 Where heaven-born Virtue builds her amaranthine  
 seat."

Him follows soon, of brow severe,  
 And bending stern her laughter-quelling eyes,  
 Affected fair of seeming worth,  
 Benamed heaven's primogenial birth,  
 Philosophy, descended from the skies  
 To rule the intellectual sphere.

"In mines immured of dark unfathom'd thought,  
 Erst glitt'ring gems," she said, "of purest ray,  
 In deep and gloomy caverns lay,  
 By human sight unseen, by human hand unsought,  
 These, after-ages durst explore.  
 Hence, 'mid superstitions foul,  
 Socrates, illumined soul!  
 Quaff'd everlasting life from the narcotic bowl.  
 And he, impassive Plato, led,  
 Not undelighted, to the fountain-head,  
 With the wise Stagyrite, sipp'd the sweet of Virtue's lore.

"They told how Man, so Heaven design'd,  
 Man, offspring of th' immortal gods,  
 Should seek felicity refined,  
 The mental banquet of the mind,  
 In higher, pure, serene abodes.  
 They bade us view with noble scorn,  
 (On Contemplation's wing upborne,)  
 The mean delights of mortal sense.  
 'Aspire!' they cried, 'aspire  
 Beyond the bounds of brutal base desire,  
 And mount to intellectual excellence!'"

They feel, we own, of Virtue's star a beam,  
 And prize the glimmering ray :  
 But ah ! did Socrates supreme,  
 Though lovely be his lucid theme,  
 To Virtue's radiant seat explore the living way ?  
 They feel, we own, the beam of Virtue's star,  
 The glimmering ray they prize ;  
 But ah ! beneath her orbit far,  
 Hurl'd from his Phaëtonian car,  
 How low amid the dust e'en godlike Plato lies !

For, not in academic groves,  
 Though rich in philosophic lore ;  
 Nor 'mong the haunts the Stoic loves,  
 Can we immortal truth explore.

Beauteous, fair Philosophy,  
 Fair and beauteous though thou be,  
 Passion's fond imperious charms  
 Delude thy vot'ry from thine arms.  
 Not letter'd Græcia's sapient laws  
 Of Nature's fault define the cause ;  
 Alone her potent ills can they detect,  
 And follow Goodness only in effect.

On Lapland's snowy height,  
 With wonder and delight,

Thus the furr'd traveller checks his bounding deer,  
 When lo ! with sweet surprise,  
 His fascinated eyes  
 Behold in heaven th' aërial scenes appear,  
 Than e'er the southern sun,  
 Delighted gazed upon,  
 Of lovelier landscape, mountain, dale, and plain :  
 And rival suns display  
 Their evanescent ray,  
 And onward voyage o'er the icy main.  
 But instant, from his eyes,  
 The melting meteor flies,  
 And disappointment marks his angry soul ;  
 While murky mists profound  
 The frigid scene surround,  
 And all the horrors of the arctic pole.

## III.

Immured in darkness, bound in chains,  
 The yet untutor'd mind remains :  
 Yet unsuspected, yet unknown,  
 That man is made for God alone !  
 Glorious Truth ! by heaven reveal'd  
 From the dull eye of Reason seal'd.

At once, on Nature's night,  
 Beams Revelation's light !  
 And lo, the gloom, while Heaven its aid supplies,  
 efore the gathering glories flies !  
 When thus the rising King of day  
 The orient heaven illumes ;  
 The shades of darkness own his sway,  
 And seek their kindred glooms.

Not light alone heaven's brilliant beams impart,  
 Their genial influence vivifies the heart ;  
 Instructs the penitential tear to flow,  
 And Faith's fair fruits in sweet succession grow ;

Till, all subdued to Love's benign control,  
Instinctive Goodness fills the faithful soul.

Now, centred in her God,  
She lives, she triumphs, in her blest abode ;  
And tastes the bliss creating Love design'd.  
Hence ! vaunting Knowledge, hence ! in darkness hide !  
Hence ! empty philosophic pride !  
When Jesus reigns, the Monarch of the mind !  
He speaks ! the omnific Word !  
Mad Chaos, peace !  
Confusion, hear his voice ! wild uproar, cease !

“ Behold ! I sit upon my throne,  
The former things are past, are gone !  
What cannot grace almighty do ?  
I form new heavens, the earth renew ;  
Let there be life ! let light appear !  
And let a second Eden bear  
(Unknown the former fatal tree,)  
The fruits of immortality !  
And let, with trees of life beside,  
The crystal living waters glide !  
Lo, man, with nature at his feet,  
My imaged transcript shines complete ;  
Retrieving, through the hallow'd cross,  
More than the elder Adam's loss !  
No point below the nether sky  
Attracting, his pursuit is high,  
He loathes the dull delights of sense,  
Inspid, poor impertinence ;  
Too weak the spell his soul to bind,  
Too mean to touch the illumined mind.  
He drinks, by Wisdom gently led,  
At Truth's perennial fountain head,  
And banquets on angelic food,  
And finds in me the Sovereign Good.

Not till he enters Death's dark gate,  
 From flesh detach'd, does he await  
 (Like exiles from their country driven)  
 Possession of a future heaven.  
 E'en now expands th' ethereal wing,  
 Presumes a flight where seraphs sing,  
 And, far beneath him space and time,  
 He sits with me in seat sublime,  
 Head with Truth unfading crown'd,  
 And Virtues minist'ring around !”

Eternal Power, whose wondrous grace  
 Could calm the tumult of my breast,  
 Whose truth could error's midnight chase,  
 Whose love could lull my soul to rest !  
 Can I forget the power, the love,  
 That drew my simple soul to thee,  
 And made me, rapt to glory, prove  
 How vast my own Divinity !  
 Thee, when Morning's golden eye  
 Opens to the eastern sky ;  
 When, as now, his noontide ray  
 Darts the zenith'd orb of day ;  
 When, submitting to the shades,  
 Lucid evening slowly fades ;  
 Father, Friend, Redeemer, King,  
 Thee will I enraptured sing.  
 Thee, while crimson health remains  
 Gaily mantling in my veins ;  
 When disease and pain assail,  
 When my heart and body fail ;  
 Thee, in life, my lips shall praise,  
 Death shall but improve my lays.  
 Whether in the flesh, my mind,  
 Life's ethereal spark beshrined ;  
 Or resorb'd into the skies,  
 Into life divine it rise ;

My numbers, deathless as my soul,  
 Shall, with unending ages, roll,  
 While raptured, on the flowery brink,  
 At Love's eternal fount I drink  
 (The radiant sons of light among,)  
 Fresh inspiration for my song.

---

JEREMIAH XIV. 7—9.

O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake : for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night ? Why shouldest thou be as a man that is astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save ? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us and we are called by thy name ; leave us not."

---

O THOU Hope of Israel's race,  
 Humbly would we seek thy face ;  
 We who, in affliction's hour,  
 Supplicate thy saving power.

Lo, we sink into the dust,  
 Yet on thee presume to trust ;  
 Thee, before whose purer eyes  
 All our heinous crimes arise.

Yes, we will with Mercy plead ;  
 May our humble suit succeed !  
 Will the Lord our prayer withstand,  
 Be a stranger in the land ?

Surely thou wilt not depart,  
 Who thine Israel's Saviour art !  
 Art thou not the Friend indeed,  
 Saviour in the time of need ?

Wilt thou then our suit deny,  
Not attend thy people's cry?  
Spurn thy suppliants, and their prayer  
Scatter into empty air?

Light of life, our guilty gloom  
Only with a glance illumine;  
Soon shall mercy's gathering ray  
Shine unto the perfect day.

May our loving faith prevail!  
Hail, returning Saviour, hail!  
Make us thy abiding home;  
Answer, "Lo, I quickly come!"

THE END.







