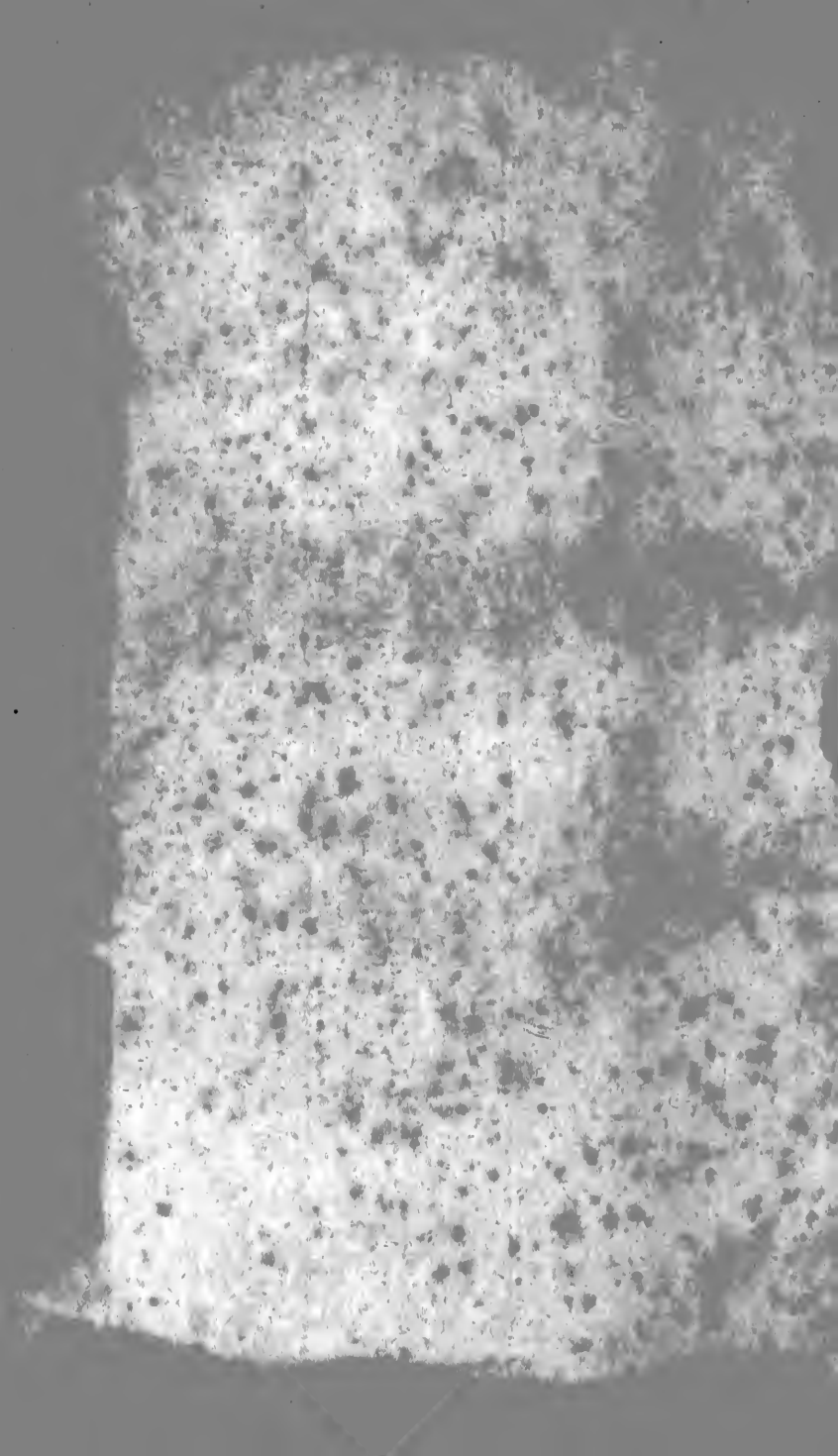

SACRED BIOGRAPHY:

OR THE

HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS.

By HENRY HUNTER, D. D.

SACRED BIOGRAPHY;

OR THE

HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS.

BEING A

COURSE OF LECTURES,

DELIVERED AT THE

SCOTS CHURCH, LONDON-WALL.

BY HENRY HUNTER, D.D.

VOLUME III.

JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM. JOHN VIII. 58.

I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, SAITH THE LORD, WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY.
REVELATION. I. 8.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY ROBERT HAWES:
AND SOLD BY J. MURRAY, NO. 32, FLEET-STREET;
AND JAMES DICKSON, EDINBURGH.
M. DCC. LXXXVI.

CONTENTS.

LEC-

LECTURE VI.

LECTURE VII.

LECTURE VIII.

ing, I will ſing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed glorioufly: the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the ſea. The Lord is my ſtrength and ſong, and he is become my ſalvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

LECTURE XII.

Exod. xv. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.—And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah; for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured againſt Moſes, ſaying, What ſhall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord ſhewed him a tree, which when he had caſt into the waters, the waters were made ſweet: there he made for them a ſtatute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. And ſaid, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his ſight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his ſtatutes; I will put none of theſe diſeaſes upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threeſcore and ten palm-trees; and they encamped there by the waters.

LEC-

LECTURE XIII.

LECTURE XIV.

Rephidim : and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moſes, and ſaid, Give us water, that we may drink. And Moſes ſaid unto them, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Iſrael: and thy rod, wherewith thou ſmoteſt the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will ſtand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moſes did ſo, in the ſight of all the elders of Iſrael.

LECTURE XV.

Exod. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.—Then came Amalek, and fought with Iſrael in Rephidim. And Moſes ſaid unto Joſhua, Chooſe out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will ſtand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joſhua did as Moſes had ſaid to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moſes, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to paſs, when Moſes held up his hand, that Iſrael prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But

Mo-

SACRED

SACRED BIOGRAPHY.

LECTURE I.

LUKE XX. 27—38.

THEN CAME TO HIM CERTAIN OF THE SADDUCEES (WHICH DENY THAT THERE IS ANY RESURRECTION) AND THEY ASKED HIM, SAYING, MASTER, MOSES WROTE UNTO US, IF ANY MANS BROTHER DIE, HAVING A WIFE, AND HE DIE WITHOUT CHILDREN, THAT HIS BROTHER SHOULD TAKE HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP SEED UNTO HIS BROTHER. THERE WERE THEREFORE SEVEN BRETHREN: AND THE FIRST TOOK A WIFE, AND DIED WITHOUT CHILDREN. AND THE SECOND TOOK HER TO WIFE, AND HE DIED CHILDLESS. AND THE THIRD TOOK HER; AND IN LIKE MANNER THE SEVEN ALSO. AND THEY LEFT NO CHILDREN, AND DIED. LAST

OF ALL THE WOMAN DIED ALSO, THEREFORE IN THE RESURRECTION, WHOSE WIFE OF THEM IS SHE? FOR SEVEN HAD HER TO WIFE. AND JESUS ANSWERING SAID UNTO THEM, THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD MARRY, AND ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE: BUT THEY WHICH SHALL BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO OBTAIN THAT WORLD, AND THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, NEITHER MARRY, NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE. NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE; FOR THEY ARE EQUAL UNTO THE ANGELS, AND ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, BEING THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION. NOW THAT THE DEAD ARE RAISED, EVEN MOSES SHEWED AT THE BUSH, WHEN HE CALLETH THE LORD THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB. FOR HE IS NOT A GOD OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING: FOR ALL LIVE UNTO HIM.

ONE

LECT. I.

ONE of the moſt obvious and natural conſolations of Reaſon under the loſs of thoſe whom we dearly loved, and one of the moſt abundant conſolations, furniſhed by Religion, is the belief, that our departed friends, are, at their death, diſpoſed of infinitely to their advantage. We weep and mourn while we reflect upon the deprivation of comfort we have ſuſtained: but we wipe the tears of ſorrow from our eyes, when we conſider that our loſs, is their unſpeakable gain. "Rachel weeping for her children," refuſes to be comforted, ſo long as ſhe thinks "they are not;" but her ſoul is tranquillized and comforted, when her eyes in faith, look within the veil, and behold them ſoftly and ſecurely repoſing in the boſom of their Father and God. It is an humbling and a mortifying employment to viſit church-yards, to ſtep from grave to grave, to recal the memory, while we trample upon the aſhes of the young, the beautiful, the wiſe and the good; but we find immediate relief, we riſe into joy, we tread among the ſtars,

LECT. I. when, aided by Religion, we tranſport ourſelves in thought, to thoſe bleſſed regions where all the faithful live, and reign, and rejoice: where "they that "be wiſe ſhine as the brightneſs of the "firmament, and they that turn many "to righteouſneſs as the ſtars for ever "and ever.*" Then diſtance is ſwallowed up and loſt, and we mingle in the noble employments and pure delights of the bleſſed Immortals who encircle the throne of God.

It is aſtoniſhing to think, that there have been men diſpoſed willingly to deprive themſelves of this glorious ſource of comfort, ready to reſign the high prerogative of their birthright, and by a ſpecies of humility ſtrange and unnatural, ſpontaneouſly degrading themſelves to the level of the brutes that periſh. And yet there have been, in truth, ſuch men in every age. But it is no wonder to find thoſe who ſatisfy themſelves with the purſuits and enjoyments of a mere beaſtly

* Dan. xii. 3.

nature,

nature, while they live, contented to lie down with the beaſts in death, to ariſe no more. They firſt make it their intereſt that there ſhould be no hereafter, and then they fondly perſuade themſelves, that there ſhall be none.

Errour of every kind, both in faith and morals prevailed in the extreme, at the period when, and in the country where the Saviour of the world appeared for our redemption. The nation of the Jews, was divided in reſpect of moral and religious ſentiment, into two great ſects or parties, who both pretended to found their opinions upon the authority of the inſpired books, which were held in univerſal eſtimation among them; particularly the writings of Moſes. But they drew concluſions directly oppoſite, from the ſame facts and doctrines; and both deviated in the groſſeſt manner from the ſpirit and deſign of that precious record, which they both affected to hold in the higheſt veneration. The Phariſees, earneſtly contending for the ſtrict obſervance

LECT. I. of the law, confined their attention to its minuter and leſs important objects, and paid "the tithe of mint and aniſe and "cummin," but omitted "the weightier "matters of the law, judgment, mercy "and faith:" and raiſing oral tradition to the rank and dignity of Scripture, found a pretence for diſpenſing with the plaineſt and moſt eſſential obligations of morality, when they contradicted their intereſts and opinions. Scrupulouſly offended at the neglect of waſhing hands previous to eating; they were wicked enough to eſtabliſh by a law of their own, neglect of, unkindneſs, and diſobedience to parents; thus, according to the juſt cenſure which our Lord paſſed upon them, "ſtraining out a gnat, and ſwallowing "a camel." The Sadducees on the other hand, the ſtrong ſpirits of the age, diſdaining the reſtraints impoſed on mankind by a written law, thought fit to become a law unto themſelves. They left the auſterities of a ſtrict religion and morality to vulgar minds; and that they might procure peace to themſelves in the

the enjoyment of thoſe ſinful pleaſures to which they were addicted, denied the exiſtence of ſpirit, the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retribution. They alledged that the law was ſilent on thoſe points, and that this ſilence was a ſufficient reaſon for rejecting the belief of them. They went farther, and contended, that were ſuch doctrines contained in the law, they ought not to be admitted, becauſe they implied a contradiction, or, at leaſt involved ſuch a number of difficulties as it was impoſſible ſatisfactorily to ſolve. The chief of thoſe difficulties, they propoſe to our bleſſed Saviour in the paſſage I have read, not in the ſpirit of docility and diffidence, to have it removed, but in the pride of their hearts, vainly taking it for granted, that it was inſurmountable.

My principal intention in leading your thoughts to this ſubject at this time, is the occaſion which it afforded to the great Teacher, who came from God, of diſcourſing on a theme nearly connected

LECT. I. with the design of these lectures, and of disclosing to us sundry important particulars respecting the venerable men whose lives we have been conversant with, and those which we are still to examine; and respecting that world, in which, we together with them, have a concern so deeply, because eternally interesting. To these we shall be led, by making a few cursory remarks on the preceding conversation which took place between Christ and the Sadducees. And this shall serve as an Introduction to the farther continuation of a course of Lectures on the history of the memorable persons and events presented to us in the holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament.

The Sadducees insidiously begin their attack by professing the highest respect for the authority of Moses and his writings: "Master, Moses wrote unto us." The most pernicious designs, the most malevolent purposes are necessitated to clothe themselves, in smiles; while mischief lies

lies brooding in mens hearts "their "words are ſmoother than oil." The father of lies himſelf can have recourſe to truth, if it be likely to ſerve his turn; and the enemy of all goodneſs will condeſcend to quote that Scripture which he hates, if it can help him to an argument for the occaſion. With this affected deference for Moſes, they are aiming at the total ſubverſion of every moral and religious principle; by weakening one of the ſtrongeſt motives to virtue, and undermining the ſureſt foundation of hope and joy to man. They alledge that obedience to the law might eventually lead to much confuſion and diſorder; and they ſuppoſe a ſituation, for none ſuch ever exiſted, in which compliance with the revealed will of God in this world, would infallibly lead to diſcord and diſtreſs in that which is to come. In this we have an example of a very common caſe, that of men ſtraining their eyes to contemplate objects at a great diſtance or totally out of ſight; and wilfully neglecting or overlooking thoſe which are immediately before them:

LECT. I. them: troubling themſelves about effects and conſequences of which they are ignorant and over which they have no power: regardleſs of obvious truth and commanded duty, which are their immediate buſineſs and concern. The Sadducees to cloke their licentiouſneſs and infidelity affect ſolicitude about the regularity and peace of a future ſtate, which in words they denied, if they did not from the heart diſbelieve.

I make but one remark more, before I come to our Lord's reply. Eagerneſs and anxiety to bring forward and to eſtabliſh an opinion, betray an inward doubt or diſbelief of it. Truth is not ever proclaiming itſelf from the houſe-tops, is not forward to obtrude itſelf upon every occaſion, but is ſatisfied with maintaining and defending itſelf when aſſaulted: but falſhood is eternally ſtriving to conceal or ſtrengthen its conſcious weakneſs by a parade of words, and a ſhew of reaſon. The zeal of the Sadducees to explode and run down the doctrine of the

reſur-

resurrection, plainly betrays a secret dread and belief of it.

Our Lord in his answer, points out directly the source of all errour and infidelity, "Ye do err, not knowing the "scriptures, and the power of God." Not knowing the Scriptures, ye suppose a doctrine is not in them, because ye have not found it in them: because ye have shut your own eyes, ye vainly imagine there is no light in the sun; and take upon you to affirm it. Not knowing the power of God, you call that impossible which you cannot do, deem that absurd, which you do not comprehend, and pronounce that false which you wish to be so. The whole force of the objection to the truth of the resurrection goes upon the supposition that the future world is exactly constituted as the present; that the relations and distinctions which subsist among men upon earth, are to subsist in the kingdom of heaven. But the supposition is founded in ignorance and falshood, and the moment it is denied, the mighty argument

LECT. I. ment built upon it, falls to the ground. "In the resurrection," says Christ "they "neither marry, nor are given in mar- "riage, but are as the angels of God in "Heaven." In these words the condition of men in the world to come is described, first, negatively, "They "neither marry, nor are given in marri- "age." The power which created the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, might undoubtedly, had it pleased him, have created the whole human race at once, as easily as he formed the first of men, Adam, and as he rears up one generation of men after another in the course of his Providence. But thinking it meet to people the earth, by multiplying mankind gradually upon it, difference of sex, and the institution of marriage were the means he was pleased to employ. In the resurrection, the number of the redeemed being complete at once, that difference and that institution being unnecessary, shall be done away. The Evangelist adds, "neither can they die any more." Death too enters into the

the plan of Providence for the government of this world. Men muſt be removed to make room for men. But becauſe this ſphere is narrow and contracted, and unable to contain and ſupport the increaſing multitudes of many generations, Is the Lord's hand ſhortened, that he cannot expand a more ſpacious firmament, and compact a more ſpacious globe to contain at once the countleſs nations of them that are ſaved? O how greatly men err; not knowing the Power of God! Death is no part of the plan of Providence for the government of that world of bliſs. In our Father's houſe above there are *many* manſions, there is bread enough, and to ſpare, there is room for all, proviſion for all: the father need not to die to give ſpace to the ſon, nor the mother ſpare that the child may have enough. For they are "as the angels "of God," ſays our Lord, according to Matthew, "equal to the angels, ſays our evangeliſt, "and are the children of God." This deſcribes their happineſs poſitively. Men on earth "ſee in a glaſs "darkly;

LECT. I.

LECT. I.

"darkly; know in part, prophesy in "part," are encompassed with infirmity: but the "angels in heaven" excel in "strength, stand before the throne of God, "serve him day and night in his temple "without wearying, see face to face, know "as they are known." Their number is completed, their intercourse pure and perfect, without the means of increase and union here below. Having thus reproved their ignorance and presumption, respecting the "power of God," our Lord proceeds to expose their ignorance respecting "the scriptures," and produces a passage from Moses, in whom they trusted, which they had hitherto overlooked or misunderstood, wherein the doctrine in dispute was clearly laid down; and which we had principally in view in leading your attention to this passage on this occasion.

The passage is that noted declaration of God to Moses from the midst of the burning bush, "I am the God of thy "father, the God of Abraham, the God "of

"of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*." That God should have condescended to hold this language concerning Enoch, "who was translated that he should not "see death, had been less wonderful; for that holy man, who walked with God upon earth, was exalted immediately to a more intimate union with God in heaven. But to speak thus of men who were long ago mouldered into dust, of whom nothing remained among men but their names, conveys an idea of human existence before which the life of a Methusaleh dwindles into nothing, which swallows up mortality, and gives a dignity and a duration to man which bids defiance to the grave. That God should say to Abraham while he lived, "I am "thy shield, and thy exceeding great "reward†," was a miracle of grace and condescension; but to speak thus, more than three centuries after he had been consigned to the tomb, "I AM the GOD

* Exodus iii. 6. † Genesis xv. 1.

"of

LECT. I. "of Abraham," exhibits a relation between God and the Faithful, which perfectly reconciles the mind to the thoughts of diſſolution. Indeed it is impoſſible to conceive any thing more elevating, any thing more tranquillizing to the ſoul than the view of future bliſs with which the text preſents us. And this tranquillity and elevation are greatly heightened by the conſideration that Jehovah from the midſt of flaming fire under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, and Jehovah in the perſon of the great Redeemer under the New, taught the ſame glorious truth to the world. And what is it? "I am the God of Abraham, and "the God of Iſaac, and the God of "Jacob."

When God was pleaſed to expreſs his favourable regard to Abraham upon earth, what did it amount to? He led him through a particular diſtrict of land in the length and breadth of it, and ſaid "I "will give it thee." But Abraham now expatiates through a more ample region, and

and contemplates a fairer inheritance, an inheritance, his, not in hope, but in poſſeſſion. Abraham though following the leading of the divine Providence, ſaw the Redeemer's day only afar off: but in virtue of his relation to God he has now beheld the dawning of the morning expanded into the pure light of the perfect day. He once felt the events which affected his family, with the emotion natural to a man; he has ſince beheld them extending their influence to nations he thought not of, and now looks forward in holy rapture to that period, when he, and his Iſaac, and an earthly Canaan, and every thing of a temporal and tranſitory nature, ſhall bring their glory and their honour, and lay all at the feet of "Him, who ſitteth upon the throne, and before the Lamb."

From Abraham *we* are removed to a diſtance of time and place in which thought is loſt; and we ſeem to have no more intereſt in him, than if He had never exiſted. But the doctrine of the

LECT. I. text brings us ſo cloſe to him, that we recogniſe the friend of God, in the midſt of myriads of ſaints, in glory. We converſe with him, and continue to be inſtructed by him.

The Duſt of Abraham ſleeps unnoticed and forgotten in the cave of Machphelah; but lift up thine eyes, and behold Abraham on high, and Lazarus in his boſom; his ſpirit united to God "the Father of Spirits," and to all "the "Spirits of juſt men made perfect." "And even that duſt" alſo "reſts in "hope:" It ſhall not always be left in the place of the dead; it ſhall not remain for ever a prey to corruption. Abraham purchaſed a tomb, and buried his Sarah out of his ſight; but he has overtaken, regained her, in the regions of eternal day, where virtuous and believing friends meet, never more to be disjoined. Abraham received his Iſaac from the wonder-working hand of heaven, when nature was dead to hope; at the command of God, he chearfully ſurrendered

ered him again, and devoted him upon the altar: again he receives him to newness of life, and that darling son lives to put his hand upon his eyes. But they were not long disunited; the Son has overtaken the Parents; they rejoice in God, and in one another; they are the Children and heirs of the Resurrection; "they are as the angels of God in heaven."

"I am the God of Isaac." This Isaac, the heir of Abraham's possessions, of his faith, of his virtues, was on earth united to the God of the Spirits of all flesh, by many tender and important relations:—by piety, by filial confidence, by goodness, by patience and submission on his part; by election, by special favour, by highness of destination on the part of his heavenly father. Yet these distinguished advantages exempted him not from the stroke of affliction. Many years did this heir of the promises, this chosen seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, many years did he go child-

LECT. I.

leſs. Early in life was he viſited with loſs of ſight, and thereby was expoſed to much mortification and dejection of ſpirit. Children are at length given him, and they prove the torment of his life; they excite a war betwixt nature and grace in his own breaſt; diſcord and jealouſy arm them againſt each other; he is in danger of "loſing them both in "one day." One muſt be baniſhed from home, the other mingles with idolators. Behold a wretched, blind old man, a prey to grief of heart." But theſe things, on the other hand, diſſolved not, interrupted not his covenant relation to God: they ſerved but to cement and ſtrengthen the divine friendſhip: and death which to human apprehenſion ſeparates all connection, and indeed tears aſunder every mortal tie, only brought into a clearer light, intercourſe and intimacy, which can never expire.

"I am the God of Jacob." In all the wanderings, in all the dangers, in all the diſtreſſes of this Patriarch; in all his

his ſucceſſes, all his acquiſitions, all his joys, we diſcover the relation of God to him, expreſſed in theſe words, and the preſence of God with him whitherſoever he went, conſtantly relieving the wretchedneſs of the one ſtate; dignifying and ſupporting the felicity of the other. This gave him ſecurity from the violence of an incenſed brother; this cheared the ſolitude of Luz, and turned it into a Bethel; by this the ſlumbers of a head repoſed on a pillar of ſtone were made refreſhing and inſtructive; this repreſſed and overbalanced the rapacity of Laban; this ſupported and ſanctified the loſs of Joſeph; this ſweetened the deſcent into Egypt, and diſſipated the gloom of death; by this, though dead he exiſts, though ſilent he ſpeaketh, "abſent from the "body he is preſent with the Lord;" the moment of his departure is on the wing to overtake that of his redemption from the power of the grave. Before God, the diſtance ſhrinks into nothing; that word, that one little word, I AM, unites the æra of Nature's birth with that of its

LECT. I.

LECT. I. diſſolution, joins eternity to eternity, "and ſwallows up death in victory."

The ſame gracious declaration applies with equal truth and juſtice to every ſon and daughter "of faithful Abraham" to every "Iſraelite indeed." We ſpeak of departed friends in the *paſt* time, we "cannot but remember ſuch things *were*; "and *were* moſt dear to us;" but it is the glorious prerogative of Jehovah to employ eternally the *preſent* in deſcribing his own Eſſence, and his covenant relation to his People: "I AM THAT I AM." "I AM the God of thy Father" of thy buried, thy lamented brother, friend, lover, child! And to us alſo is the word of this conſolation ſent, "Fear not, for "I *am* with thee, be not diſmayed, "I *am* thy God." "Thus ſaith the "Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and "he that formed thee, O Iſraël; Fear "not: for I have redeemed thee, I have "called thee by name, thou art mine. "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, "I will be with thee, and through the "rivers,

"rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee, "when thou walkeſt through the fire, "thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall "the flame kindle upon thee. For I *am* "the Lord thy God, the Holy One of "Iſrael, thy Saviour." Believing, reſting upon this ſure foundation, the Chriſtian triumphs in the proſpect of "departing and being with Chriſt;" ſmiles at the threatening looks of the king of terrours, exults and ſings "with the ſweet "ſinger of Iſrael," "Yea, though I "walk through the valley of the ſhadow "of death, I will fear no evil: for thou "art with me, thy rod, and thy ſtaff, "they comfort me. Surely goodneſs "and mercy ſhall follow me all the "days of my life: and I will dwell in "the Houſe of the Lord for ever."† and with the enraptured apoſtle of the Gentiles, "O Death, where is thy ſting; "O Grave where is thy victory? Thanks "be to God who giveth us the victory "through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*."

† Pſalm xxiii. 4. 6. * 1 Cor. xv. 15—57.

LECT. I.

Itis a tranſporting reflection, that the fond wiſhes and deſires of the human heart, are warranted, encouraged and ſupported by the revelation of God: that the life and immortality which we naturally pant after, are brought to light by the Goſpel. It is pleaſant to find wiſe and good men, guided only by the light of reaſon, and the honeſt propenſities of nature, cheriſhing that very belief, cleaving to that very hope which the Text inſpires. Cicero, in his beautiful treatiſe on Old-Age, while he relates the ſentiments of others, ſweetly delivers his own on this ſubject. The elder Cyrus, according to Xenophon, thus addreſſed his ſons before his death, "Do "not imagine, O my dear children, "that when I leave you, I ceaſe to exiſt. "For even while I was yet with you, "my Spirit you could not diſcern; but "that it animated this body you were "fully aſſured, by the actions I per-"formed. Be aſſured it will continue "the ſame, though ſtill you ſee it not. "The glory of illuſtrious men muſt ſink

"with

" with them into the grave, were not
" their ſurviving ſpirits capable of ex-
" ertion, and concerned to reſcue their
" names from oblivion. I can never
" ſuffer myſelf to be perſuaded, that
" the man lives only while he is in the
" body, and dies, when *it* is diſſolved;
" or that the ſoul loſes all intelligence,
" on being ſeparated from an unintelli-
" gent lump of clay; but rather, that
" on being liberated from all mixture
" with body, pure and entire, it enters
" upon its true intellectual exiſtence.
" At death any one may diſcover what
" becomes of the material part of our
" frame: all ſinks into that from which
" it aroſe, every thing is reſolved into
" its firſt principle; the Soul alone is
" apparent neither while it is with us,
" nor when it departs. What ſo much
" reſembles death as ſleep? Now the
" powers of the mind in ſleep loudly
" proclaim their own divinity; free and
" unfettered, the ſoul plunges into fu-
" turity, aſcends its native ſky. Hence
" we may conclude how enlarged thoſe
" powers

LECT. I. "powers will be, when undepreſſed, unreſtrained by the chains of fleſh. Since "theſe things are ſo, conſider and reverence me as a tutelary deity. But, "granting that the mind were to expire "with the body, nevertheleſs, out of "reverence to the immortal Gods who "ſupport and direct this fair fabrick of "Nature, pioufly, affectionately cheriſh "the memory of your affectionate Father."—The great Roman Orator puts theſe words into the mouth of Cato in addreſſing his young friends Scipio and "Lælius. Thoſe excellent men, your "Fathers, who were ſo dear to me in "life, I conſider as ſtill alive; and indeed as now enjoying a ſtate of being "which alone deſerves to be dignified "with the name of life. For as long "as we are ſhut up in this dungeon of "ſenſe, we have to toil through the "painful and neceſſary drudgery of life, "and to accompliſh the laborious taſk "of an hireling. The celeſtial Spirit is, "as it were, depreſſed, degraded from "its native ſeat, and plunged into the

"mire

LECT. I.

" mire of this world, a ſtate repugnant
" to its divine nature and eternal dura-
" tion."—And again, " Nobody ſhall
" ever perſuade me, Scipio, that your
" Father Paullus, and your two Grand-
" fathers, Paullus and Africanus, and
" many other eminent men whom it is
" unneceſſary to mention, would have
" attempted and atchieved ſo many
" ſplendid actions, which were to ex-
" tend their influence to poſterity, had
" they not clearly diſcerned that they
" had an intereſt in, and a connection
" with the ages of futurity, and with
" generations yet unborn. Can you
" imagine, that I may talk a little of
" myſelf, after the manner of old men,
" Can you imagine, that I would have
" ſubmitted to ſo many painful toils, by
" night and by day, in the forum, in the
" ſenate, in the field, had I apprehended
" that my exiſtence and my reputation
" were to terminate with my life?
" Were this the caſe, would it not
have been much better to doſe away in
" indolence an inſignificant and uſeleſs
life?

LECT. I.

" life? But I don't know how, the ſoul
" inceſſantly exerting its native vigour,
" ſtill ſprung eagerly forward into ages yet
" to come, and ſeized them as its own.

" I feel myſelf tranſported with de-
" light, at the thought of again ſeeing
" and joining your fathers, whom on
" earth I highly reſpected and dearly
" loved: and borne on the wings of
" hope and deſire I am ſpeeding my
" flight to mingle in the honoured ſo-
" ciety not of thoſe only whom on
" earth I knew and with whom I have
" converſed; but of thoſe alſo, of whom
" I have heard and read, and the hiſtory
" of whoſe lives I myſelf have written,
" for the inſtruction of mankind.—I
" have the conſolation of reflecting, that
" I have not lived wholly in vain: and
" I quit my ſtation in life without re-
" gret, as the way-faring man whoſe
" face is towards home, bids farewell to
" the Inn where he had ſtopped for a
" little refreſhment on his way. O glo-
" rious day, when I ſhall be admitted
" into

LECT. I.

" into the divine aſſembly of the wiſe
" and good! When I ſhall make an
" eternal eſcape from this ſink of cor-
" ruption, and the din of folly! When
" amidſt the happy throng of the immor-
" tals, I ſhall find thee alſo my Son, my
" Cato, beſt, moſt amiable of men!
" On thy aſhes, I beſtowed the honours
" of the Tomb. Ah! why did not mine
" rather receive them from thy hand!
" But your Spirit, I know it, has never
" forſaken me; but caſting back many
" a longing, lingering look to your af-
" flicted Father, has removed to that
" region of purity and peace whither
" you were confident I ſhould ſhortly
" follow you.—And I feel, I feel our ſepa-
" ration cannot be of long continuance.

" If, indulging myſelf in this fond
" hope, my young friends, I be under
" the power of deluſion, it is a ſweet,
" it is an innocent deluſion. I will
" hold it faſt and never let it go, while
" I live. I deſpiſe the ſneer of the wit-
" ling, who would attempt to laugh

" me

LECT. I. "me out of my Immortality. Suppoſe "him in the right, and myſelf under a "miſtake, he ſhall not have the power "to inſult me, nor ſhall I have the "mortification of feeling his ſcorn, when "we are both gone to the land of ever-"laſting forgetfulneſs."

How pleaſing the thought, my dear Chriſtian friends, I again repeat it; how pleaſing the thought, that the honeſt propenſities of nature, the faireſt concluſions of unaſſiſted reaſon, and the moſt ardent breathings of Truth and Virtue, are here in uniſon with the cleareſt and moſt explicit declarations of the holy ſcriptures!

But the ſacred Dove ſoars into a region which nature and reaſon never could have explored. Revelation, to the immortality of the Soul, has added the Reſurrection of the Body. And, "wherefore "ſhould it be thought a thing incredible "that God ſhould raiſe the dead"? The Spirit ſays to "theſe dry bones, live."

"We

"We believe that Jesus died and rose again." What a sure ground of hope, that "them also who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him!" Delightful reflection! Who would be so unjust to God, and so unkind to himself, as to part with it? How it smooths the rugged path of life, how it tempers the bitterness of affliction, how it dissipates the horrours of the grave! One child sleeps in the dust, the diameter of the globe separates me from another, but the word of life, "I AM the God of thy seed," rescues that one from corruption, and puts the other in my embrace. Time dwindles into a point, the Earth melts away, "the Trumpet sounds," "the dead arise incorruptible." Behold all things are made new! New Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "Arise, let us go hence," and "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

LEC-

LECTURE II.

HEB. xi. 24—27.

BY FAITH MOSES WHEN HE WAS COME TO YEARS, REFUSED TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER; CHUSING RATHER TO SUFFER AFFLICTION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THAN TO ENJOY THE PLEASURES OF SIN FOR A SEASON: ESTEEMING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT: FOR HE HAD RESPECT UNTO THE RECOMPENCE OF THE REWARD. BY FAITH HE FORSOOK EGYPT, NOT FEARING THE WRATH OF THE KING; FOR HE ENDURED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.

THE Hiſtory of mankind contains many a lamentable detail of the ſad reverſes to which human affairs are

 liable;

LECT. II.

liable; of the affluent, by unforeſeen, unavoidable calamity, tumbled into indigence; of greatneſs in eclipſe; of the mighty fallen; of princes dethroned, baniſhed, put to death. In ſome inſtances of this ſort, we ſee the unhappy ſufferers making a virtue of neceſſity, and bearing their misfortunes with a certain degree of patience and magnanimity; but in general, ſudden and great diſtreſs either ſours or depreſſes the ſpirit, and men ſubmit to the will of Providence with ſo ill a grace, that it is evident they are not under the power of religion; that they flee not for conſolation to the proſpects of immortality.

We are, this evening, to contemplate one of thoſe rare examples of true greatneſs of mind, which made a voluntary ſacrifice of the moſt enviable ſituation, and the moſt flattering proſpects which human life admits of; and that at an age, when the heart is moſt devoted to the purſuit of pleaſure, moſt ſuſceptible of the allurements of ambition. It is

the

the ſingular inſtance of Moſes, the Prophet and Legiſlator of Iſrael, who, brought up from infancy in a court, inſtructed in all the learning of the Egyptians; treated as the heir of Empire, and encouraged to aſpire to all that the heart naturally covets, and that Providence beſtows on the moſt favoured of mankind; at the age of forty, chearfully reſigned all theſe advantages, and preferred the life of a ſlave with his brethren, and of a ſhepherd in the land of Midian among ſtrangers, to all the luxury and ſplendour belonging to the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter, to all the dazling hopes of royalty, or of power next to majeſty.

Scripture, in its own admirably conciſe method, diſpatches the hiſtory of this great man's life, from his infancy to his fortieth year in a few ſhort words, namely, "And Moſes was learned in all the wiſ-"dom of the Egyptians, and was mighty "in words, and in deeds.*" As not

* Acts vii. 22.

LECT. II. deeming information concerning attainments in human ſcience, or feats of martial proweſs, worthy of the knowledge of poſterity, compared to the triumphs of his Faith, the generous workings of his Public Spirit, and the noble Ardour of fervent Piety.

Philo and Joſephus, however, and other Jewiſh Writers have taken upon them to fill up this Interval of Time, by a fanciful, fabulous, unſupported account of the earlier years of Moſes; which we ſhould perhaps be diſpoſed in part to retail for your amuſement, if not for your inſtruction, had not the Spirit of God ſupplied us with well authenticated memoirs of a more advanced period of his life. In the peruſal of which, with ſerious meditation upon them, we ſhall, I truſt, find pleaſure and profit blended together.

Taking Inſpiration then for our guide, we divide the Hiſtory of Moſes, into three periods, of equal duration in reſpect of time,

time, namely of forty years each; but very different in reſpect of ſituation, notoriety and importance. The firſt, and of which the Bible is ſilent, or ſpeaks but a ſingle word, preſents him to us a ſtudent in the ſchools of the Egyptian Magi, one among the Princes in the court of Pharaoh, a Poet, an Orator, a Stateſman, a General, or whatever elſe imagination pleaſes to make him. The ſecond, exhibits an humble ſhepherd, tending the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law, and fulfilling the duties, and exemplifying the virtues of the private citizen. In the third, we attend the footſteps of the Saviour of his nation, the leader and commander, the lawgiver and judge of the Iſrael of God: under whom that choſen race was conducted from Egyptian oppreſſion, to the poſſeſſion of the land promiſed to Abraham and to his ſeed; the inſtrument choſen, raiſed up, and employed of the Divine Providence, to execute the purpoſes of the Almighty in a caſe which affected the general in-

LECT. II.

LECT. II. tereſts, ſpiritual and everlaſting, of all mankind.

It is of the ſecond of theſe periods we are now to treat; and though our materials be ſmall and few, if we be ſo happy as to make a proper uſe of them, we ſhall find that by the bleſſing of God our labour has not been in vain.

In Moſes then, in the very prime and vigour of his life, we ſee a mind uncorrupted by the maxims and manners of an impious, tyrannical, idolatrous court; not intoxicated by royal favour, not ſeduced by the allurements of ambition, not deadened by the uninterrupted poſſeſſion of proſperity, to the impreſſions of humanity and compaſſion. And what preſerved him? He believed in God. The mind's eye was fixed on Him who is inviſible to the eye of ſenſe? And what is the wiſdom of Egypt compared to this? It was a land of aſtronomers, a land of warriours, a land of artiſts; and the improvement which Moſes made in every liberal

liberal art and ſcience, we may well ſuppoſe was equal to any, the firſt of the age and nation in which he lived. But a principle infinitely ſuperiour to every thing human, a principle not taught in the ſchools of the Philoſophers, a principle that carries the ſoul where it reſides, beyond the limits of this little world, inſpired high thoughts, dictated a noble, manly, generous conduct. And firſt, it taught him to deſpiſe and to reject empty, unavailing worldly honours. "By faith "Moſes when he was come to years, re-"fuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's "daughter.*" Ordinary ſpirits value themſelves on rank and diſtinction. Ordinary men raiſed unexpectedly to eminence, ſtrive to conceal and to forget the meanneſs of their extraction; but Moſes would rather paſs for the ſon of a poor, oppreſſed Iſraelite, than for the adopted ſon and heir of the oppreſſing tyrant's daughter. Putting religion out of the queſtion, true magnanimity will ſeek to derive conſe-

Hebrews v. 24.

LECT. II. quence from itſelf, not from parentage or any other adventitious circumſtance; will not conſider itſelf as ennobled by what it could have no power over, nor debaſed, by what has in itſelf no blame. To be either vain of one's anceſtry, or aſhamed of it, is equally the mark of a grovelling ſpirit. Are you highly deſcended my friend? Let high birth inſpire high, that is worthy, generous ſentiments. Beware of diſgracing reputable deſcent, by ſordid, vulgar, vicious behaviour. Haſt thou nothing to boaſt of in reſpect of pedigree? Strive to lay the foundation of thy own nobility: convince the fools of the world that goodneſs is true greatneſs; that a catalogue of living virtues is much more honourable than a long liſt of departed names. Know ye not that faith makes every one who lives by it, more than the ſon of a king? For the ſon of a king may be a fool or a profligate; but faith makes its poſſeſſor a ſon of God, that is, a wiſe and a good man; and by it Moſes was more noble in the wilderneſs of

of Sinai, than in the imperial court of Pharaoh. LECT. II.

As this divine inſtructor taught him to undervalue and to refuſe empty honours, ſo it inſpired him with pity to his afflicted brethren. "And it came to paſs in thoſe "days, when Moſes was grown, that he "went out unto his brethren, and looked "on their burdens, and he ſpied an "Egyptian ſmiting an Hebrew, one of "his brethren.*" Eaſe and affluence generally harden the heart. If it be well with the ſelfiſh man himſelf, he little cares what others endure. But religion teaches another leſſon: "Love to "God whom we have not ſeen," will always be productive of "love to men "whom we have ſeen." From the root of faith, many kindred ſtems ſpring up; and all bring forth fruit. There, ariſes the ſtately plant of heavenly mindedneſs, producing the golden apples of ſelf-government, ſelf-denial, and contempt of

* Exodus ii. 11.

the

LECT. II. the world; and close by its side, and sheltered by its branches, gentle sympathy expands its blossoms and breathes its perfumes; consolation to the afflicted, and relief to the miserable.

The progress of compassion in Moses, is described with wonderful delicacy and judgment. First, he foregoes the pleasures of a court. Unable to relish a solitary, selfish gratification, while he reflected that his nearest and dearest relations were eating the bread, and drinking the water of affliction; he goes out to look upon their misery, and tries by kind looks and words of love, to soothe their woes. Unable to alleviate, much less to remove their anguish, he is determined at least to be a partaker of it; and since he cannot raise them to the enjoyment of *his* liberty and ease, he voluntarily takes a share of *their* bondage and oppression. There is something wonderfully pleasing to a soul in trouble, to see one who might have shunned it, and have turned away from the sufferer, out of pure love, drinking from

from the ſame bitter cup, ſubmitting to the ſame calamity. At length an honeſt zeal breaks forth, and overleaps the bounds of patience and diſcretion. Seeing a brutal Egyptian ſmiting an Hebrew, incapable of ſurpreſſing his indignation, he aſſaults the oppreſſor, and puts him to death. "Moſes was meek above all the "men of the earth." But "ſurely "oppreſſion maketh a wiſe man mad." This we alledge as an apology for the conduct of Moſes, not a vindication of it; for we pretend not to ſay it was in all reſpects juſtifiable. But it is one of thoſe ſingular caſes to which common rules will not apply.

The day after, he had the mortification of ſeeing two Hebrews ſtriving together. Unhappy men! As if they had not enemies enough in their common, cruel taſk-maſters; as if condemnation to labour in making bricks without ſome of the neceſſary materials, could not find employment for their moſt vigorous efforts; as if an edict to deſtroy all their male children

LECT. II. children from their birth, had not been ſufficient to fill up the meaſure of their woe; they pour hatred and ſtrife into the bowl, already ſurcharged with wormwood and gall. Wretched ſons of men! Eternally arraigning the wiſdom and goodneſs of Providence; eternally complaining of the hardſhips of their lot; and eternally ſwelling the catalogue of their miſeries by their own perverſeneſs and folly; adding vinegar to nitre, and then wondering how their diſtreſſes came to be ſo great. Moſes reproved the offending Egyptian by a blow, and a mortal one; he tries to gain an offending brother by meekneſs and gentleneſs; he makes reaſon and humanity ſpeak; but they ſpeak in vain; for the ſame ſpirit that leads men to commit cruelty or injuſtice, leads them alſo to vindicate and ſupport them. "And "he ſaid to him that did the wrong, "wherefore ſmiteſt thou thy fellow? "And he ſaid, who made thee a prince and "a judge over us? Intendeſt thou to kill "me, as thou killedſt the Egyptian? *"

* Exodus ii. 13, 14.

From

From this Moſes diſcovered that the raſh action he had committed the day before, was publickly known and talked of, and might prove fatal to him, unleſs he inſtantly fled from the danger. The affair had reached the ears of Pharaoh, who, it would appear, wanted only a decent pretence to rid himſelf of a man, of whom all Egypt was jealous. He hurries away therefore out of the territories of the king of Egypt, into that part of Arabia which is called Petrea, from its mountainous or rocky aſpect; and by a ſingular concurrence of providential circumſtances, is ſtopped at a city of that country called Midian, and induced to remain there for many years.

There lived in this city a perſon of diſtinguiſhed rank and ſtation; but whether poſſeſſed of a ſacred or a civil character, the ambiguity of the term in the holy language permits us not to determine; and the Scripture leaves us totally uncertain whether he were a prieſt or a prince of Midian. But we are left in no doubt reſpecting his moral and intel-

lectual

LECT. II. lectual qualifications; and we ſhall have no reaſon to be diſpleaſed at finding the hiſtory of Moſes blended with that of ſo ſenſible and ſo good a man as Jethro, or Raguel, turns out to be. Whatever his dignity was, the ſacerdotal or royal, we find his daughters trained up in all the ſimplicity of thoſe early times; following the humble, harmleſs profeſſion of ſhepherdeſſes. Wiſe is that father, kind and juſt to his children, who, whatever his ſtation, poſſeſſions, or proſpects may be, brings up his ſons and his daughters to ſome virtuous and uſeful employment; for idleneſs is not more odious, diſhonourable, and contemptible, than it is inimical to happineſs, and irreconcileable to inward peace.

Moſes being arrived in the neighbourhood of Midian, weary and faint with a long journey, through a barren and unhoſpitable country, ſits down by a well of water to reſt and refreſh himſelf.--- And as a good man's footſteps are all ordered of the Lord, Providence ſends him thither, juſt at the moment, to ſuc-

cour

cour the daughters of Raguel from the violence of ſome of their neighbours. In that country, the precious fluid beſtowed upon us in ſuch boundleſs profuſion, being diſpenſed as it were in drops, became an object of deſire, and a ground of contention. The daughters of Jethro, ſenſible of their inferiority in point of ſtrength, endeavour to ſupply it by diligence and addreſs. They arrive at the well before their rival ſhepherds, and are preparing with all poſſible diſpatch to water their flocks, when behold they are overtaken by theſe brutals, who rudely drive them and their flocks away, and cruelly attempt to convert the fruits of their labour to their own uſe. Moſes poſſeſſing at once ſenſibility, courage, and force, takes part with the injured, and affords them effectual ſupport againſt their oppreſſors. An helpleſs, timid female, aſſaulted and inſulted, is an object of peculiar concern to a brave and generous Spirit; and for this reaſon, courage and intrepidity are qualities in men, held in great and juſt eſtimation by the Female Sex.

If

LECT. II.

If the heroic behaviour of Moſes merit approbation and reſpect, the modeſt reſerve of the virgin daughters of Raguel is equally amiable and praiſe-worthy. It does not appear that they ſolicited protection, but modeſtly received it, they look their thanks rather than utter them; and they deem it more ſuitable to their ſex and character to appear ungrateful to a generous ſtranger, than to offend him by forwardneſs and indelicacy. They haſten home to their father, who, ſurprized at the earlineſs of their return, enquires into the cauſe of it. Happy, I doubt not, to celebrate the praiſes of a man whoſe appearance and behaviour muſt have made a deep impreſſion upon them, they relate the adventure of the morning, and Raguel, ſtruck with the magnanimity, gallantry, and ſpirit of this ſtranger's conduct, eagerly enquires after him, ſends to find him out, invites him to his houſe and table, and endeavours to expreſs that gratitude which the young women could not, by every effort of kindneſs and hoſpitality. Minds ſo well

aſſorted

aſſorted as thoſe of Moſes and Jethro; and attracted to each other by mutual acts of beneficence, would eaſily aſſimilate, and unite in friendſhip. And the pleaſing recollection of protection given and received, the natural ſenſibility of a female mind to perſonal accompliſhments, but more eſpecially to generoſity and courage, on the one hand; and the irreſiſtible charm of feminine beauty and modeſty to a manly heart, on the other, would ſpeedily and inſenſibly between Moſes, and ſome one of the Prieſt of Midian's fair daughters, ripen into love. What follows therefore, is all in the courſe of honeſt Nature, which never ſwerves from her purpoſe, never fails to accompliſh her end. But it was Providence that furniſhed the field, and the inſtruments with which Nature ſhould work. That Providence which ſaved him forty years before, from periſhing in the Nile; that Providence which delivered him ſo lately from the hands of an incenſed king; the ſame Providence now, by a concourſe of circumſtances

LECT. II. equally beyond the reach of human power or foresight, fixes the bounds of his habitation, forms for him the most important connection of human life; and for another space of forty years, makes him forget the tumultuous pleasures of a court, in the more calm and rational delights of disinterested friendship and virtuous affection.

It was in this delicious retreat, that the man of God is supposed to have composed by divine Inspiration, and committed to writing, that most ancient, most elegant, and most instructive of all books; which contains the history of the world from the creation down to his own times: a period which no other writer has presumed to touch upon; holy ground, which none but the foot of God himself has dared to tread. Here also, and at this time, it is conjectured by interpreters, he wrote that beautifully poetical, moral and historical work, the Book of Job: which, for sublimity of thought, force of expression, justness of sentiment, strength

ſtrength of reaſoning, and variety of matter, holds a diſtinguiſhed place in the ſacred code. If from the ſchools of the Magi he drew ſuch ſtores of wiſdom and eloquence, high muſt our ideas riſe of thoſe noble ſeminaries of learning. But Moſes derived his wonderful accompliſhments, from a much higher ſource; even from the everlaſting Spring of all knowledge, even from him who made the Heavens and the Earth, and cauſed the light to ariſe; even from him who can make the deſert of Horeb a ſchool of WISDOM, and the ſimple wiſer than all his teachers. Here alſo he has the felicity of becoming a Father; and in Midian, God builds up one of the families of Iſrael.

LECT. II.

And now at laſt the time to favour that deſpiſed oppreſſed Nation was come. Egypt had changed its ſovereign, in the mean time, but the Seed of Jacob had felt no mitigation of their diſtreſs; every change they have undergone is only from evil to worſe. Moſes was now arrived at his eightieth year; but re-

LECT. II. mained in the full vigour of his bodily ſtrength and of his mental powers. Erring, reaſoning, cavilling men will be aſking, Why was the employment of Moſes in ſo important a ſervice ſo long delayed? Why bury ſuch talents, for ſuch a ſpace of time, in the inglorious life of an obſcure ſhepherd? Why call a man at ſo late a period of life, in the evening of his day, in the decline of his faculties, to a ſervice that required all the fervour, intrepidity, and exertion of youth? To all which we anſwer in the words of our Saviour, "It is not for you "to know the times or the ſeaſons, "which the Father hath put in his own "power." Man is perpetually in a hurry, and often haſtens on, without making progreſs; but "he that believeth ſhall not make haſte." God, the father of believers advances to his end, not in a vehement and hurried ſtep, but in a ſolemn, ſteady, majeſtic pace; his progreſs, which we may in our folly account ſlow, in the iſſue proves to have been the moſt expeditious, and the

the courſe which human ignorance may condemn as irregular and circuitous, in the end will be found the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt.

The courſe of the hiſtory then has brought us to that important, eventful hour when the ſhepherd of Midian, trained up in retirement, and contemplation, and converſe with God, was to ſhake off his diſguiſe, and ſtand confeſſed, the miniſter of the moſt high God, the king in Jeſhurun, the ſcourge of Egypt, the deliverer of Iſrael. As the commiſſion given him to execute, and the ſtation aſſigned him, were altogether ſingular and uncommon, we are not to be ſurprized, if the ſeal and ſignature affixed to that commiſſion, and the powers beſtowed for the faithful and effectual execution of it, were likewiſe out of the uſual courſe of things, and beſpoke the power and authority of him who granted it. But as this merits a principal place in the courſe of theſe exerciſes, we ſhall not compreſs it into the concluſion of a Lecture; hoping through the help of

LECT. II. God, to resume and continue the subject next Lord's day.

Such was Moses the Jewish legislator and hero, during the two first great periods of his life. But a greater than Moses is here, even he, "the latchet of whose shoes Moses is unworthy to stoop down and unloose." To whom Moses and Elias on the Mount of transfiguration brought all their glory and honour, and laid them at his feet!

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and Jesus disdained not to be called the Son of the carpenter. Supreme, all divine, though HE was, yet he declined not the society of the poorest, meanest, most afflicted of mankind!

Was the humiliation of Moses chearful and voluntary, not forcibly obtruded upon him, but sought out and submitted to? Christ, though "in the form of "God, and thought it not robbery to be "equal

" equal with God, yet made himſelf of " no reputation, and took upon him the " form of a ſervant?" Was ſympathy a leading feature in the character of Moſes? Jeſus " hath not deſpiſed, nor " abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; " neither hath he hid his face from him, " but when he cried unto him, he " heard.*" " In all our affliction, he " was afflicted, and the angel of his pre- " ſence ſaved them; in his love and in " his pity he redeemed them, and he bare " them, and carried them all the days of " old.†" Did Moſes, through the vale of obſcurity, arrive at the ſummit of glory? Of Chriſt it is ſaid, as following up the ſcene of his humiliation, " Wherefore God " alſo hath highly exalted him, and given " him a name which is above every " name: that, at the name of JESUS, " every knee ſhould bow, of things in " heaven, and things in earth, and things " under the earth: and that every tongue " ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is

* Pſalm xxii. 24. † Iſaiah lxiii. 9.

LECT. II. "Lord, to the glory of God the Father." But the time would fail to point out every mark of resemblance. Christ derives no glory from similitude to Moses; but all the glory of Moses flows from his typifying Christ, the Lord, in whom "all the promises are yea and amen;" and who is "the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth."

LEC-

LECTURE III.

EXODUS iii. 13, 14.

AND MOSES SAID UNTO GOD, BEHOLD WHEN I COME UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND SHALL SAY UNTO THEM, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU: AND THEY SHALL SAY TO ME WHAT IS HIS NAME? WHAT SHALL I SAY UNTO THEM? AND GOD SAID UNTO MOSES, I AM THAT I AM: AND HE SAID, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, I AM HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU.

THE objects presented to us in the commerce of the world, have a relative greatness; but those with which we converse in solitude and retirement, possess a real grandeur and magnificence. A vast city, a numerous and well-disciplined army,

LECT. III. a proud navy, a ſplendid court, and the like, dazzle the eyes of a ſtranger, and produce a tranſient wonder and delight. But a little acquaintance diſſolves the charm, the dimenſions of created greatneſs ſpeedily contract themſelves, the glory departs, and what once filled us with aſtoniſhment, is regarded with calm indifference, perhaps with diſguſt. The Eye, almoſt with a ſingle glance, reaches the end of human perfection, and inſtantly turns from what it has ſeen, in ſearch of ſomething yet undiſcovered, ſtriving to find in novelty and variety, a compenſation for the poverty, littleneſs, nothingneſs of the creature. But when we withdraw from the haunts of men, and either retire within ourſelves, or ſend our thoughts abroad to contemplate God and his works; we meet a height and a depth, which the line of finite underſtanding cannot fathom; we expatiate in a region which ſtill diſcloſes new ſcenes of wonder; we feel ourſelves at once invited and checked, attracted and repelled; we behold much that we can comprehend

prehend and explain; but much more that passeth knowledge; we find ourselves, like Moses, at the bush, "upon "holy Ground," and the same wonderful sight is exhibited to our view — "JEHOVAH!" IN A FLAME OF FIRE! — whose light irradiates and encourages our approach; but whose fervent heat arrests our speed, and remands us to our proper distance. LECT. III.

That great man had now passed the second great period of his life, in the humble station of a shepherd, and the shepherd of another man's flock. He had quitted the enchanted regions of high life, not only without regret, but with joy; not impelled by spleen, not soured by disappointment; but filled with a noble disdain for empty honours, with generous sympathy towards his afflicted brethren, animated by exalted piety, which settled on an invisible God, and inspired with a soul which looked at pomp with contempt, and on obscurity with acquiescence and desire. It was in this calm

retreat

LECT. III. retreat that he cultivated thoſe qualities, which proved more favourable to the deſigns of Providence, than all the learning he had acquired in Egypt.

At the age of eighty, the race of glory is at an end with moſt men: nay, the drama of life concludes with the generality, long before that period arrives. But the fame, activity, and uſefulneſs of Moſes, commenced not till then; for as it is never too early, ſo it is never too late to ſerve God, and to do good to men; and true Wiſdom conſiſts in waiting for and following the call of heaven, not in anticipating and out-running it. Abraham was turned out a wanderer and an exile at ſeventy-five. And Moſes at fourſcore was ſent upon an enterprize, which it required much courage to undertake, much vigour to conduct and ſupport, and a great length of time to execute. But before the divine mandate, every mountain of difficulty ſinks, every valley is exalted, the crooked becomes ſtraight, and the rough places plain. Abraham at the head of

a handful of ſervants, ſubdues five victorious kings, with their armies: Sarah, at ninety, bears a ſon; and Moſes at eighty with a ſimple rod in his hand, advances to ſuccour Iſrael and cruſh the power of Egypt.

LECT. III.

The ſolemnity with which the commiſſion was given, ſuited the dignity and importance of the undertaking. The whole was of God, and *he* does every thing in a manner worthy of himſelf. While Moſes was employed in the innocent cares and labours of his lowly ſtation; and faithful attention to the duties of our ſeveral ſtations is the beſt preparation for the viſits of the Almighty; a very unuſual and unaccountable appearance preſented itſelf to his eyes. A buſh wholly involved in flames, yet continuing unchanged, undiminiſhed, unconſumed by the fire. Whether nature preſerves her ſteady tenour, or ſuffers an alteration or ſuſpenſion of the laws by which ſhe is uſually governed, the finger of God is equally viſible in both; for what

LECT. III. what power, ſave that which is divine, could have eſtabliſhed, and can maintain the order and harmony of the univerſe? And what power ſhort of omnipotence, can break in upon that order, make the Sun to ſtand ſtill, or its ſhadow return back to the Meridian after it had declined; can leave to fire its illuminating, but withdraw its devouring quality; and render artificial fire ſuch as that of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, harmleſs to the three children of the captivity, but fatal to the miniſters of the king of Babylon? Were our hearts right with God, miraculous interpoſitions would be unneceſſary; every creature, every event ſhould promote our acquaintance with our Maker. And ſuch is the condeſcenſion of the Moſt High, that he vouchſafes to cure our ignorance, inattention, or unbelief, by making the mighty ſacrifice of that ſtated courſe of things which his wiſdom ſettled at firſt, and which his power continues to ſupport. Rather than man ſhall remain unchanged, unredeemed, the great ſyſtem of nature ſhall undergo alteration;

teration; fire ſhall ceaſe to burn, the Nile run blood inſtead of water, the ſun forget to ſhine for three days together; the eternal uncreated Word become fleſh, and the fountain of life to all, expire in death.

It required not the ſagacity of a Moſes to diſcover, that there was ſomething extraordinary here; but miſtaking it at firſt, for merely an unuſual, natural appearance, whoſe cauſe, by a cloſer inveſtigation, he might be able to diſcover, he is preparing by nearer obſervation to ſatisfy his curioſity: when lo! to his ſtill greater aſtoniſhment, the buſh becomes vocal as well as brilliant, and he hears his own name diſtinctly and repeatedly called, out of the midſt of the flame. Curioſity and wonder are now checked by a more powerful principle than either. Terrour thrills in every vein, and arreſts his trembling ſteps. How dreadful muſt the viſitations of God's anger be to his enemies, if to his beſt beloved children, the intimations of his goodneſs, clothed in any thing like

LECT. III. like ſenſible glory, be ſo awful and overwhelming? When I meet thee, O my God, ſtripped of this veil of fleſh, may I find thee a pure, a genial and lambent flame of loving-kindneſs, not a conſuming fire of wrath and vengeance!

Moſes inſtantly comprehends that the Lord was there; or if he could for a moment have doubted who it was that talked with him, in a moment his doubt muſt have been removed by the continuation of the voice of him that ſpake. We find here, as in many other places of the Old Teſtament, the ſame perſon who is ſtiled in the courſe of the narration the "Angel of the Lord," ſtiling himſelf JEHOVAH and GOD; exerciſing divine prerogatives, manifeſting divine perfections; and claiming the homage which is due to Deity alone. The perſon therefore thus deſcribed can be none other than the uncreated "Angel of the Covenant," who, "at ſundry times, and in divers "manners," in maturing the work of Redemption, aſſumed a ſenſible appearance

ance; and at length, in the fulneſs of time, united his divine nature to ours, and dwelt among men, and made them "to behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

LECT. III.

Every thing here is ſingular, and every thing inſtructive. The firſt interview between God and Moſes inſpires terrour; but the ſpirit of bondage gradually dies away, and refines into the ſpirit of adoption and love. Acquaintance begets confidence, perfect love caſteth out fear; and the man who ſpake to God with trembling, in Horeb, by and by becomes ſtrengthened to endure his preſence forty days together in Sinai. "Enduring, as "ſeeing Him who is inviſible," he "deſpiſed the wrath of an earthly king." When he comes to the knowledge of that ſame God, by the ſeeing of the eye and the hearing of the ear, he "exceedingly fears and quakes, abhors himſelf, and lies low in duſt and aſhes." But following on to know the Lord, he comes

LECT. III. at length to converſe with him, as a man with his friend. "Acquaint thyſelf then "with him, and be at peace, thereby "good ſhall come unto thee." Miſerable beyond expreſſion, beyond thought, are they, whoſe acquaintance with God has to begin at death; who having lived without a gracious, merciful, long-ſuffering God in the world, find they muſt, by a dreadful neceſſity, fall into the hands of a neglected, forgotten, righteous, incenſed God, when they leave it.

The appearance of Jehovah in the buſh, was not only preternatural, but emblematical; not only ſanctioned the commiſſion given to Moſes by the ſeal of Deity, but exhibited a lively repreſentation of the ſtate of his church and people in Egypt; oppreſſed, but not cruſhed, brought low, but not deſerted of heaven, in the midſt of flames, but not conſumed. And it is a ſtriking emblem of the Church of God in the world, to the end of time; "troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſ-"ed, perplexed, but not in deſpair, per-"ſecuted

"ſecuted but not forſaken, caſt down, "but not deſtroyed."

The ſame voice which ſolicited intercourſe with Moſes, which tendered friendſhip, which encouraged hope, ſets a fence about the divine majeſty; reminds him of his diſtance, of his impurity; forbids raſhneſs, preſumption, familiarity. In veneration of the ſpot which God had honoured with his ſpecial preſence, he is commanded to "put off his ſhoes from off his feet:" A mandate, which by an image natural and obvious, enjoins the drawing near to God in holy places, and in ſacred ſervices, with ſerioufneſs, attention, and reverence; diveſted of that impurity which men neceſſarily contract by coming into frequent contact with the world. And ſurely, it is owing to the want of a due ſenſe of the majeſty of God upon our ſpirits, that his houſe is profaned, and his ſervice marred by levity, careleſſneſs, and inattention. Did we ſeriouſly conſider, that the place where we ſtand is "holy ground," that the word which we

LECT. III. ſpeak and hear is "not the word of men, but of the living God," Could one ſhort hour's attendance betray us into ſlumber? Could the little jealouſies and ſtrife of a baſe world intrude into a worſhiping heart? Could the eye find leiſure to wander upon the dreſs and appearance of another? Durſt a ſcornful leer, or ſimpering countenance communicate from one vain, ſilly, irreverent ſpirit to another the private ſneer and cenſure? Would there be a contention for place and pre-eminence? Now, ſurely, God is as really though leſs ſenſibly in this place, as he was in the buſh at Horeb: And though we ſee him not, his eyes are continually upon us, and he will bring every thing into judgment. O Lord, open thou our eyes, that we may behold thee, and every other object ſhall inſtantly diſappear.

The words which follow, if any thing can increaſe their intrinſic force and importance, derive a peculiar energy and value to the Chriſtian world, as the paſſage quoted by our bleſſed Lord, from

an

an authority which they could not deny, to confute the Sadducees, on the ſubject of the Immortality of the ſoul, and the Reſurrection of the body. "I "AM the GOD of Abraham, and the God "of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob." We ſpeak of the dead, under the idea that they *were*; but God repreſents them as ſtill exiſting, and his relation to them as unbroken, his care of them uninterrupted. The effect which this declaration had upon Moſes, is ſuch as might have been expected; no more "turning aſide to ſee this great ſight;" he hides his face, "afraid to look upon God." It is ignorance of God, not intimate communion, which encourages forwardneſs and freedom. Angels who know him beſt, and love him moſt, are moſt ſenſible of their diſtance, and are repreſented as "covering their faces with their wings" when they approach their dread Creator.

In the declaration which immediately follows, under a ſanction ſo ſolemn and affecting, Which ſhall we moſt admire,

LECT. III. the mercy and goodneſs of God, or his perfect wiſdom and foreknowledge?—Four hundred years have elapſed ſince this wretched ſtate of his poſterity had been foretold and revealed to Abraham. For wiſe and gracious purpoſes it was appointed, and brought to paſs. But the days of darkneſs are now almoſt ended, and the Sun returns. Like rain to a dry and thirſty land, the promiſes of favour and ſalvation fall upon a perſecuted, oppreſſed people; and "that Moſes whom they refuſed ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" is after an interval of forty years ſent back to Egypt on the kind and merciful errand of ſalvation to an oppreſſed and perſecuted people.

Moſes however, it would appear, has not forgotten the ſurly reception, which his well-meant interpoſition had met with from his brethren, ſo long before; and preſumes to urge it as a reaſon, why a perſon of more influence and authority, ſhould be intruſted with the commiſſion.

He

He conſidered not, that formerly he acted from the impulſe of his own mind. With indeed an upright and benevolent intention, but with a zeal rather too bold and impetuous; whereas now, he was following the direction of Providence, and therefore certain of ſucceſs. As there is a ſinful pride which urges men to ſeek ſtations and employments, to which they have neither pretenſion, title, nor qualification; ſo there is a ſinful humility, which ſhrinks from the call of God, which, in the guiſe of ſelf-denial, contains the ſpirit of rebellion and diſobedience; and which, under the affectation of undervaluing and debaſing our own perſons and qualities, indirectly charges God with fooliſhneſs, in pitching upon an inſtrument ſo inapt and improper. Such humility is of the very eſſence of pride, and ſuch, with regret we obſerve it, was the ſpirit by which Moſes was on this occaſion actuated. The heavenly viſion removes the objection at once, by aſſuring him of the divine preſence, bleſſing, and ſupport; and refers him for the proof of it, to a train of events cloſely ſuc-

LECT. III. ceeding each other; and all iſſuing in the people's aſſembling together in that very ſpot to worſhip, after their enfranchiſement, as a chain of evidence, that the authority under which he acted was divine.

Still doubting and irreſolute, Moſes ventures to urge another difficulty, which he expreſſes in theſe terms, "And Moſes "ſaid unto God, Behold, when I come "unto the children of Iſrael, and ſhall "ſay unto them, The God of your Fa-"thers hath ſent me unto you: and they "ſhall ſay to me, What is his name? "What ſhall I ſay unto them?" God had already declared his name, and purpoſe, and given his charge, and yet Moſes dares to make enquiry. How rare a thing it is, to ſee a ſoul wholly reſolved into the will of God! How ſeldom do we find a faith entirely diſpoſed to be, to do, and to endure, neither more nor leſs, than what God is pleaſed to appoint! But the incredulity and preſumption of Moſes ſhall not render the deſign of God of

of none effect. When men are contradicted or oppoſed, they fly out, and ſtorm, and threaten. But the great God bears with our frowardneſs and folly, gives way to our ſcruples, and, yielding to our obſtinacy, overcomes evil with good. And we are almoſt tempted to rejoice that Moſes ſtood out ſo long, as it gave occaſion to the moſt ſolemn and ſatisfying proclamation of the name and nature of God, from his own mouth, and the moſt amiable and engaging picture of tender mercy and long-ſuffering, that ever was exhibited. "And God ſaid unto "Moſes, I AM THAT I AM: And he "ſaid, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the "children of Iſrael, I AM hath ſent "me unto you."

What flimſy things are commiſſions iſſued under the hand-writing and ſeals of kings compared to this! A ſhred of parchment, a morſel of wax, an unmeaning ſcrawl; a ſlender, contracted ſhort-lived power, delegated from one worm to another. Where is now the ſignet of Ahaſuerus,

LECT. III.

ſuerus, which pretended to communicate irreverſible authority to the writing whereto it was affixed? Where are the warrants under which the ſtateſmen and heroes of other times deliberated, fought, and conquered? With the princes who granted them, they are gone to oblivion. They *were* what they *were*. They fulfilled their day, and then they fell aſleep, and now are ſeen no more! What avail the long liſt of empty titles which potentates and princes, in the pride of their hearts, affix to their periſhing names? All, all ſhrink and fade, before that tremendous power, whoſe authority no change of circumſtances can affect, whoſe exiſtence no ſucceſſion of ages can impair; who yeſterday, to day, and for ever, ſtill proclaims of himſelf, "I AM."

Nothing can equal the ſimplicity, ſublimity, and force of theſe remarkable words. Independency of exiſtence, eternity of duration, immutability of purpoſe, faithfulneſs and truth in keeping covenant and ſhewing mercy, all conveyed in one little

little ſentence, "I AM THAT I AM." Longinus the celebrated critic, has with equal judgement and taſte, quoted a well-known paſſage from the writings of Moſes, as an inſtance of the true ſublime, viz. The firſt words pronounced by the Creator in the formation of the world, "And GOD ſaid, Let there be "Light, and there was Light." Why did not Longinus dip deeper into the works of this great hiſtorian, enrich and embelliſh his own beautiful little book, and farther approve his exquiſite taſte, by inſerting other paſſages from the page of Inſpiration, particularly the paſſage under review? A paſſage which Jews, Heathens, and Chriſtians, as one man have conſented to admire.

Under the ſanction of this moſt awful Name, God repeats his commiſſion, repeats his charge, repeats his promiſe of ſupport, aſſiſtance, and ſucceſs: ſucceſs with the elders of Iſrael; ſucceſs with the people; ſucceſs againſt Pharaoh.—And yet, Moſes "ſtaggers at this promiſe," although

LECT. III. although it be the promiſe of the Eternal, "thro' unbelief!"—What have we moſt to wonder at here, The ſtrange incredulity and perverſeneſs of the *Prophet*, or the ſingular fidelity and exactneſs of the *Hiſtorian*, in recording his own errours? GOD had ſaid, "They *ſhall* hearken to thy "voice:" Yet Moſes preſumes, in the face of this expreſs declaration, to gainſay, and draw back—"And Moſes anſwered, and "ſaid, But behold, they will not believe "me; nor hearken unto my voice: for they "will ſay, The LORD hath not appear-"ed unto thee."—Surely the LORD is "GOD, and not man, and therefore the "children of men are not conſumed."—A man of common ſpirit would here have broken off the conference, and left the timid, froward ſhepherd to his own folly, and permitted him to remain deſtitute of the honour which he obſtinately perſevered to decline. But it pleaſed God to ſhew us patience, at leaſt in one inſtance, too powerful for unbelief: "for his ways are not like our

"our ways, nor his thoughts, as our "thoughts." LECT. III.

He who would cure infidelity in others, muſt firſt be purged of the old leaven himſelf. To effect this in the heart of his ſervant Moſes, God vouchſafes to perform miracle upon miracle. He turns the rod which was in the hand of Moſes, into a ſerpent; and from a ſerpent to a rod again: in order to intimate to him, and to the world, that the moſt harmleſs things become noxious, and the moſt pernicious things innocent, at his command. His hand is in a moment covered over with leproſy, and in a moment reſtored — to ſhew the power of God's holy law, to fix guilt upon the ſinner, and of his grace, to remove it from the penitent. He is enjoined and authorized to perform theſe ſigns before all Iſrael, in order to produce that conviction in them, which they had firſt wrought upon his own mind. Should theſe happen to fail, he is permitted to go a ſtep farther. Nature ſhall ſubmit

to

LECT. III. to a thorough alteration, rather than the ſeed of faithful Abraham continue ſlaves in Egypt, or periſh through unbelief!—Water ſhall become blood before their eyes, rather than the blood of their innocent children be poured out any more, like water upon the ground.

And now ſurely Moſes is gained, and the work of God ſhall no longer ſtand ſtill. Alas! the ſullen ſpirit is not yet ſubdued. Though forced to retreat, he continues to fight as he retires. The ſlowneſs of Iſrael to believe, was formerly the plea; now his own want of talents is urged, in excuſe of his ſtrange backwardneſs and diſobedience. That objection too, is immediately removed, by a promiſe of wiſdom and eloquence ſuited to the occaſion. The language of the oracle, and the long-ſuffering of the ſpeaker, are miraculous and ſupernatural, as all the other circumſtances of the caſe. "And the Lord ſaid unto him; Who "hath made man's mouth? or who mak-

,, eth

" eth the dumb, or deaf, or the ſeeing, " or the blind? have not I the Lord?— " Now therefore go, and I will be with " thy mouth, and teach thee what " thou ſhalt ſay*."

" Wonder, O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed, O earth!" This inſtead of producing humble ſubmiſſion and inſtantaneous compliance, without a reaſon, without a plea, meets with a direct refuſal; " O " my Lord, ſend I pray thee, by the " hand of him whom thou wilt ſend." And now what heart does not tremble for fear, that the fire which had ſpared the buſh, ſhould wax hot to puniſh the madneſs of the prophet? What patience can endure ſuch a repetition of inſult? The anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Moſes; and—and what? O it became a flame of Love to melt his heart, and purify it of its droſs. " The anger of " the Lord was kindled againſt Moſes, " and he ſaid, is not Aaron the Levite,

* Exodus iv. 11, 12. † Exodus iii. 13.

" thy

LECT. III.

"thy brother? I know that he can "ſpeak well. And alſo behold, he com- "eth forth to meet thee; and when he "ſeeth thee, he will be glad in his "heart." Providence had all this while been preparing a concluding, a convincing proof of power, wiſdom, and goodneſs inconceivable. Lo, Aaron is already far advanced on his way from Egypt, in queſt of his brother.

That after ſo long an interval, through a field of ſo many chances, he ſhould at that very inſtant of time arrive—How is it to be accounted for? On no other principle but this, the Lord is, "wonderful in "counſel, and excellent in working." "He ſeeth the end from the beginning." He ſaith, "my counſel ſhall ſtand, "and I will fulfill all my pleaſure." "He doth according to his will in the "armies of heaven, and among the in- "habitants of the earth. Let every knee bow, let every tongue confeſs, let every heart adore and love.

Moſes

Moſes is at length ſubdued; and we ſtand, with aſtoniſhment and joy, to contemplate the triumph of mercy over judgement. God grant we may improve the example of his divine patience, as a pattern. God, in mercy, preſerve us from preſuming upon it, as an encouragement to offend. And may God bleſs what has been ſpoken. Amen.

LECT. III.

LECTURE IV.

EXODUS vi. 9.

AND MOSES SPAKE SO UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; BUT THEY HEARKENED NOT UNTO MOSES, FOR ANGUISH OF SPIRIT, AND FOR CRUEL BONDAGE.

EVERY Nation has, in its hiſtory, events of peculiar importance, which lateſt poſterity is diſpoſed fondly to commemorate. But the memory of remarkable deliverances, is neceſſarily blended with the recollection of heavy diſtreſs, or imminent danger; and whether as men, or as citizens, we greatly rejoice, by that very joy we expreſſly declare that we, or our Fathers, once had cauſe to mourn. Perpetual ſunſhine ſuits not the ſtate of the natural world; perpetual ſucceſs is by no

LECT. IV. means favourable either to human happineſs, or virtue. Hunger is neceſſary to give a reliſh to food; the gloom of winter is the happieſt recommendation of the chearfulneſs and bloom of ſpring. We diſcover the value of health by diſeaſe, and the bleſſings of peace, would be but half underſtood, were it not for the antecedent anxieties and calamities of war. Men therefore act fooliſhly as well as impiouſly, when they charge the wiſe, righteous and merciful Governour of the World with careleſſneſs or unkindneſs, becauſe he admits into the ſyſtem of his works, or into his moral government of the Univerſe, what ignorance calls diſorder, preſumption cries down as unneceſſary, and pride condemns as unjuſt.

What ſo irregular, at firſt ſight, and, always ſo, to the vulgar eye, as the face of the ſtarry heavens? A handful of little ſparks, ſcattered at random in the air!—But to the attentive, enquiring, enlightened ſpirit, a vaſt combination of worlds, each in its place, every one moving in its proper orbit; the whole poſſeſſing every

every quality that can at once excite aſtoniſhment and inſpire delight; greatneſs, order, beauty, harmony, utility! Excellencies obvious to the ſlighteſt obſervation, of the moſt ſhallow underſtanding: Excellencies undiſcoverable by the cloſeſt inveſtigation of the moſt penetrating genius. Now, clowniſh thoughtleſſineſs and ſtupidity is not more incompetent to judge of the order and frame of Nature, than paſſion and prejudice, by which all men are governed, are to determine upon the wiſdom and goodneſs of the ways of Providence. Every man would have every thing bend, to his humour, conveniency, indolence or intereſt. This would produce, were it permitted, endleſs confuſion and miſery; did not God over-rule and employ the activity and the indolence, the ſenſeleſs caprices and the jarring intereſts of men, to execute his purpoſes, and without their intention, nay in ſpite of their efforts, make them productive of regularity, ſtability and happineſs.

In contemplating therefore agents and

LECT. IV.

events; those which we have heard and read of, or those which we see and are concerned in, the only road to composure and improvement, is, to consider the whole, as the work of a supreme, intelligent, almighty, invisible Agent, who is carrying on a plan which we comprehend not, or understand only in part; and who, from all that we can know of him, from nature, from experience, and from revelation, takes delight in shewing mercy and doing good; but who, in the exercise of even these gracious prerogatives, governs not himself by the partial lights, hasty conceptions, and contracted views of ignorant, erring men, but by his own all-comprehending intelligence, all-pervading benignity, all-subduing Love.

If in that portion of ancient history which is now to come under our consideration, we observe Providence treating one nation with uncommon severity, and another with indulgence altogether as singular, We are to regard the parties not as they are in themselves, or in relation

lation to each other, but in their relation to God, and to mankind in general; as an important link in the great chain of Providence; as ſerving and inſtructing the human race to the end of the world. The perverſeneſs and unbelief of Moſes met with pity and forgiveneſs, and were cured by a ſeries of miracles. The impiety and unbelief of Pharaoh met with reſentment and puniſhment; and were even confirmed and ſtrengthened by a moſt awful ſeries of miracles; not for the ſake of Moſes and Pharaoh merely, but to illuſtrate, in the eyes of the whole world, the goodneſs and ſeverity of God; the wiſdom and ſafety of repentance and ſubmiſſion on the one hand, the madneſs and danger of impenitence on the other. Egypt was plagued, and Iſrael ſaved, that violence and cruelty might be awakened to ſee the naked ſword of Juſtice, ſuſpended by a ſingle hair over its guilty throat; and that miſery and depreſſion might find a refuge from deſpair.

LECT. IV.

We have ſeen with what ſolemnity

LECT. IV.

the commiſſion to Moſes for the deliverance of Iſrael was granted, and the awful Seal which was appended to it: even the great and fearful name, JEHOVAH, "I AM THAT I AM." We have ſeen the backwardneſs, irreſolution, and timidity of the prophet, in undertaking an employment ſo flattering to ambition, ſo deſirable to the ſpirit of patriotiſm, ſo elevating to a mind awake to the influence of religion. We have ſeen the goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God, in deigning by repeated exertions of power and mercy to remove the ſcruples, and level the objections of incredulity and fear. And we have ſeen Aaron the brother of Moſes, providentially conducted to the ſpot, and at the moment, to eſtabliſh a belief, in the divine power and veracity, to confirm the wavering trembling ſoul: and conſtituted to a ſhare of the diligence, difficulty, danger and glory of the illuſtrious enterprize.

Behold then, two plain old men, one of eighty, and the other of eighty-three years

old

old, ſetting out from the deſarts of Arabia, on an undertaking, to human reaſon, the moſt wild and romantic that ever was attempted: to perſuade, or to conſtrain, one of the moſt powerful princes of the world, to enfranchiſe, nay to diſmiſs, the tenth part of his moſt valuable and uſeful ſubjects! And how are they provided for this vaſt undertaking? The pleas of reaſon, the powers of eloquence, the calls of humanity, the claims of juſtice, it is well known, make but a feeble impreſſion on the hearts of kings, when their pride, ambition, or intereſt oppoſe. For ſuch a multitude to ſlip away by ſtealth, is impoſſible; and to think of forcing an eſcape from a power ſo greatly ſuperior is raſhneſs and ruin. When *men* engage in hazardous and difficult expeditions, they levy armies, accumulate treaſure, provide magazines, ſtrengthen themſelves with alliances. But when *God* addreſſes himſelf to action, we behold no apparatus, no effort. Is an univerſe to ſtart out of nothing? "God *ſpeaks*, and it is "done." Is a ſun to ariſe, and light to ſhine?

LECT. IV.

ſhine? God ſays, "Let there be light." Is a great nation to be ſubdued, and a ſmall one aſſerted into liberty? Our eyes are directed, not to a general at the head of a mighty hoſt, but to a ſhepherd with a rod in his hand.

But the commands of Heaven break not in upon the ſacred duties, and the virtuous charities of private life. The charge given to Moſes was preſſing, the object moſt important, and the authority under which it was iſſued, ſupreme; but yet he is permitted, to return for a little while, to attend the calls of nature, of gratitude; the gentle claims of filial piety, of conjugal and paternal affection. He went back to his father-in-law, to acknowledge his protection, hoſpitality and kindneſs to him when a ſtranger: to inform him of the extraordinary commiſſion he had juſt received, and the neceſſity he was thereby laid under of immediately entering upon the execution of it; to obtain his conſent for this purpoſe, and to aſk his paternal benediction. Religion is in a happy ſtate

in

in the ſoul of that man, who has learned to unite and reconcile the views and purſuits of the citizen, with thoſe of the private man; who pleads not the performance of one duty, as an excuſe for the omiſſion of another; whoſe life exhibits every moral and divine principle in action, every one in his ſeaſon, every one in his place. How ſimple and affectionate the diſmiſſion which honeſt Raguel gave to Moſes, compared to that of the ſelfiſh, rapacious Laban to Jacob—"Go in peace!" An adieu expreſſive at once of ſubmiſſion to the will of Providence, and of affection to his ſon-in-law, mixed with regret at the thought of parting with him.

It pleaſed God again to confirm the confidence of Moſes, by aſſuring him that all who had ever harboured a deſign againſt his life, were now dead; and that nothing therefore remained but to addreſs himſelf boldly to his great work. Accompanied with his wife and two ſons, he leaves

LECT. IV. leaves the land of Midian, and proceeds towards Egypt.

On this journey a very extraordinary incident befel him: but the conciſeneſs of the ſacred hiſtory leaves it involved in much darkneſs and difficulty. God had bleſſed him with two ſons in Midian, whom, in compliance with the commandment of God, and as a ſon of Abraham, he ought to have circumciſed on the eighth day from their birth. This however, either for want of the proper miniſter, from inattention, or out of improper reſpect to the feelings or prejudices of Zipporah his wife, or ſome other reaſon that appears not, had been hitherto wholly neglected; and thereby his children, the younger at leaſt, through his neglect, ſeems to have incurred the dreadful penalty denounced by the terms of the covenant, againſt uncircumciſed perſons, that of being "cut off from his people." This puniſhment God ſeems diſpoſed to exact at the hand of Moſes himſelf, who was indeed the guilty perſon, by attacking him either

either with a threatening bodily diſtemper, by remorſe of conſcience for his criminal neglect, by the appearance of an avenging angel, or ſome other ſenſible token of diſpleaſure. But the difficulty is, Why the conduct of Moſes in this reſpect was never called in queſtion before? Why he was not purged of this guilt before he was honoured at all with the divine commiſſion? Why the precept was inforced upon a journey, and at an inn, where the operation could be performed leſs commodiouſly, and was accompanied with ſome degree of danger? What Zipporah meant when ſhe reproached Moſes as "a bloody huſband?"—The paſſage is evidently inveloped in much obſcurity; and probably with deſign. Inſtead of curiouſly enquiring into its hidden meaning, an attempt vain and unprofitable, we may, by the bleſſing of God, learn from it, more than one practical leſſon, neither obſcure, nor unimportant; and this, no doubt, the Spirit of God principally intended. The firſt is, that no circumſtances of prudence or conveniency can ever be with

pro-

LECT. IV. propriety urged as a dispensation with a clearly commanded duty. Secondly, that as there may be a sinful undervaluing of the feelings, prejudices, and inclinations of our near and dear relations, so there may be a sinful tenderness for, and compliance with them, to the neglect of God's known and declared will, and with the risque of falling under his just censure. Thirdly, that he who is to be the interpreter of the law to others, ought in all points to be blameless, and conformed to the law himself. To which we may add yet a fourth, not of less importance than any of these. Namely, that when God has procured the proper respect to his revealed will, the controversy between him and the offender is at an end, the object of his government being not so much to avenge, as to amend.

This scene of domestic danger and distress is speedily followed by one of a pleasanter kind, namely, the interview between the two brothers in the wilderness. An interview, attended with many cir-

circumſtances to render it mutually interesting and ſatisfactory. It muſt have been highly gratifying to Moſes, after living forty years among ſtrangers, to meet his own brother; to receive particular information concerning his family and nation, to communicate to a friendly ear the knowledge of his own ſituation during ſo long an interval. What muſt it have been on the other hand to Aaron to learn from the mouth of his brother, the great deſigns of Providence reſpecting themſelves and their people? With what overflowings of heart would they mingle their ſighs and tears! With what ardour would their united prayers, and vows, and praiſes aſcend to heaven? How confirmed the faith, how forward the zeal of each, ſtrengthened and ſtimulated by that of the other! They go on their way rejoicing; they are following God, and they proſper,

Moſes had found the evidence of his divine miſſion completed, in the opportune arrival of his brother Aaron, according to the declaration of the oracle at the buſh; and

LECT. IV. and he ſoon finds a reſolution of his firſt doubt, in the very entrance upon the diſcharge of his office. Compare the firſt, and the two laſt verſes of this 4th chapter, and ſee what a contraſt they form to one another. "And Moſes anſwered, and "ſaid, But, behold, they will not be-"lieve me, nor hearken unto my voice: "for they will ſay, The Lord hath not "appeared unto thee."—"And Aaron "ſpoke all the words which the LORD "had ſpoken unto Moſes, and did the "ſigns in the ſight of the people. And "the people believed: And when they "heard that the Lord had viſited the "children of Iſrael, aud that he had "looked upon their affliction, then they "bowed their heads, and worſhipped."—The tremendous Name JEHOVAH affixed as a ſignet to the record, and vouching its authority by ſign upon ſign, quickly produces belief; and inſpires gratitude and joy, corrected by reverence and godly fear. So far then the way is cleared, and Moſes is no longer rejected, as an upſtart and intruder, as preſuming

to

to take upon himſelf the office of prince and judge over his brethren. LECT. IV.

But this is the ſmalleſt difficulty in the way. Who does not eagerly cleave to the proſpect of returning liberty? Men believe things incredible, attempt things impoſſible, endure things intolerable, when freedom, precious freedom is the object. No wonder then, that oppreſſed, groaning Iſrael greedily liſtened to the voice of this heavenly charmer. But the grand difficulties are yet behind. Their fetters will not fall off by a wiſh. Their fond deſires dictate not the edicts of Pharaoh. The ſmarting of the ſtrokes of their taſk-maſters whips, are not to be conjured away by a ſound. The queſtion is not, Will Iſrael believe; but, will the king of Egypt comply? Every ſtep Moſes advances, he finds a new and growing proof of the truth and faithfulneſs of God. For the ſame mouth, which declared concerning the children of Iſrael, "they ſhall hearken "unto thy voice" declared concerning Pharaoh, "I am ſure that the king of Egypt

LECT IV. "will not let you go, no not by a mighty "hand." The faith and obedience of the one, therefore; and the insolence and pride of the other, equally and conjunctly demonstrated to Moses that the Lord had spoken unto him.

Armed therefore, with a command from on high, confident of the goodness of their cause, and exalted above the fear of man, Moses and his brother advance boldly into the presence of the king, and make their requisition, in these lofty and majestic words, "Thus saith the Lord God of "Israel, Let my people go, that they "may hold a feast unto me in the wil-"derness."

In some ancient Jewish fragments, we have an account of four miracles, by which Moses signalized his entrance into Egypt. First, he made fire to issue out of the earth, in the eyes of all Israel, and thereby produced confidence in him, as their deliverer. Secondly, being shut up in prison, by order of Pharaoh, he broke

broke the bars, burſt open the gates, ſtruck the guards with death, and releaſed himſelf. Thirdly, he pronounced in the ears of the king, the name of JEHOVAH—at the ſound of which, that prince became deaf, and after a certain interval, recovered his hearing, through the favour of him who had taken it away. Fourthly, by the uſe of the ſame awful Name, he deprived all the Egyptian prieſts of ſenſe and motion. To this the Rabbins add, that on entering the palace of the tyrant, he was ſuddenly clothed with a dreadful form, and a countenance bright and majeſtic, like that of an angel. But, we have no need to reſort to fancy, for a deſcription of the magnificence of the ſcene, neither is there reaſon to ſuppoſe that any part of the glory of Moſes conſiſted in perſonal luſtre. His employer, and his errand, lend him ſufficient dignity and importance, without the glare which dazzles the eye.

LECT. IV.

Whatever were the outward appearance of Moſes, his meſſage we know, was

LECT. IV. treated by Pharaoh, with insolence and contempt, in these words; "Who is the "Lord, that I should obey his voice, to "let Israel go? I know not the Lord, "neither will I let Israel go." We are not to conclude that Pharaoh was an atheist, from his using this impious language. No: Egypt was a country wholly given to superstition: a land which had multiplied deities to itself. It was JEHOVAH whom he scorned to acknowledge. It was the God of Israel he despised. He judged of the power of their patron and protector, from their own present forlorn condition.

The methods which Moses and Aaron employed to obtain the end of their mission, is a beautiful, an instructive, and an alarming representation, of the conduct of Providence, towards sinners in general. They begin with delivering a plain message in the name of their master. Being repulsed, they proceed to argue and expostulate. A deaf ear being turned to the voice of reason and humanity, they have recourse

recourſe to more extraordinary proofs of the weight and authority of their commiſſion; proofs which indeed mark an almighty arm; but an arm ſtretched out, to convince, not to cruſh. A bold defiance being given to Omnipotence, what other method of working conviction and procuring reſpect is left, but to let it fall with all its dreadful weight on the head of the defier.

It happened to Iſrael, as it often does to men ſtruggling to get free from the preſſure of calamity; their efforts only ſerve to plunge them deeper in the mire; and it happened to Moſes and Aaron, as it ſometimes befals men, actuated by a ſimilar good intention, but with leſs title and encouragement, their interference hurts thoſe whom it was meant to ſerve; and they have the mortification of ſeeing the miſeries of their poor brethren, cruelly increaſed, through what might be deemed their zeal and officiouſneſs. The inflexible tyrant avenges himſelf, for the freedom taken with the king of Egypt, by

LECT. IV.

perſons ſo low and contemptible, upon the bleeding ſhoulders of thouſands of wretches, who could not redreſs themſelves, and durſt not complain. Miſerable condition indeed! where the caprice of one man determines the fate of millions! Happy nation, where not men, but laws govern!

Providence, in this inſtance, ſeems reſolved to try how far ſavage cruelty, and patient ſuffering can go; ready to take up both, when they have come to the extreme. Iſrael is not prepared for ſalvation, till the cup of woe is full, and deliverance deſpaired of, from every quarter, ſave heaven: and Pharaoh feels not the rod of God's anger, till having filled up the meaſure of his iniquity, hardened his heart againſt God, and againſt man, poured contempt upon mercy, and braved infinite juſtice, he exalts himſelf into an awful monument to every impenitent ſinner, of the deſperate madneſs of fighting with his maker.

Moſes

Moſes is ready to ſink afreſh under this cruel diſappointment. The reproaches of the unhappy ſufferers, called, forced, laſhed to labour, beyond what their ſtrength could bear, cut him to the heart, and again he ſhrinks from the taſk impoſed on him: and in theſe deſponding words, he ventures to pour out the anguiſh of his ſoul before the Lord, "Wherefore haſt thou ſo evil intreated "this people? why is it that thou haſt "ſent me? For ſince I came to Pharaoh, "to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done "evil to this people, neither haſt thou "delivered thy people at all."

Thus far has flowed the angry tide of proud imperial paſſion; and thus low has ebbed, the trembling, retreating ſtream of baffled expectation. And now, "It is "time, Lord, that thou work!" To the one he ſaith, "Hitherto ſhalt thou come, "but no farther, and here ſhall thy proud "waves be ſtayed." To the other, "Return, and fill all thy channels, and "overflow all thy banks."

LECT. IV.

The angel of the Lord begins with reaſſuring Moſes himſelf, by a recapitulation of the tenour of the covenant made with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, under the ſanction of his name as the Lord God Almighty. In all their wanderings, weakneſſes and diſtreſſes, they had been encouraged to truſt in a Being, omnipotent, to protect them; all-ſufficient, to ſupply their wants. But their poſterity were, henceforth, to know him by another name, and under a new deſcription; even, the incommunicable, unutterable Name, which denotes eternal, unchangeable, Self-exiſtence; deriving nothing from any, but conferring upon all, life, and breath, and all things; which is above all, through all, and in all; "the ſame yeſterday, to-day, "and for-ever:" and of conſequence, true to his word, faithful in keeping covenant, unalterable in his decrees!

Under the ſeal of that moſt tremendous, moſt animating, and inſpiring name, Moſes is again diſpatched to the people, with the aſſurance of a ſpeedy, an inſtantaneous

taneous appearance in their behalf. But alas! their ſpirit is broken, by the long continuance, and accumulated weight of their calamities. They have been diſappointed ſo often, that they can believe, can hope no longer; and the meſſage delivered by Moſes, is like a charming ſong upon the ear of a deaf, or a dead man. He is ſent from the people to Pharaoh, with a repetition of the demand of heaven upon him. But alas! the meſſenger himſelf has caught the deſponding ſpirit of the unhappy men whom he had been laſt viſiting: and the heart of Pharaoh has not relented in the leaſt. Heaven ſeems to have interpoſed ſomewhat too late; the cauſe appears loſt.—Let us judge nothing raſhly; let us not judge before the time. Let us humbly and patiently wait the iſſue, and then condemn, if we dare, if we can.

Moſes, at the buſh, ſaw God, under the appearance of a flame of fire; but no man can ſee God and live. "No man hath "ſeen God, at any time: the only begot-

"ten

LECT. IV.

"ten ſon, which is in the boſom of "the father, he hath declared him." The deliverer of Iſrael needed himſelf to be nurtured and prepared for the diſcharge of his high office; but the Saviour of a loſt world, entered upon the execution of his infinitely more arduous taſk, every way qualified to bring it to a happy concluſion—The jewiſh Lawgiver ſtood himſelf condemned by the law, and was a partaker with others, in guilt and tranſgreſſion; the Chriſtian Leader was "holy, harmleſs, and undefiled."—Moſes undertook the work aſſigned him, ſlowly and reluctantly; but, O with what readineſs did the friend of mankind preſs forward to the perfecting of his kind deſign; "Lo I come: in the volume of the book "it is written of me: I delight to do "thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is "within my heart*." "I have a bap-"tiſm to be baptized with, and how am "I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed?"† And yet there was no ſhame, no pain, no

* Pſalm xl. 7, 8. † Luke xii. 50.

croſs

croſs in the way of Moſes; whereas the Captain of ſalvation was to be "made "perfect through ſufferings;" nevertheleſs he advanced undiſmayed to the combat. "With deſire, I have deſired to eat "this paſſover with you before I ſuf- "er*."—Moſes frequently reſiled from the conflict, ſhrunk from difficulty and danger, failed in the hour of trial; but our great leader and commander went on "conquering and to conquer;" turned not back; deſiſted not from doing and from ſuffering, till he could ſay, "*It is finiſhed.*" The Sun of righteouſneſs ſhineth in his ſtrength, let every ſtar hide his diminiſhed head. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

* Luke xxii. 15.

LEC.

LECTURE V.

EXODUS vi. 1.

THEN THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, NOW SHALT THOU SEE WHAT I WILL DO UNTO PHARAOH; FOR WITH A STRONG HAND SHALL HE LET THEM GO, AND WITH A STRONG HAND SHALL HE DRIVE THEM OUT OF HIS LAND.

THE hiſtory of the divine conduct is the beſt illuſtration of the nature of GOD. Do we deſire to know what the ſupreme Being is? We have but to conſider what he does. Are we anxious to be ſatisfied of the truth of the declarations made by the great JEHOVAH concerning himſelf in his word? Let us compare them with the hiſtory and experience of men in every age. The proofs of the divine

LECT. V. divine goodneſs and mercy are written in characters ſo fair, and are ſo frequently preſented to our view, that not to obſerve them muſt argue the groſſeſt ſtupidity and inattention; and not to acknowledge, love, and adore the glorious ſource of that unbounded goodneſs, muſt argue the blackeſt ingratitude. When the Lord makes himſelf known by the judgments which he executes; we ſee him advancing, to uſe the ideas, and the language of men, with ſlow and reluctant ſteps. When miſery is to be relieved, benefits conferred, or ſins forgiven, the bleſsing outruns expectation, or even deſire. But, when the wicked are to be puniſhed, juſtice ſeems to regret the neceſſity under which it is laid, to maintain itſelf, and the ſinner is not deſtroyed till, to his own conviction, his condemnation is acquitted of unrighteouſneſs; and, till every thing around him calls for vengeance.

The wickedneſs of the old world was ſo great, that God is ſaid to have repented that he had made man. Nevertheleſs after

after God had threatened to deſtroy the human race with a deluge, a reprieve of many years is granted, to afford ſpace and means for averting the calamity, by repentance. Abraham was permitted, nay encouraged, to intercede for the ſinful, the devoted cities of the plain of Jordan; and the righteouſneſs of ſo ſmall a number as *five* perſons would have ſaved the whole people of thoſe regions. The nations of Canaan were not expelled, to make way for Iſrael, till the meaſure of their iniquity was full; and the haughty ſpirit of Pharaoh was not brought low, by wonder upon wonder, plague upon plague, till he had hardened his heart againſt the power of God, and the ſufferings of men, and thereby made himſelf a "veſſel of "wrath fitted for deſtruction."

LECT. V.

The awful ſcene which we are this night to contemplate, is, in more reſpects than one, ſingular, and unexampled. We are not only preſented with a ſeries of miracles, a demonſtration of the tremendous power of almighty God, but what

is

LECT. V. is ſtill more extraordinary, they are a ſeries of miracles, all marked with uncommon rigour and ſeverity. The wiſe and righteous Governour of the world ſeems, in this inſtance to have deviated from the uſual lenity of his proceeding; as if determined to make men tremble before him, and to ſtand in awe of his power and juſtice, as well as to hope in his mercy.

Moſes and Aaron, though their former embaſſy to Pharaoh had met with a reception ſo mortifying to themſelves, and ſo fatal to their afflicted brethren, are obliged and encouraged at God's command, to undertake a ſecond. And the haughty tyrant having dared to reject the firſt, as delivered in the name of an unknown God, they are now furniſhed with credentials, which carried their own authority on their foreheads, and were calculated to convince every thing but rooted infidelity, of the divine power, by which they were iſſued. Firſt, they make reaſon ſpeak. And had Pharaoh been wiſe,

no

no other monitor had been neceſſary. But a deaf ear being turned to that meek and heavenly charmer, it becomes needful to employ a ſtronger and more forcible language. Being again introduced, they again deliver their meſſage, and are again treated with ſcorn. Aaron, as he was commanded, having the rod of God in his hand, caſts it upon the ground before Pharaoh and his court, and lo! it inſtantly becomes animated; it is converted into a ſerpent, armed with deadly poiſon. When Moſes firſt beheld this ſtrange ſight, he "was afraid, and would "have fled:" but Pharaoh appears not in the leaſt alarmed. The ſame fire melts wax, and hardens clay; the ſame doctrine is the ſavour of life unto life, in them that believe, and of death unto death, in them that periſh.

Some interpreters have alledged, that this transformation was not only miraculous but emblematical: and, that it was intended to humble that tyrannical and ſanguinary prince, by exhibiting a

LECT. V. representation of his own character, and his ſubſerviency to the power of that God whom he had preſumed to defy. What a ſudden and ſtriking change, through the permiſſion of Providence takes place! From a harmleſs rod, or ſhepherd's crook, the emblem of mild, wiſe and good government, into a poiſonous ſnake, the emblem of cruelty and oppreſſion. And lo, at the divine pleaſure, the poiſon is again extracted, the deadly tooth plucked out; the fiery ſerpent becomes a harmleſs rod again. And thus, in general, afflictive providences are either the gentle rod of a father to admoniſh, to correct, and to reform: or the keen two-edged ſword of an adverſary, to cleave aſunder, to devour, and to deſtroy. Whether this were intended or not; it is evident Pharaoh underſtood it not, or diſregarded it. And as infidelity is always deſirous of fortifying itſelf by ſomething that has the ſemblance of reaſon: and while it pretends to doubt of every thing, is, in truth, the moſt ſimple and credulous principle in the world. Pharaoh affects to treat

the

the miracle, wrought by Moſes and Aaron, as a mere trick, a feat of necromancy or magic; he calls for ſuch of his own people as profeſſed theſe arts, to confront them with the Iſraelitiſh ambaſſadors; to oppoſe ſkill to ſkill, and to diminiſh the reſpect and attention claimed by Moſes and Aaron to their miſſion, and their God, by ſhewing ſimilar or equal ſigns performed by Jannes and Jambres the votaries of an Egyptian deity. LECT. V.

The magicians confidently undertake the taſk, and through the permiſſion of heaven, partly ſucceed. Their rods caſt upon the ground likewiſe become ſerpents. The heart of Pharaoh exults, the magicians of Egypt laugh the jewiſh ſhepherds to ſcorn. But the triumph of unbelief is only for a moment. Aaron's rod, in it's ſerpent ſtate, ſwallowed up theirs. Reaſoning man will aſk, Why were not impiety and infidelity checked in their very firſt attempt? Why were the demons of Egypt left in poſſeſſion of the

LECT. V. slighteſt veſtige of power, to oppoſe, or to imitate the mighty power of God? Why grant to Pharaoh and his magicians, even the momentary triumph of their incantations? The reaſon is obvious. Had the Egyptian inchantments been attended with no ſucceſs, and produced no effect, infidelity had its plea at hand. "Your pretended miracle is mere illuſion, an attempt to miſlead our underſtanding, by impoſing upon our ſenſes. Though we cannot produce this particular effect, perform this particular trick, by our art, we can effect wonders equally or much more aſtoniſhing." But, by being permitted to ſucceed in their firſt effort, and to rival Moſes and Aaron ſo far, in power and reputation, they are inſenſibly drawn in, to give their ſanction to the ſign performed by the Hebrews, for the ſake of their own credit; and no ſooner is it ſtamped for currency, with their image and ſuperſcription, than they and their abettors are confounded, by ſeeing the wretched impr[illegible] of their art effaced, annihilated; an[illegible] image remains viſible

but

but that of the living and true God. The power which ſwallowed up the magicians rods, could as eaſily have prevented the tranſmutation; but the confutation is much more complete by the one than it would have been by the other. Impiety has ſhut her own mouth, and infidelity ſtands ſtripped of her laſt, and only plea. LECT. V.

An opportunity is here preſented, of inſtituting an inquiry, which has greatly employed, and violently divided the learned, and ingenious; namely, whether the ſupernatural effects, here, and elſewhere in ſcripture, aſcribed to the agency of demons and malignant ſpirits, through the practice of magical arts, were real miracles, that is, alterations of the known and eſtabliſhed laws of nature, by the permiſſion of God; or only dexterous impoſitions, practiſed by ſubtle artiſts, on the ſimple and credulous, giving the appearance of reality, to what had no exiſtence. We ſhall not take upon us to determine, whether of theſe two opinions, is moſt conformable to reaſon,

LECT. V. and the analogy of faith. But the opportunity having offered, we ſhall take the liberty of ſuggeſting ſome conſiderations, tending leſs to ſettle the queſtion, than to ſhew, that perhaps, it is not capable of a ſolution. But our grand aim ſhall be to ſhew, that, which ever ſide men are pleaſed to take, the miracles wrought in ſupport of truth, through the agency of the Author of all good, preſerve all their ſuperiority, and the truth itſelf ſhines in all its luſtre.

And firſt, if we try the cauſe by the *Letter* of the narration of Moſes, it will immediately ſtrike every reader, that theſe extraordinary feats were actually produced by the power of the devil. The hiſtory relates the change that paſſed on the magicians rods, in the ſelf-ſame terms which deſcribe the tranſmutation of Aaron's, and the name given to theſe execrable men, is the ſame that belongs to perſons who have devoted themſelves to the wicked one. On the other hand, we know, that Scripture, in deſcribing natural objects, uſually

uſually accommodates itſelf to the prevailing notions of the ages and nations in which the inſpired authors lived and wrote; that it condeſcends even to adopt the language, the ideas, and the prejudices of the vulgar; and, that it employs not the accurate language and juſt ideas of philoſophy, but thoſe of common life, in treating the greateſt and moſt important ſubjects. We thence conclude, that whether the inchantments of the magicians produced real miracles, or were deceptions merely, the Spirit of God would certainly have narrated the fact in the ſelf-ſame terms. From the letter of the ſacred hiſtory, therefore, we can draw no concluſive argument, for either ſide of the queſtion.

We ſhall have equal reaſon to ſuſpend our judgment, if we try, ſecondly, to decide it, by the relations tranſmitted to us from various ages and regions of the world, concerning real or ſeeming inchantments. It would perhaps, be as difficult to perſuade the men of our own

LECT. V. age, that ſuch a thing as witchcraft ever exiſted, as it would have been, to convince the inhabitants of ſome former ages, that moſt of the effects, aſcribed to Satan and his agents, had no foundation, but the cunning, dexterity, and knavery of one part of mankind, practiſing on the ignorance, credulity, and ſimplicity of another. But, as it would betray a ſilly and ridiculous eaſineſs of belief, on the one hand, to admit as true, the ten thouſand ſtories, which the times of ignorance deviſed, related, and believed; and with which our own childhood probably was ſcared and alarmed; ſo, it would certainly be an unreaſonable and abſurd degree of ſcepticiſm, on the other, to reject as fabulous, every relation of this ſort, however well authenticated. Wiſe and good men have proved, by arguments amounting almoſt to demonſtration, the abſurdity of admitting the actual interference of a diabolical power, to deceive mankind. And wiſe and good men, by evidence apparently as clear and ſatisfactory, have endeavoured to eſtabliſh the

the certainty of ſuch interference in particular inſtances. And this ſeems a good reaſon, againſt pronouncing haſtily, upon the nature of the ſorceries practiſed by the magicians of Egypt.

We ſhall find ourſelves equally in the dark, if we attempt to form our judgement, in the third place, by metaphyſical notions. Our minds are exceedingly limited with reſpect to all objects, and particularly with reſpect to the nature of ſpirits. We know, from experience, that the Soul, little as it comprehends its own nature and eſſence, has a wonderful influence, over every particle of that body, to which it is united: but we can form no notion, of the power and influence, which ſpirits of a different order, may poſſeſs over larger portions of matter, and even over our bodies, and of conſequence, over our minds. Much leſs are we able to conceive, what an extent of power, the Father of ſpirits may, for wiſe purpoſes, have permitted to evil ſpirits over the whole world of nature, fallen into diſ-

order,

LECT. V. order, and labouring undert he curſe of heaven, on account of man's apoſtacy. The limited nature of human underſtanding, therefore, likewiſe forbids us to decide too peremptorily on a ſubject ſo obviouſly involved in difficulty.

Finally, the principles of religion, here refuſe to lend us their aid. In whatever tends to convey ſaving light to the ſoul, or peace to the conſcience; in all that relates to the government of the heart, or the wiſe conduct of the life, Religion is at hand, and kindly offers, preſſes her aſſiſtance upon us; but, in queſtions of doubtful diſputation, in which men rather aim at gratifying a reſtleſs curioſity or wild imagination, than at improving the underſtanding, or mending the heart, Revelation rather checks and repreſſes inquiry, than promiſes or lends her aid. It is ſufficient then, for our purpoſe, to ſay, that of whatever nature were the incantations of the Egyptian magicians, and their effects, the God of Truth, by the hand of Moſes and Aaron, put his infinite ſupe-

ſuperiority, beyond a poſſibility of doubt; and extorted an acknowledgment of it, from the mouths of the magicians themſelves. But, though they are put to ſilence, and Pharaoh confounded by the miracle of Aaron's rod ſwallowing up their's, yet they are not brought to ſee the inſufficiency of their art, neither is he yet reduced to yield obedience to an authority aſſerted by ſo high a hand. A miracle therefore, which only threatened, but continued harmleſs; a miracle which proved fatal only to the inſtruments of ſorcery and inchantment, failing to produce compliance, it becomes at length neceſſary to follow up the remonſtrances of reaſon and humanity, and the evidence of ſigns powerful indeed, yet innocent, by the operation of ſigns that ſhall be felt: Signs, which ſhall addreſs themſelves to the underſtanding and ſenſes at once; and force conviction upon the moſt careleſs and incredulous.

Their river, the Nile, was the chief ground of glorying to the Egyptians.

It

LECT. V. It was the ornament of their country, and the ſource of its fertility. Deriving the moiſture neceſſary to fructification from thence, they vainly boaſted that they were independent of the heavens, ſtanding in no need, like the reſt of the world, of the refreſhing drops which fall from thence. Egypt, therefore, is firſt ſmitten, in the darling ſource of its pride; and that which preſumptuouſly put itſelf in the place of God, firſt feels the power of God; and becomes, from a cauſe of vain-glorious boaſting, a lothing and an abomination to its worſhippers. Smitten with the awful rod, its waters are inſtantly and univerſally turned into blood. Horrid change! An inundation too ſcanty, threatened a famine: an inundation too copious, threatened a deluge. But, O dreadful reflection! the river no longer flows with that precious refreſhing fluid, which gives drink and renewed vigour to thirſty men, to thirſty cattle, to the parched ground; but a fluid which taints the air, which excites abhorrence, inſtead of ſatisfying the appetite; and kills

kills what it contains, instead of communicating life and fruitfulness where it is diffused. And should it rise and swell, what is it? An abominable deluge of blood. Its streams had been often stained with the blood of Hebrew innocents; and its savage master is now punished, with seeing its vast channel filled from shore to shore, with one crimson tide. In this awful glass, we are made to see, that whatsoever men exalt into the room of God, and worship as God, will sooner or later become a lothing or a curse to them; and the instrument of their sin assuredly will be converted, at length, into the instrument of their punishment."

"And the magicians of Egypt did so "with their enchantments." Foolish, unhappy men; to try to increase an evil already intolerable! If their art could have done any thing, it had been more wisely employed in endeavouring to purify and sweeten these polluted streams. To succeed in multiplying blood was ruinous: the greater the power of their art,

the

LECT. V. the more pernicious to themſelves and to their country. And this is the whole extent of the boaſted power of Satan: a power to do evil, a power to deſtroy: but a power deſtitute both of capacity and inclination to do good. Whereas that of heaven, though it be an ability to do evil, is an ability which it exerciſes rarely, and with reluctance; while the doing of good, and the diffuſing of happineſs, is its habitual object, its conſtant employment. Vain man would be independent; and yet what is he? A creature ſuſtained by bread, refreſhed by water; he lives by reſpiring the air which he ſucks in: he depends every inſtant of his exiſtence, on the aid of every element. Let the quantity, or the qualities of any one of them be ever ſo little changed, and that moment he becomes miſerable. One rainy or droughty ſeaſon, makes whole nations to languiſh; the froſt of a night, deſtroys the hope of a year; and a ſingle blaſt of wind ſends navies to the bottom. There is no need of a miracle to plague them whom God means

means to punish. All nature is at war with his adversaries: the stars in their courses, fight against those who fight with God. O may we never be so mad as to provoke that power, by which we are continually supported, and from which we cannot flee! LECT. V.

After a chastisement so awful, who could have imagined that Pharaoh was able still to stand out. But the human heart exhibits a mystery of iniquity, which nothing but multiplied experience could render credible. The next summons has a threatening annexed it; and the moment of refusal is to be the moment of execution. The plague being particularly specified before hand, was likely to excite the greater alarm, and thereby drive the offender to the means of prevention: but it would appear Pharaoh despised it. What, terrified at a swarm of frogs! Vermin, lothsome indeed, but despicably harmless. How ignorantly do men estimate the judgements of God, when they consider only the instrument which

LECT. V. which he employs. Men effect little, with large and abundant means; God performs wonders, with things mean and contemptible. Is a haughty tyrant to be subdued? There is no need of twelve legions of angels; an army of frogs in the hand of God is sufficient for the purpose. Again, the magicians are weak enough to assist the plague; at least, they affect to lend their aid; and rather than not be thought mighty, will seek to themselves a name by doing mischief. Again, the River, which ministred so much to their pride, is made the minister of avenging heaven to punish them. As its waters were lately all blood, to poison the fishes it contained, and to taint the air, so now they are all putrefaction, to give dreadful life to an innumerable race of odious vermin, for humbling the proud. Every creature is, and does, just that which God would have it to be and to do—becomes either a blessing, or a curse, at his command! And were we wise enough, to assist our weak, or to correct our erroneous vision by the optics

optics of the ſanctuary, we ſhould behold, under many a fair and flattering form, much lothſomeneſs and deformity. LECT. V.

Pharaoh deſpiſed this plague, when it was threatened, but feels it to be no ſlight one, when it falls upon him; and he is, in this reſpect, the picture of many a thoughtleſs ſinner, who trifles with the judgments denounced in the word of God, till bitter experience teaches him, that every arrow from the quiver of the Almighty is both penetrating and poiſonous. The proud heart which refuſed to bend, at length begins to break; and a ſlow, lingering, partial, reluctant conſent, is given to the demand of heaven; and permiſſion is granted the people to go, "that they may do ſacrifice unto the "Lord." The conceſſion, ſlight as it is, procures a reſpite. Mercy, ever on the wing, flies to ſuccour the miſerable.

We have ſeen Moſes and Aaron executing the judgements of avenging heaven, by

LECT. V. the agency of a rod. Christ himself is the powerful Word, by which God made and sustains worlds; the all-potent instrument to save, and to destroy. "With "righteousness shall he judge the poor, "and reprove with equity, for the meek "of the earth: and he shall smite the "earth with the rod of his mouth, and "with the breath of his lips shall he "slay the wicked."—Moses acted by a delegated power: Jesus has all power in Himself.---"Moses verily was faithful in "all his house, as a servant: but Christ "as a Son, over his own house." The same Moses was the deliverer of Israel, and the scourge of Egypt: The same Jesus, who is the Author of eternal Salvation to them that believe, "shall be "revealed from heaven, with his mighty "angels, in flaming fire: taking ven-"geance on them that know not God, "and that obey not the gospel of our "Lord Jesus Christ."—"All judgement "is committed to the Son." "He shall "reign, till he hath put all his enemies

,, under

"under his feet." "The laſt enemy "that ſhall be deſtroyed is death."

"O death, where is thy ſting? O "grave, where is thy victory? Thanks "be to God which giveth us the victory, "through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Amen.

LEC-

LECTURE VI.

EXODUS X. 7.

AND PHARAOH'S SERVANTS SAID UNTO HIM, HOW LONG SHALL THIS MAN BE A SNARE UNTO US? LET THE MEN GO, THAT THEY MAY SERVE THE LORD THEIR GOD. KNOWEST THOU NOT YET, THAT EGYPT IS DESTROYED?

HOW very different an appearance do objects wear, according as they are beautified and exalted by the favour of heaven, or blasted and disfigured by the curse of an offended GOD! Eden, before Man's apostacy; Eden, fresh planted, by the sovereign hand of the Creator, contained every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, and in the midst of it was the tree of life; but, O sad reverse, the fatal effect of transgression!

LECT. VI. "Curſed is the ground for thy ſake; "thorns and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth "to thee;" and the tree of life is removed to happier regions, or guarded from guilty man's approach by the flaming ſwords of the cherubim. The plain of Jordan, well-watered every where, and beautiful as the garden of the Lord, delighted the eyes, and allured the heart of Lot, when he ſeparated himſelf from his uncle Abraham. But O how awfully changed that once delicious ſpot! The day when Lot went out of it, "Abraham "looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, "and towards all the land of the plain, "and beheld, and lo, the ſmoke of the "country went up, as the ſmoke of a "furnace." What a charming proſpect did Egypt preſent in the days of her glory? Her fertile ſurface, covered with the ſilver flux of her ſtately, overflowing river, except where thouſands of populous cities lifted up their proud heads to the ſkies; or her golden, luxuriant harveſts, waving with the fragrant wind. How changed the ſcene, when the Nile ran not water, but blood; after the murram had deſtroy-

ed

ed all their cattle; after the lightening and the hail had blasted every tree, devoured every herb, and the "locusts had "consumed what the hail had left."—What makes earth resemble heaven; and men like angels? The presence, the blessing, and the Image of God! What once covered the earth with water, and shall at length destroy it by fire? What sinks men to the level of diabolical, damned spirits, and adds tenfold horrour to gloomy hell? The wrath of the Almighty, and the deprivation of his glorious similitude. Nature sinks under the description, and the denunciation of the divine displeasure: What must it be to endure its dreadful effects, without intermission, and without end!

Instead of going into a particular detail of the subsequent plagues, wherewith God afflicted Egypt, we shall suggest a few historical, and practical remarks, upon the subject in general, serving to unfold the windings and the workings of the human heart: to illustrate and vindicate the ways of Providence;

LECT. VI. to expose the madness of striving against God; and to display the wisdom, the safety, and the happiness of submitting readily, chearfully, and universally to the divine authority.

And, first. We observe, that as God has many inconceivable methods of doing good to men; so his power of punishing is unlimited, and the treasures of his wrath are far beyond, what fear itself, which magnifies every object, can fancy. Of the glorious capacity and disposition to bless mankind, who has not enjoyed the sweetest, and frequently-repeated experience? Whose life so short, as not to contain a history of benefits; a display of mercy, a profusion of loving-kindness, which astonishes while it delights? Whose portion of felicity so scanty, as not to exhibit wonders of goodness infinitely above the desert of angels? What understanding so brutish, what heart so ungrateful, as, not to recur, at the first call, to a multitude of special blessings, pressing upon the memory, urging prior or superior claims of acknowledgement and praise? Need

Need you to be told, ungrateful, forgetful children of men! Need you to be told the value of an uninterrupted and ſteady courſe of good health; or of the more ſenſible benefit of recovery from ſickneſs and pain? Shall I ſend you back to years that are long paſt, or recall yeſterday to your recollection? Remind you of that common bounty which gives you, day by day, your daily bread; or of that ſingular, ſhall I ſay miraculous interpoſition, which ſeemed to drop down manna, around your tabernacle? Muſt all ages, and nations, and regions of the world be made to paſs in review before your eyes; or will you confine your obſervation to your own moment of exiſtence, your own hand-breadth of ſpace, your own two or three acquaintances and contemporaries, your own pittance of knowledge? Shall the glories of nature, or the wonders of Providence be unfolded to your view? The fatneſs and fragrancy of the fertile earth, or the vaſtneſs and brilliancy of the vault of heaven? Will you confine yourſelves to things ſeen and temporal; or borne as

on

LECT VI. on eagle's wings, contemplate things which are unſeen and eternal? Will you converſe with your fellow-mortals on the ſurface of this mole-hill, or join in the ſongs and raptures of angels, who ſurround the throne, and of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, immortal intelligences, perfectly awake to the full perception of their bleſſedneſs? Chooſe you to dwell on the tranſitory comforts of the life that now is, or to anticipate the joys ſubſtantial, ſincere, and laſting, of that which is to come? Creation ſpreads her fair, her ample, her ſplendid page to the delighted eye. The myſterious volume, ſealed to the careleſs reader, as with ſeven ſeals, to the ſerious and attentive ſoul unveils the hidden wiſdom of God, and, written with a ſun-beam, ſtands recorded the gracious purpoſe of him who "worketh all things after the counſel of his own will."

Wouldſt thou be ſatisfied, O man, that the great God has means innumerable, unutterable, incomprehenſible, of conferring happineſs on mankind? Think,

O

O think how he has loved the world, in the redemption of it, by CHRIST JESUS! Think how many demonſtrations of grace meet in that one, "GOD ſpared not his "own Son, but gave him up for us all!" And when you have ruminated, and ruminated, on the hiſtory of Redeeming Love; when you have recovered from the aſtoniſhment and joy of contemplating what GOD *has done* for you, loſe yourſelf afreſh, in the proſpect of what the Lord hath *laid up* for the heirs of ſalvation—of that great, exceeding, and eternal weight of glory" which eye hath "not ſeen, nor ear heard, and of which "it hath not entered into the heart of man" to form any adequate conception or idea! Fly, O my ſoul, whither thou wilt; ſettle where thou wilt, infinite goodneſs ſtill ſupports thy flight, and ſettle thou muſt on the Rock of ages at laſt.

But, ah! my friend, this GOD, almighty to ſave, is alſo mighty to deſtroy. As his bounty is an inexhauſted horn of plenty, to bleſs his friends, ſo his juſtice

is

LECT. VI. is a capacious quiver, ſtored with innumerable poiſoned arrows, to ſhed the blood, to drink up the ſpirits of his adverſaries. Think in how many parts thou art vulnerable. In every particle of thy frame, in every faculty of thy ſoul. Every ſenſe opens a paſſage, for the entrance of an avenging God. The underſtanding at his command, expands to the horrid perception of juſtice that will not bend; of ſeverity that knows not to relax; of vengeance, that admits not of pity. Memory, rouſed by that trumpet which awakes the dead, gives new form and ſubſtance to the hideous ſpectres of tranſgreſſions long ſince departed, and vainly imagined to be laid in the grave for ever; and the guilty wretch is dragged to the bitter recollection of what he once dwelt on, with unhallowed delight, and now would fain bury in eternal oblivion; or which he would, with the price of worlds redeem from the hiſtory of his wretched life. As memory, to fulfil the righteous judgement of God, can readily ſummon up all that is paſt, to awaken remorſe,

remorſe, and inſpire terrour; ſo fear launches forth into the boundleſs, endleſs regions of futurity, and rouſes deſpair; and in the very abyſſes of burning hell, ſhudders at the thought of a deeper gulph, of a hotter flame. Read, O ſinner, the hiſtory of the plagues of Egypt, and tremble! Suppoſe for a moment, the cup wherewith thou art ready to quench thy burning thirſt, inſtantly turned into blood, to the lothing of thy ſoul and thy fleſh. Suppoſe thy body ſtruck with an univerſal leproſy, the duſt under thy feet quickened into abominable vermin; the air around thy head impregnated with ſwarms of noiſome inſects: thy ſun diſappeared for three tedious lingering days; and the thunder of an angry God rolling over thy guilty, devoted habitation; and all this but the beginning of ſorrow; the mere threatenings of wrath to come; woe that may be endured, torment that may expire. But ah! from yonder fearful pit, ariſes the ſmoke of a fire that ſhall not be quenched; that ſhall aſcend for ever and ever. I hear groans burſting from the

LECT. VI.

bosom

LECT. VI. bosom of despair; and the rattling of everlasting, adamantine chains. Behold the wild looks, the agonizing pangs of that poor rich man, when from the flames of his torment, he beholds Lazarus, in Abraham's bosom. Heaven, removed to an inaccessible distance; heaven disjoined by an unpassable gulph: Heaven, the rest of the weary, and the reward of the faithful, affords a momentary glimpse of its joys, only to embitter remorse, to pierce the soul with keener pangs; and to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was before. "It is a fearful thing "to fall into the hands of the living "God."

After serious reflection upon these things, our second observation would seem ill-founded, and destitute of all probability and truth, did not all history, and daily experience confirm the woeful certainty of it. It is this:—That by frequent indulgence, and long habits of sin, the heart may at length become quite callous; equally insensible to the calls of mercy,

mercy, and the alarms of juſtice. We are ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the ſight of a poor, infatuated wretch, like Pharaoh, repeatedly braving that power, which returned to cruſh and humble him, and ſlighting that grace, which as often relented, and afforded ſpace and means for repentance. Would to God there were room to think the repreſentation more unnatural than it is, and that the character of Pharaoh were a rarity in the world. But alas! what is the life of moſt men, but an habitual fighting againſt God? Upon whom falls the weight of our remark? Upon a few, thoughtleſs hardened wretches, who have found out the ſecret of lulling conſcience to reſt; who having conquered the ſenſe of fear and of ſhame, commit iniquity with greedineſs; who ,, hide not their ſin, like Sodom, but publiſh it like Gomorrah?" Let us not deceive ourſelves, but watch over our own hearts, and exhort one another "daily, leſt any be hardened through "the deceitfulneſs of ſin."—There ſtands Pharaoh, the daring, the preſumptuous

ſinner!

LECT. VI.

ſinner! Whom goodneſs could not mollify, nor judgments ſubdue: And let him who is without ſin caſt the firſt ſtone at him. Who can flatter himſelf with the thought, that the errours of his life, were the mere inadvertences of haſte and inattention? Who can ſay of himſelf, "this fault I "corrected as ſoon as I diſcovered it? "Having been once made ſenſible of the "danger and wickedneſs of that ſinful "courſe, I inſtantly forſook it, and have "returned to it no more. Smarting from "the effects of my folly, I have never "again dared to provoke the laſh of my "father's chaſtening rod. The reſolu-"tions of ſickneſs and ſorrow, I have "faithfully remembered, and diligently "kept. Vows made at the Lord's table, "I have made conſcience to perform. "The threatenings of God's word, I have "not diſregarded; the long-ſuffering of "my God, I have not abuſed." Alas! Alas! the reverſe of all this is the truth. Not a ſingle, but repeated acts of intemperance, injuſtice, impurity, impiety; not caſual and undeſigned expreſſions, but

but deliberate and indulged habits of falſhood, malevolence, ſelfiſhneſs and uncharitableneſs, place *us* as criminals at the bar, by the ſide of Pharaoh, and forbid us to condemn him, for that we alſo have ſinned. What avails it me, to ſay, that my offence is not the ſame with his? Perhaps I had neither power, nor inclination, nor opportunity, for committing that man's tranſgreſſion; have I therefore waſhed my hands in innocence? Can I therefore plead, "not guilty?" The great queſtion is, have I kept myſelf free from *mine own* tranſgreſſion? And, ſpared of God to make the enquiry—let Pharaoh's impenitence, and Pharaoh's doom, awaken us to a ſenſe of our danger; and urge our ſpeedy flight from the wrath that is to come.

Third. This hiſtory leads us to remark, the great difference between the ſlow, reluctant, partial ſubmiſſion of fear, and the prompt, chearful and unreſerved compliance of a grateful, and affectionate heart. Pharaoh will not move a ſtep, like a ſul-

LECT. VI. len, ſturdy ſlave, but by a freſh application of the whip; the moment the pain of the ſtripe ceaſes, he ſtands ſtill, or turns back. The firſt ſummons is treated by him with inſolence and ſcorn; and Iſrael ſhall not have a ſingle moment's relaxation from their burthens. Brought to himſelf by a few ſtrokes of the rod of God's anger, he yields a tardy conſent to the intermiſſion of their labours for a little while, and to their doing ſacrifice to their God. But it muſt be, "in the land where they dwelt, even in Egypt." That alternative being rejected, and a new demand made, backed with a new threatening, and followed with a new plague; he agrees to permit the *male* part of Iſrael, who were arrived at Man's eſtate, to reſort to the place appointed; but he reſolves to detain their wives, children, and cattle, as hoſtages for their return. Conſtrained at length, by dint of judgments, to let the *whole* congregation depart, he endeavours to ſtipulate, that they ſhould not go *very far* off; and not, till broken by the laſt dreadful plague, can he be brought to reſign his

his uſurped authority over the free-born ſons of GOD. LECT. VI.

We often find men pretending to make a merit, of giving up, what it is no longer in their power to retain. When a man has ſquandered away his means, in riot and extravagance, Deſerves he praiſe for living ſparingly? Another has ruined his conſtitution by intemperance; Is his forced continence an object of admiration? By no means. He has diſcontinued his debaucheries, through diſability, not inclination, and conviction of his errour. Old age has debilitated a third; Is he therefore virtuous? No, no: his vices have forſaken *him*, not he his *vices*. When a man ſerves through fear, he does no more than he needs muſt; but love is liberal and generous, and ſtands not queſtioning, "yea hath GOD ſaid?" but ever on the watch, ever on the wing, the moment the voice of GOD is heard, is ready to reply, "Here am I, Lord, ſend me." Which leads to remark,

LECT. VI.

Fourthly. The wiſdom of giving up, at the command of God, at once, what we muſt give up at laſt, whether we will or not. What a pitiful figure does Pharaoh make in the end! Baffled in every attempt, driven out of every fortreſs, diſhonoured in the eyes of his own ſervants, tranſmitted to lateſt poſterity a monument of pride and impotence. Were not the proud blind and infatuated, they would yield through ſelf-love; to preſerve their own conſequence, at leaſt the appearance of it. Unhappily for us, our will ſtands but too often in oppoſition to the will of God. When they come to claſh, who ought in reaſon to give way? Who muſt of neceſſity ſubmit? Knoweſt thou not, O man, that to deſtroy thyſelf, thou needeſt but to follow thy own headſtrong inclinations: that the gratification, not the diſappointment of illicit deſire, is ruinous? But who ever made a ſacrifice of inclination to duty, and had reaſon to repent it? Who knows not, that to yield ſubmiſſion is to obtain a triumph? In a contention where there is a probability

bility, or even a poſſibility of our prevailing, it may be worth while to riſk a combat; but who except a madman will ſeek to encounter a foe by whom he is ſure to be defeated?—And yet in that mad, that ruinous ſtrife, ſee how many are engaged! Behold the ſtars in their courſes, ranged on the part of their creator, all nature ſtanding in arms to eſpouſe his cauſe; and who muſt be overcome? Againſt whom is this formidable preparation made? There ſtands the enemy, in all his weakneſs and folly; a crawling worm, on a dunghill, provoking his fate, tampering with eternal ruin, hardening himſelf againſt God, and yet thinking to proſper. The influence of no malignant ſtar is neceſſary, to blaſt him: there is neceſſity for no earthquake to ſwallow him up; no archangel armed with a ſword of fire, need deſcend to cut him aſunder: His breath is in his own noſtrils; he is ſinking into his duſt; his own ridiculous efforts are waſting and conſuming him. Fooliſh creature and unwiſe! why will you contend longer? "wherefore ſhould

LECT. VI. "you be ſtricken any more?" Con-ſtrain not HIM to be thy foe, who has towards thee the diſpoſition of the beſt of friends, and who is mighty to ſave, even "to the uttermoſt, them that come unto "him."

Fifth. In the courſe of theſe dreadful plagues, we obſerve, not only the pride of man effectually humbled, but the power of Satan trampled in the duſt, under the feet of the Moſt High. It is highly intereſting to obſerve by what gradual ſteps the enemy and the avenger is laid low, till he is at length deſtroyed. Preſumption, at firſt, induces him, in confidence of a permitted power, to enter the liſts, and try his ſtrength with God. Aaron's rod is turned into a ſerpent. The magicians attempt the ſame, and ſucceed. Their rods alſo become ſerpents. But Aaron's rod ſwallowed up their's. By and by, the water of the river is turned into blood, and the fiſhes die. The magicians by their inchantments, madly aſſiſt the plague, and acquire a little tranſitory re-

reputation, by doing mischief. Flushed with this farther success, they go on, to imitate the miracles of Moses and Aaron; but to their confusion, they fail, where it seemed most probable, that they should with greatest ease support their fame. That lothsome vermin is to be produced miraculously, which slovenliness and filth naturally produce, without any effort. At the word of Moses, the dust of the land is transformed into this noisome, nauseous insect. But the whole power of hell cannot effect at the time, and in the manner which it would, what time and carelessness alone, in the usual course of things, would certainly have brought forth; and they feel themselves attacked with a plague, which their art could not bring upon others. Finally, after having become the subjects of a miraculous calamity which might be borne, they are attacked with one intolerable, which drives them from the competition: they give up their silly arts of sorcery, and attempt to rival the true God no more. And thus, when the mystery

LECT. VI. of godlineſs ſhall be finiſhed, an aſtoniſhed world ſhall behold the ſleight and devices of Satan falling upon his own head, his momentary triumphs covering him with more accumulated diſgrace, and his infernal malice and diabolical craft made miniſtring ſervants, to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God. A good reaſon, among many others, why we ſhould judge nothing raſhly, before the time, till the Lord cometh, who ſhall bring light out of obſcurity, and fully vindicate his ways to men.

Sixth. We obſerve, how unlike the latter end of things are to their beginnings. The world laughs at the idea, of two feeble old men, iſſuing forth, the patrons of liberty; to force a mighty prince, and a powerful nation, to liſten to the dictates of juſtice and humanity, and to liberate a million of wretched creatures, whoſe ſpirits were totally broken by their miſeries, and who ſeemed to have loſt even the inclination of vindicating their own rights. Pharaoh deſpiſed them; the magicians

gicians defied them; Iſrael diſtruſted them; they themſelves are ready to ſink under the difficulty and danger of the enterprize. But conducted of heaven, they attempt, they proceed, they proſper, they overcome. They invade Egypt, two ſolitary, unſupported individuals! They leave it, at the head of ſix hundred thouſand men, fit to bear arms, with a correſponding number of females, beſides old men and children; and a mixed multitude of non-deſcript perſons; bidding defiance to the whole force of a wiſe and warlike country. And we ſee them, in the courſe of a few years, taking forcible poſſeſſion of one of the ſtrongeſt, moſt impracticable, and beſt defended countries in the world.

I need but hint to you, the counterpart of this. The unconnected ſon of a carpenter, at the head of twelve ſimple illiterate fiſhermen, attacking the religious eſtabliſhments of the whole globe, and prevailing. Armed with a few plain facts, and a few doctrines, as plain, overturing

LECT. VI. turning the whole fabrick of heathen mythology and worſhip; ingrafting on the ſtock of Moſes, and the legal diſpenſation, a Scion from a nobler root; which has ſwallowed up the parent tree, filled the earth with its branches, is feeding the nations to this day with its fruit, and is likely to maintain its place, till all the gracious purpoſes of heaven are accompliſhed. "It is the Lord's doing, and it "is marvellous in our eyes." When "the world by wiſdom knew not God, "it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of "preaching, to ſave them that believe." The next Lecture will, by divine favour, exhibit the inſtitution and celebration of the firſt paſſover, with the event which gave occaſion to it. May God bleſs what has been ſpoken. To whom be glory and honour, for ever and ever.

LEC-

LECTURE VII.

EXODUS xii. 1, 2, 3.

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND AARON IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, SAYING, THIS MONTH SHALL BE UNTO YOU THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS; IT SHALL BE THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR TO YOU. SPEAK UNTO ALL THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL, SAYING, IN THE TENTH DAY OF THIS MONTH, THEY SHALL TAKE TO THEM EVERY MAN A LAMB, ACCORDING TO THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS, A LAMB FOR AN HOUSE.

IN the hiſtory of all nations, there are æras and events of peculiar importance, which extend their influence to future ages and generations, and are fondly commemorated by lateſt poſterity.

Hence,

LECT. VII. Hence, every day of the revolving year, becomes, in its courſe, to one people or another, the anniverſary of ſomething great, which befel their forefathers, and is remembered by their ſons with triumph or with ſorrow. Moſt of the religious obſervances which have obtained in the world, when they are traced up to their ſource, are found to originate in providential diſpenſations; and hiſtory becomes the beſt interpreter of cuſtoms and manners. It is a moſt amuſing employment to obſerve the operation and progreſs of the human mind in this reſpect; and to conſider, how variouſly different men, and at different periods, have contrived to tranſmit to their children, the memory of ſimilar atchievements, ſucceſſes or diſaſters. A great ſtone, ſet up on end, a heap of ſtones, a mound of earth, and the like, were, in the earlier, ruder, ſimpler ſtate of the world, the monuments of victory; and to dance round them with ſongs, on an appointed day, was the ruſtic commemoration of their rude and ſimple poſterity. The triumphs, and the death

death of heroes, came, in proceſs of time, to be remembered with conviviality and mirth; or with plaintive ſtrains and ſolemn dirges. The hoary bard varied, and enlivened the feaſt, by adapting to his rough voice, or rougher harp, the uncouth rhimes he himſelf had compoſed in praiſe of departed gallantry and virtue. As arts were invented and improved, the wiſe, the brave, and the good were preſerved from oblivion, by monuments more elegant, more intelligible, and more laſting. A more correct ſtyle of poetry, a ſweeter melody were cultivated. Sculpture and Painting conveyed to childrens children an exact repreſentation of the limbs and lineaments of the venerable men, who adorned, who inſtructed, who ſaved their country. And thus, though dead, they continued to live and act, in the animated canvaſs, the breathing braſs, or the ſpeaking marble. At length, the pen of the hiſtorian took up the cauſe of merit, and diffuſed over the whole globe, and handed down to the very end of

LECT VII. of time, the knowledge of the perſons, and the actions, which ſhould never die.

We are this evening, to beſtow our attention upon an inſtitution, altogether of divine appointment, intended to record an event, of ſingular importance to the nation immediately affected by it, and which, according to its intention, and in in its conſequences, has involved a great part of mankind.

Moſes and Aaron, having, as the inſtruments in the hand of Providence, chaſtiſed Egypt with nine ſucceſſive and ſevere plagues, inflicted in the view of procuring Iſrael's releaſe, are at length diſmiſſed by the unrelenting tyrant, with a threatening of certain death, ſhould they ever again preſume to come into his preſence. Moſes takes him at his word, and bids him, a ſolemn, a long, an everlaſting farewel. When men have finally baniſhed from them their adviſers, and admoniſhers, and God has ceaſed to be a reprover to them, their deſtruction cannot

cannot be very diſtant. Better have the law to alarm, to threaten, and to chaſtiſe us, than to have it in anger altogether withdrawn. Better a conſcience that diſturbs and vexes, than a conſcience laid faſt aſleep, than a conſcience "ſeared as "with a hot iron."

What ſolemn preparation is made for the tenth and laſt awful plague of Egypt! God is about to reckon with Pharaoh for the blood of the Iſraelitiſh male children, doomed from the womb to death, by his cruel edict. His eye pitied not, nor ſpared the anguiſh of thouſands of wretched mothers, bereaved of their children, the inſtant they were born; and a righteous God pities, ſpares him not, in the day of viſitation.

The circumſtances attending this tremendous calamity, are ſtrikingly calculated to excite horrour. Firſt. God himſelf is the immediate author of it. Hitherto he had plagued Egypt by means and inſtruments; "Stretch out thy "hand,"

LECT. VII. "hand:" "Say unto Aaron, Stretch "forth thy hand with thy rod." But now it is, "I will go out into the midſt "of Egypt." "And it came to paſs "that at midnight the LORD ſmote all "the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, "from the firſt-born of Pharaoh that ſat "on his throne, unto the firſt-born of "the captive that was in the dungeon, "and all the firſt-born of cattle." As mercies coming immediately from the hand of our heavenly father, are ſweeter and better, than thoſe which are communicated through the channel of the creature; ſo judgments iſſuing directly from the ſtores of divine wrath are more terrible and overwhelming. The ſword of an invading foe, is a dreadful thing, but infinitely more dreadful the ſword of a deſtroying angel, or the uplifted hand of God himſelf.

Secondly. The nature and quality of the calamity, greatly increaſes the weight of it. It is a wound there, where the heart is moſt ſuſceptible of pain; an evil

evil which undermines hope; Hope, our refuge, and our remedy, under other evils. The return of another favourable ſeaſon, may repair the waſtes, and compenſate the ſcarcity, of that which preceded it. A body emaciated, or ulcerated all over, may recover ſtrength, and be reſtored to ſoundneſs; and there is hope that the light of the ſun may return, even after a thick darkneſs of three days. But what kindneſs of nature, what happy concurrence of circumſtances, can re-animate the breathleſs clay, can reſtore an only ſon, a firſt-born, ſtricken with death? LECT. VII.

The univerſality of this deſtruction, is a third horrid aggravation of its woe. It fell with equal ſeverity on all ranks and conditions: the prince and the peaſant; the maſter and the ſlave. From every houſe the voice of miſery burſts forth. None is ſo much at leiſure from his own diſtreſs, as to pity, ſoothe or relieve that of his wretched neighbour.

Fourth. The blow was ſtruck at the

LECT. VII.

awful midnight hour, when every object assumes a more sable hue; when fear, aided by darkness, magnifies to a gigantic size, and clothes in a more hideous shape, the real and fantastical, the seen and the unseen disturbers of silence and repose. To be prematurely awakened out of sleep, by the dying groans of a friend suddenly smitten, to be presented with the ghastly image of death, in a darling object, lately seen and enjoyed in perfect health; to be forced to the acknowledgement of the great and holy Lord God, by such an awful demonstration of his presence and power! What terrour and astonishment could equal this?

The keen reflection, that all this accumulated distress might have been prevented, was another cruel ingredient in the embittered cup. How would they now accuse their desperate madness, in provoking a power, which had so often, and so forcibly warned them of their danger? If Pharaoh were not past feeling, how dreadful must have been the pangs he

he felt; as he reflected, that after attempting to deſtroy a hapleſs, helpleſs race of ſtrangers, who lay at his mercy, by the moſt unheard of cruelty and oppreſſion, he had now ruined his own country, by an obſtinate perſeverance in folly and impiety; that he had become the curſe, and the puniſhment, of a nation, of which he was bound to be the father and protector: and to find his own hopes blaſted in their faireſt, moſt flattering object, the heir of his throne and empire, becauſe he regarded not the rights of humanity and mercy, in the treatment of his vaſſals.

Finally. If their anguiſh admitted of a ſtill higher aggravation, the diſtinction, from firſt to laſt, made between them and Iſrael, the bleſſed exemption which the oppreſſed Hebrews had enjoyed from all theſe calamities, eſpecially from this laſt death, muſt have been peculiarly mortifying and afflictive. "But againſt any "of the children of Iſrael, ſhall not a "dog move his tongue, againſt man or "beaſt; that ye may know how that

LECT. VII. "the LORD doth put a difference between "the Egyptians and Israel." This partakes of the nature of the misery which the damned endure; who are represented as having occasional, distant and transitory glimpses, of the blessedness of heaven, only for their punishment, only to heighten the pangs of their own torments. Of the approach of their other woes, they had been repeatedly warned. But this, it would appear, came upon them suddenly, and in a moment. They had gone to rest in security. The short respite they enjoyed from suffering had stilled their apprehension; "surely," said they, "the "bitterness of death is past." But ah! it is only the deceitful calm which precedes a hurricane or an earthquake. Let men never dream of repose from the righteous judgment of God, whatever they may have already endured, till they have forsaken their sins, and fled for refuge in the divine mercy.

It is now worth while, to consider the notice given to God's own people of this ap-

approaching evil, and the means appointed, and employed to ſecure them from being involved in the general ruin. The event ſo deſtructive to Egypt, was intended to be the æra of their liberty, and the means of their deliverance. They had hitherto reckoned the beginning of their year from Tiſri, which anſwers to our September; which, as they ſuppoſed, was the time when the creation was begun and compléted; but they are now poſitively enjoined to begin to reckon from Ahib or Niſan, that is March, in memory of a new creation; whereby their condition was totally changed from ſervitude of the moſt abject kind, into freedom the moſt exalted and perfect; the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. They are diſtinctly informed of the ſtroke which Providence was meditating againſt Egypt, and of the preciſe time when the blow was to be ſtruck. They are accordingly directed to two things. Firſt, to provide for their own ſafety; and, Secondly, to hold themſelves in perfect readineſs, to take advantage of the per-

LECT. VII. miſſion to depart, which the panic, occaſioned by the death of the firſt-born, ſhould extort from Pharaoh. For the former of theſe purpoſes, every particular family, or the two adjoining, in proportion to their number; the loweſt, according to the Jewiſh writers, being not under ten, nor the higheſt above twenty, were commanded to chooſe out and ſet apart, every one a male lamb, or kid, of a particular deſcription, on the tenth day of the month, and to kill it on the evening of the fourteenth. The fleſh of the victim was to be eaten by every ſeveral houſhold apart, roaſted with fire. They were all carefully to keep within their houſes. And, the blood of the ſacrifice, was to be taken, and ſprinkled on the two ſide-poſts, and the upper door-poſt of every houſe where it was eaten. This ſprinkling of the blood, was to be the token of God's covenant, and a protection to the families ſo diſtinguiſhed, from the ſword of the avenging angel.

But, a poſitive inſtitution, ſo immediately

ately from heaven, ſo full of meaning and inſtruction, of ſuch celebrity in the hiſtory of the world, and connected ſo cloſely with an ordinance of ſtill greater notoriety, and of much more extenſive influence; of much longer duration, and which commemorates an event of infinitely greater importance, ſurely demands the moſt minute attention, and the moſt ſerious enquiry. We pretend not to comprehend, and therefore undertake not to explain every particular circumſtance of this ſolemn divine ordinance; but the moral and religious deſign, is in general ſo obvious, that a reader of ordinary capacity, has but to run over it, with a common degree of ſerioufneſs and attention, tounderſt and what the Spirit of God is ſaying in it, for the edification of mankind.

And firſt. God was about to diſtinguiſh Iſrael by ſpecial marks of his favour. In order to this, they muſt carefully diſtinguiſh themſelves by a punctual obſervance of his command. Is more ex-

LECT. VII. pected of an Iſraelite than of an Egyptian? Undoubtedly. The bleſſings which come down from above, from the Father of lights, are not mere, arbitrary and capricious effuſions of liberality, falling upon one ſpot, and paſſing by another, without reaſon or deſign. No, they are the wiſe and gracious recompenſe of an intelligent, obſerving and diſcriminating Parent, to faithful, affectionate, and obedient children. Iſrael had been forewarned of the enſuing danger in vain, had one iota or tittle relating to the ordinance of the Paſchal Lamb been neglected. Calamity is to be avoided, not by foreknowing that it draws nigh, but by running to a place of ſafety. Salvation by Chriſt conſiſts, not merely in head-knowledge of his perſon, doctrine and work; but in a cordial receiving, and reſting upon him alone for ſalvation, as he is freely offered to us in the goſpel, "for wiſdom, and "righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and "redemption." The careful ſelection then, of a proper victim, and the exact application of it, according to the commandment

mandment, have a plain and an instructive meaning. LECT. VII.

Secondly. As Israel was to depart in haste, the Spirit of God was pleased to enjoin a memorial of that haste, in the quality of the bread which they were touse, during the celebration of this festival. When liberty, dear liberty is in question, who so silly as to care, whether the taste be gratified or not, for a few days, with a less palatable kind of food? Our most perfect enjoyments in this world, and our highest attainments, have a mixture of bitterness, or of insipidity attending them: like the flesh of lambs, eaten with bitter herbs, and unfermented bread. The Jews, we know, were singularly diligent and curious, in searching out and removing from their houses, every thing leavened, during this sacred season. With superstitious scrupulousness, they prepared unleavened bread for themselves, and the poor, for months before the solemn day arrived. A few days previous to the feast, they cleansed all their vessels, and furniture,

LECT. VII.

ture. What could ſtand the fire, they purified with fire; what could not, they dipped in, or rinſed with water. Their marble mortars they had hollowed anew. The night preceding the day of unleavened bread, they lighted wax tapers, and prepared for a general ſearch after every remainder of leaven. The maſter of the family beginning the ceremony with this ſolemn addreſs to God, "Bleſſed art thou, "O Lord, who haſt commanded us to "put away all that is leavened out of "our houſes." --- All the males of the houſhold; maſter, children, domeſtics, aſſiſted in ſearching the whole houſe over, and examined into the moſt ſecret corners, leſt peradventure ſome lurking particle of leavened bread, or fermented dough might have been overlooked, in order to its being deſtroyed. As if this had not been ſufficient, that the family might be purged of all intentional violation of the commandment, the father of it concluded the ſearch with this ſolemn execration: "Let all the leaven that is "in my houſe, and which I have not

"been

"been able to find out or remove, be "ſcattered, and become like the ſmalleſt "duſt of the earth." An inſpired apoſtle is our interpreter of this part of the paſchal obſervance; ſo that we can be at no loſs about the meaning of the Spirit in its inſtitution. "Purge out there-"fore the old leaven, that ye may be a "new lump, as ye are unleavened. For "even Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed "for us. Therefore let us keep the "feaſt, not with old leaven; neither "with the leaven of malice and wick-"edneſs; but with the unleavened "bread of ſincerity and truth‖." The ſcrupulous exactneſs of the Jews, in their literal obedience to the commandment, is a ſevere and juſt reproof of many, many profeſſing Chriſtians, who ruſh to the celebration of the goſpel paſſover, with little preparation or ſeriouſneſs; and ſome, alas! deliberately hoarding up in their hearts, and ſecretly, greedily feed-

‖ 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

ing

LECT. VII. ing upon "the old leaven of malice and "wickedneſs."

Thirdly. The victim itſelf, claims our moſt ſerious attention. "A male lamb, "of the firſt year,"---"without ble-"miſh," to be taken, on the tenth day of the month, from his dam, kept apart for four days, and then killed!---Theſe are all tender and touching conſiderations. "A lamb:" The moſt innocent and gentle of animals: in the idea, and language of all ages and nations, another name for gentleneſs, harmleſſneſs, and ſimplicity; removed early from its only comfort and protection, its fond mother's ſide; deprived of liberty, and deſtined to bleed by the ſacrificing knife. Who can think of his plaintive bleatings, during the days of ſeparation, without being melted? What Iſraelitiſh heart ſo inſenſible, as not to yearn at the thought, that his life, and the comfort of his family, were to be preſerved, at the expence of the life of that inoffenſive little creature, whom he had ſhut up for the

ſlaughter,

ſlaughter, and which, in unſuſpicious confidence, licked the hand lifted up to ſhed its blood.

We have not long to ſearch for the ſpirit and ſubſtance of this part of the inſtitution: for all ſcripture preſſes upon our notice, "The LAMB OF GOD, who taketh "away the ſin of the world;"---ſlain, "in the eternal purpoſe from, and be-"fore, the foundation of the world; holy, "harmleſs, and undefiled;"---"deliver-"ed by the determinate counſel and fore-"knowledge of GOD*"---ſuffering the "Juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring "us to GOD." "Who was wounded for "*our* tranſgreſſions, who was bruiſed for "*our* iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our "peace was upon him, and with his "ſtripes we are healed:" the Lord laying on him "the iniquity of us all." Withdrawn, ſeparated from the boſom of his Father---delivered into the hands of men---pouring out his ſoul unto death.

* Acts ii. 23.

It

LECT. VII. It was to be, "a lamb of *the first year*," eight days old, at the least; a year, at the most. Not less than eight days, say the Jews, that there might intervene one sabbath from the birth of the victim; and that so the sacredness of this holy festival, might render it worthy of being offered unto God. More probably, because that till then, the animal was considered as too near a state of imperfection or impurity. It was not to exceed one year; because, to that age, it retains its lamb-like harmlessness and simplicity. Superstition, which is ever sinking the spirit in the letter, has asserted, that a single hour beyond the year, vitiated the victim, and rendered it profane.

But the figure, without straining for a resemblance, presents unto us, JESUS, "a Son born, and a Saviour given:" ours from the manger, ours to the tomb. His days cut off in the midst; at that period of life, when men are coming to their prime of vigour, beauty and usefulness. "A lamb, without blemish."---

Men

Men, who love to fritter away the ſpirit and meaning of divine inſtitutions, in literal interpretation, have gone into a particular enumeration of the various kinds of blemiſhes, which disqualified a ſacrifice, upon this occaſion; which they have multiplied to conſiderably above fifty. And what folly has taken pains to invent, ſuperſtition has been idle and weak enough to follow. The later Rabbins tell us, the lamb was ſet apart four days before the ſacrifice to afford leiſure and opportunity to enquire into its ſoundneſs and perfection; that if any unobſerved ſpot ſhould appear, there might be time to reject it, and to ſubſtitute another in its room. The Law itſelf is plain and ſimple; and no good Iſraelite, of common ſenſe, with the ſacred Charter in his hand, could poſſibly miſtake its meaning: which is ſimply to ſignify, that the good God is to be ſerved with the choiceſt and beſt of every thing. But the law evidently looked further, than to the mere corporal perfection or defects of a ſilly lamb: and we ſhould but ill underſtand both text

LECT. VII.

and

LECT. VII. and commentary, did we not look through the whole type, to HIM who is "without spot and blemish; who, though "born of a sinful mother, "did no sin;" who lived many years in the "midst of a sinful and adulterous generation," without contracting any taint of moral pollution; in whom "the prince of this world, when he came, found nothing;" and whom his agents, Judas and Pontius Pilate, the instruments of his condemnation and death, were constrained to acquit. "I have sinned, and betrayed innocent "blood:" said the one. "Take ye him, "and crucify him, for I find no fault "in him, said the other." "And when "the centurion saw what was done he "said, surely this was the Son of God!"

The very act of *selecting* the one victim, from among many, must have been an affecting office. Why should this innocent bleed and die, rather than another? Why should the notice of my eye, or his accidentally presenting himself first of the flock, or his superiour beauty and strength,

or the determination of the lot, doom him, in preference, to the ſlaughter? But one *muſt* die. Here the choice is fixed; and pity muſt not ſpare, what heaven has demanded. Theſe emotions of compaſſion, muſt have been frequently excited during the four days of ſeparation. The plaintive bleating, iſſuing from a tender, aching heart, robbed at once of its natural food, protection and comfort; feeling the bitterneſs of death, in the deprivation of maternal care and tenderneſs: the mournfully pleaſing employment, of ſupplying the devoted victim with aliment, up to the appointed hour: the cheriſhing and ſuſtaining with ſolicitude, that life to-day, which the ſtrong hand of neceſſity muſt take away to-morrow; all theſe awaken a thouſand undeſcribable feelings—How the heart is wrung, as often as the eye, or the ear, or the hand, is attracted to attend, or to miniſter to the little trembling priſoner! At length the fatal moment is come: And the afflicting alternative preſſes, "This innocent, or "my own firſt-born muſt ſuffer. If my "heart relent, lo, the flaming ſword of

LECT. VII. "the deſtroying Angel is within my "habitation. My reſolution is formed. "There is no room for deliberation. "Die thou, that my ſon may live."

But the Paſſover victim could have no preſentiment of its approaching fate. Happy in its ignorance, it could die but once. Chriſtians, need your eyes be directed to your great Goſpel Paſſover? Behold, your Atonement---deliberately choſen of God; fixed upon, in the maturity of eternal counſels; under the preſſure of the great decree; voluntarily preſenting, and ſurrendering himſelf!--- Behold him continually admoniſhed of his approaching ſufferings, and death; by his own divine preſcience, by the perpetual inſults and violence of wicked men, by the deſcent of Moſes and Elias to the mount of transfiguration. "The "deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh" at length, "at Jeruſalem," was continually aſſuming a blacker and a blacker complexion, from being foreſeen, foreknown, and more keenly felt, as the hour

hour drew nigh. Lo, he "treads the "wine-press alone." The dreadful conflict is begun. What "strong crying "with tears" do I hear? "Father, if "it be possible, let this cup pass from "me." What "great drops of blood" do I see, distilling from every pore, and "falling to the ground?"—Ah! the unrelenting executioner has begun to perform his infernal task: And yet, the bleeding "Lamb opens not his mouth." What sigh is that which pierces my soul? What strange accents burst upon my astonished ear? "My God, My God! "Why hast thou forsaken me?"—The conflict is at an end. He bows his head, "It is finished." The victim has "poured out his soul unto death." He has given up the ghost.---These "things "the angels desire to look into."

LECT. VIII.

"O the depth of the riches, both of "the wisdom and love of God! How "unsearchable are his judgments, and his "ways past finding out." Who can

LECT. VII. "comprehend, what is the breadth, and "length, and depth, and height:" Who "can know the love of Christ, which "passeth knowledge!"

LEC-

LECTURE VIII.

Exodus xii. 26, 27.

AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, WHEN YOUR CHILDREN SHALL SAY UNTO YOU, WHAT MEAN YOU BY THIS SERVICE? THAT YE SHALL SAY, IT IS THE SACRIFICE OF THE LORD'S PASSOVER, WHO PASSED OVER THE HOUSES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT, WHEN HE SMOTE THE EGYPTIANS, AND DELIVERED OUR HOUSES. AND THE PEOPLE BOWED THE HEAD, AND WORSHIPPED.

WITH

Pſalm xci. 5, 6, 7, 8.

THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID FOR THE TERROUR BY NIGHT; NOR FOR THE ARROW THAT FLYETH BY DAY; NOR FOR THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKETH

IN DARKNESS; NOR FOR THE DESTRUCTION THAT WASTETH AT NOON-DAY. A THOUSAND SHALL FALL AT THY SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT THY RIGHT HAND: BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NIGH THEE. ONLY WITH THINE EYES SHALT THOU BEHOLD, AND SEE THE REWARD OF THE WICKED.

LECT. VIII.

THE great JEHOVAH, in all the works of his hands, and in all the ways of his providence, is ever preparing grander displays of his divine perfection, than those which have been already submitted to our view. This visible creation, fair, and vast, and magnificent as it is, being composed of perishing materials, and destined, in the eternal plan, to a temporary duration, is passing away, to give place to "New "heavens, and a new earth, wherein "dwelleth righteousness." He who made all things at first saith, "Behold, "I make all things, new." The whole Jewish œconomy, "The adoption, and "the glory, and the covenants, and "the

"the giving of the law, and the ſervice "of God, and the promiſes:" The patriarchs and the prophets, with all they ſaid, acted and wrote, were but "the "preparation of the goſpel of peace;" and all iſſue in Chriſt the Lord, "in "whom all the promiſes are yea, and "amen, to the glory of God the Father." And the kingdom of *grace*, under the great Redeemer, is only leading to the kingdom of *glory*.

It is both pleaſant and uſeful, to obſerve the nature, the occaſion and the deſign of ſacred inſtitutions. A cloſer inſpection, generally diſcovers much more than is apparent at firſt ſight. The ordinance of the Paſſover, owes its inſtitution, to an event of conſiderable imp tance in the hiſtory of mankind; and its abrogation, to a ſtill greater. Its celebration, commemorates the deſtruction of all the firſt-born in Egypt, and the redemption of Iſrael. Its abolition, marks that moſt memorable æra, the death of God's own eternal ſon, and the redemption of a loſt

LECT. VIII. world by the ſhedding of his precious blood. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if, in an ordinance, which was intended to expire in the ſacrifice of the great "Lamb of Atonement," ſlain "from the foundation of the world," its divine Author ſhould have thought proper to enjoin many particulars, which, figuratively and ſymbolically, pointed out "good things to come," as well as literally expreſſed good things preſent.

Several of theſe ſignificant circumſtances, we took occaſion to point out to you in the laſt Lecture.—The commencement of the year was changed. The memory of nature's birth, was ſunk as it were, in the memory of the Church's deliverance; and a joyful expectation was excited, of the gradual approach of "the "fulneſs of time," the day, the New-year's day, of the world's redemption.--- In that ſacred feſtival was ſeen, God drawing nigh to his Iſrael, in loving-kindneſs, tender mercy and faithfulneſs; and Iſrael, drawing nigh to their God, in

in gratitude, love, and obedience.—The feaſt was prepared by the removal of all leaven, the emblem of "malice and "wickedneſs;" and eaten with unleavened bread, the emblem of "ſincerity "and truth."—The victim was appointed to be, a "lamb of the firſt year, without "blemiſh," choſen from among the flock, ſet apart, and killed, to preſerve the life of him who poured out and ſprinkled its blood; the figure of Him who was to come; "the Lamb of God" "who beareth the ſin of the world." holy, harmleſs, gentle, patient; "deli-"vered according to the determinate "counſel and fore-knowledge of God:" "ſuffering, the juſt, for the unjuſt, that "he might bring us to God." We are now to continue the ſubject.

All Iſrael was engaged in the ſame ſervice, at the ſame inſtant of time, and for the ſelf-ſame reaſon. All deſcended from the ſame common ſtock, all included within the bond of the ſame covenant, all involved in the ſame general diſtreſs, all deſtined of heaven, to a participation in the

LECT. VIII. the ſame ſalvation—They appear in the Paſchal ſolemnity, a beautiful, and an inſtructive repreſentation, of the great, united, harmonious family of God: who are "one "body, one ſpirit, and are called in one "hope of their calling:" "Who have "one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm:--- "One God and Father of all; who is "above all, through all, and in all." And who are all coming, "in the uni- "ty of the faith, and of the knowledge "of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, "unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the "fulneſs of Chriſt*."

As the Church in general, had one and the ſame ſacrifice, a lamb of the deſcription which has been mentioned; ſo every particular family, or neighbourhood, according to their number, had their own particular ſacrifice, and in that their particular protection and repaſt. The charity which comprehended the whole Iſrael of God, was thus invigorated and

* Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. 13.

en-

enlivened, by being collected and concentered; and the ſacred fire of love, which was in danger of being extinguiſhed by being diſperſed too extenſively, being thus confined within a narrower circle, lighting on fewer and nearer objects, and aided by reciprocal ſympathy and ardour, was blown up into a purer flame. A happy prefiguration, of the bleſſed influence of the goſpel, and its ſacred inſtitutions, to rectify, to rivet, and to improve the charities of private life; to ſhed peace and joy upon every condition and relation; gradually to expand the heart, through the progreſſive, continually enlarging circles of natural affection, friendſhip, love of country, love of mankind, love to ALL the creation of God.

What muſt it have been to an Iſraelitiſh parent, ſtanding with his children around him, to eat the Lord's Paſſover, to reflect, That while the arrows of the Almighty were falling thick upon the tents of Ham, *his* tabernacle was ſecured from the ſtroke: that while all the firſt-

born

LECT. VIII. born in Egypt were bleeding by the hand of the deſtroying angel: of *him*, a holy and righteous God demanded no victim, but one from the flock; ſpared a darling ſon, and accepted the blood of a lamb! What muſt have been the emotions of the Iſraelitiſh firſt-born themſelves, at that awful hour, to reflect on the ſtate of their unhappy neighbours, of the ſame deſcription with themſelves; and on their own condition; had juſtice, untempered with mercy, ſtruck the blow! Such as this, but ſuperiour, as the deliverance is greater, muſt be the joy of a truly chriſtian family, which has hope in God, through Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, in reflecting on that grace, which has made a difference between them and their ſinful neighbours; which has ſeaſonably warned them "to flee from the wrath that is "to come;" which has "delivered their "ſouls from death, their eyes from tears, "their feet from falling." What muſt be the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of every believer in Chriſt Jeſus, in the confidence of being ſprinkled with the blood of atone-

atonement, of "being at peace with "God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," of being "passed from death unto life?" What a happy community, the redeemed of the Lord! Wherever scattered on the face of the whole earth; gathered together in their glorious Head: separated by oceans and mountains, but united in interest and affection: hated, despised, persecuted of the world; cherished, esteemed, protected of the Almighty!

The sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation were *many*, because they were imperfect. The sacrifice of the Gospel is ONE; because once offered, it "for ever "perfects them that are sanctified by it." The ancient institution prescribed, A whole Lamb, for every several family; The Gospel exhibits, a whole and complete Saviour for every several elect sinner: And that Saviour at once a teacher, an atonement, a ruler; "Wisdom, "righteousness, sanctification, and re-"demption."

The

LECT. VIII.

The *application* of the blood of the deſtined victim, in this inſtitution, is a moſt remarkable circumſtance. "They "ſhall take of the blood, and ſtrike it "on the two ſide poſts, and on the up-"per door-poſt of the houſes wherein "they ſhall eat it." It muſt not be ſpilt upon the ground, as a worthleſs thing; nor ſprinkled in the entering in of the door, to be trampled upon, as an unholy thing; but above, and on either ſide; to be a covering to the head, and a bulwark around. "When I ſee the blood I will "paſs over you." Could the all-diſcerning eye of God ſtand in need of ſuch a token, in order to judge between an Iſraelite and an Egyptian? No. But the diſtinctions of God's love avail them not, who wilfully and wickedly neglect the diſtinctions of faith and obedience. The blood in the baſon, is the ſame with the blood on the door-poſt; but it is no protection, till it be believingly applied. The virtue is dormant, till ſprinkling call it forth. Surely, this part of the ceremony ſpeaks to the Chriſtian World

for

for itſelf. Why is mention ſtill made of blood, blood? "the ſhedding of blood," "the ſprinkling of blood," "redemption "through blood;" and the like? It denotes the life, which conſiſts in the blood of the animal: and inſtructs us in this momentous doctrine: That life being forfeited by ſin, the blood muſt be ſhed; that is, the life muſt be yielded up, before atonement to juſtice can be made: That the ſubſtitution and acceptance of one life in the room of another, muſt depend upon the will and appointment of the offended lawgiver: That the blood of ſlain beaſts, having no value nor virtue of its own, to take away ſin, muſt derive all its efficacy from the appointment of heaven, and its relation to a victim of a higher order: and that the blood, or life of this ONE victim yielded up to divine juſtice, is, through its intrinſic worth, and the decree of God, of virtue ſufficient to take away the ſins of the whole world.

But as in the original inſtitution, the blood

LECT. VIII. blood of the lamb ſlain was no protection to the houſe, till ſprinkled with a bunch of hyſſop on the parts of the building, and in the manner directed; ſo the ſovereign balm, appointed of the Moſt High, for the cure of the deadly plague of ſin, the price of pardon to the guilty, the life of the dead, becomes effectual to the relief of the guilty, periſhing ſinner, by a particular application of it, to his own "wounds, bruiſes, putrifying "ſores." Faith, eyeing the commandment, the power of God, and the grace of Chriſt, is like the bunch of hyſſop in the hand of the paſchal worſhipper, ſprinkling the blood of atonement, upon "the upper door-poſt, and the two ſide-"poſts," the underſtanding, the heart, the life, the ruling, and the governed powers of our nature, that the whole may be accepted through the Beloved.

I conclude this part of my ſubject, with quoting a paſſage from the Targum of Jonathan, reſpecting the ſprinkling of the blood of the paſchal Lamb, as it

was

was performed by the children of Iſrael in Egypt, which has ſtruck myſelf, as uncommonly beautiful and ſublime.---

"When the glory of the Lord was "revealed in Egypt, in the night of the "paſſover, and when he ſlew all the firſt-"born of the Egyptians; he rode upon "lightning. He ſurveyed the inmoſt "receſſes of our habitations; he ſtopped "behind the walls of our houſes; his "eyes obſerved the poſts of our doors: "they pierced through the caſements. "He perceived the blood of circumciſion, "and the blood of the paſchal lamb "ſprinkled upon us. He viewed his "people from the heights of heaven, and "ſaw them eating the paſſover, roaſted "with fire: he ſaw and had compaſſion "upon us; he ſpared, and ſuffered not "the deſtroying angel to hurt us."

The inferiour circumſtances reſpecting the ſacrifice are theſe. The fleſh of the victim was to be eaten, in the night ſeaſon, not in a crude ſtate, nor boiled in

LECT. VIII.

water, but roaſted with fire; no bone of it was to be broken; no remnant of it left until the morning; or elſe the remains were to be conſumed by fire. I am unwilling entirely to paſs over theſe circumſtances, as if they were of no eſpecial meaning or importance; for I am thoroughly convinced, every iota and tittle relating to this ordinance, has a ſpecific meaning and deſign. But I frankly acknowledge, I cannot diſcern that deſign in every particular; and am far from being ſatisfied, with the fanciful and unſupported illuſtrations of ſome commentators upon the paſſage. Should I myſelf ſeem, to any, to have given too much into imagination and conjecture, in my ideas of it, or in what is farther to be offered,—the nature of the ſubject, the ſilence of Scripture, the conſciouſneſs of honeſtly aiming at your rational entertainment and religious inſtruction; and the humble hope that theſe conjectures are, and ſhall be conformed to the analogy of faith, and if erroneous, innocently ſo; Theſe will, I am perſuaded, ſecure me a

patient

patient hearing, and a candid interpretation. LECT. VIII.

The time of the feaſt was the night ſeaſon; the very juncture when the aweful ſcene was acting, which marred the glory, and blaſted the ſtrength of Egypt. Inconſiderate men muſt have their attention rouſed and fixed, by ſtrong and ſtriking circumſtances. The moment of execution, the hour of battle, and the like, are awfully intereſting to a ſerious, humane, and public-ſpirited perſon. Every ſon of Iſrael knew, that at the very moment he was eating his unleavened cake with gladneſs, and the fleſh of lambs, with a merry heart, "Thouſands were "falling at his ſide; and ten thouſand "at his right hand." What an alarming demonſtration of divine Juſtice! What an encouraging diſplay of goodneſs and mercy! Were the eye opened to ſee God as he is; were the powers of an inviſible world habitually felt, every creature, every ſeaſon, every event, would poſſeſs a quickening, an active, a conſtraining

LECT. VIII.

influence over us. But blind, ſtupid, ſluggiſh as we are, the midnight bell muſt toll, to rouſe us to reflection:--- Death muſt aſſume the complexion of ſable night, and add artificial to natural horrour, in order to make way into our ſtony hearts. And God, who knows what is in man, vouchſafes to inſtruct his thoughtleſſneſs and folly, by acting through the medium of powerful and awakening circumſtances, upon our imagination and ſenſes. Hence, poſſibly, the injunction to eat the Paſſover by night.

It was to be "roaſted with fire," not eaten raw, nor ſodden with water. To eat fleſh in a crude ſtate, is unnatural and unwholeſome. And we never find the religious inſtitutions of the living and true God, doing violence to innocent natural propenſities and averſions, or incroaching on the health and life of his worſhippers: for he ſaith "I will have "mercy and not ſacrifice." Why the one method of preparing it, was commanded of God, in preference to the other,

other, we pretend not ſatisfyingly to account for. Was it to ſecure an uniformity of practice, in the minuteſt circumſtances relating to his worſhip? Was it to form his Church and People to implicit obedience to his will, in points which they comprehend not, as in thoſe which they well underſtand;---in all caſes whatever, whether he be pleaſed to render, or to withhold a reaſon? Was it intended as a ſymbolical repreſentation of their late condition; tried, and prepared, and refined, in the fire of Egyptian oppreſſion; purged, but not conſumed by it? Was it a figurative view of the judgment of God then executing:---Egypt, ſcorched with the flame; Iſrael, enlightened, ſeaſoned, purified by it? Did it look forward unto, and ſignify ſome particular circumſtance in the perſon, the doctrine, or ſufferings of the great evangelical ſacrifice? O Lord, Thou knoweſt. "Secret things belong to thee, but "things which are revealed, belong un-"to us, and to our children." We thank thee for what thou haſt conde-

LECT. VIII. ſcended to reveal to us; and would not preſume to "be wiſe, above what is "written."

"Not a bone" of the paſchal Lamb was to "be broken." This, as well as ſome of the foregoing circumſtances, is by ſundry commentators, ſuppoſed to be intended as a contradiction to various Pagan ſuperſtitions; and particularly to the frantic behaviour of the votaries of Bacchus; who in the fumes of intoxication, or religious frenzy, committed a thouſand abominations and extravagances; fell into violent agitations, the pretended inſpiration of their GOD; devoured the yet palpitating fleſh of the victims which they had juſt killed, and broke all their bones to pieces. But, the idolatrous rites of the heathen nations, were ſo various, and ſo contradictory one to another, that we can hardly imagine the great JEHOVAH would condeſcend to expreſs any concern, whether the rites of his worſhip, were in every inſtance, either conformed, or oppoſed to the uſages of idolatry. A very

very famous critic†, assigns a very silly reason, for this branch of the commandment. He alledges it was another indication of the extreme haste with which the Passover was to be eaten. "Men "in a hurry," says he, "do not stand to "pick bones; much less do they take "leisure to break them, for the sake of the "juice or marrow." As if it required more time to sever the joints, and break the bones by violence, than to dissect and disunite the parts without a fracture. The simple meaning of the precept seems to be, that what was once offered to God, should not be unnecessarily disfigured and mangled. The blood must be shed; for that was the seal of God's Covenant; the flesh might be eaten, for it was given for the sustenance of man's life; but the bones, forming no part either of food or sacrifice, were to be left in the state in which they were found, till consumed by fire with the remainder of the flesh, if any remained, the next morning. And,

† Bochart Hieroz, par. i. lib. ii. cap. l. fol. 609.

LECT. VIII. is it not extremely probable, that God might intend, by certain arbitrary tokens, to deſcribe the Meſſiah; and, that the prohibition to break the bones of the Paſchal Lamb was deſigned to be a type, of a remarkable circumſtance attending the crucifixion of our Saviour, which Providence watched over with ſpecial attention, and brought about by a miracle. "But when the ſoldiers came to Jeſus, "and ſaw that he was dead already, "they brake not his legs*." And it is clear from what follows, that the Evangeliſt conſidered the precept of the law, as a prophecy of Chriſt; "For theſe "things were done, ſays he, that the Scrip-"ture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of "him ſhall not be broken‡." In many caſes it happens, that the prediction was either not attended to, or had not been underſtood, till the event has explained it.

Nothing of it was to be "left until "the morning." This circumſtance

* John xix. 33. ‡ Verſe 36.

was

was not peculiar to the ſacrifice of the Paſchal Lamb, but common to almoſt every other kind of oblation.--- This will appear, if we conſult the general laws reſpecting ſacrifice. Thus the preſcription runs. "And the fleſh of "the ſacrifice of his peace offerings for "thankſgiving, ſhall be eaten the ſame "day that it is offered; he ſhall not "leave any of it until the morning.‖ And again, "When a bullock or ſheep, "or a goat is brought forth, then it ſhall "be ſeven days under the dam, and "from the eighth day and thenceforth, "it ſhall be accepted for an offering made "by fire unto the LORD. And whether "it be cow or ewe, ye ſhall not kill it "and her young both in one day. And "when ye will offer a ſacrifice of thankſ-"giving unto the LORD, offer it at your "own will. On the ſame day it ſhall "be eaten up, ye ſhall leave none "of it until the morrow; I am the "LORD§." The ſolemn affix, "I am

‖ Lev. vii. 15. § xxii. 27, 28, 29, 30.

"the

LECT. VIII. "the LORD," ſeems to inſinuate, that the reaſon of the commandment was to be ſought in the majeſty and authority of the law-giver. And, independent of authority, decency ſeems to require, that what has once been devoted to a hallowed uſe, ſhould never afterwards appear in a mangled, impure or putrid ſtate. Perhaps, ſuperſtition was, by this precept, obliquely, or intentionally reproved and repreſſed; ſuperſtition, which loves to feed upon ſcraps, and to hoard up relicks, as if they were ſacred things; ſuperſtition, which gives to the fragments of the ſacriſice, the veneration due only to the ſacrifice itſelf, and to the great author of it.

We muſt notice the remaining particulars of this ſervice, in the manner in which it was originally performed, "in haſte," "ſtanding," "with loins girded," "with "ſtaff in hand," ready to depart. The lamb was to be eaten with "bitter herbs." A repreſentation, perhaps, of the mixed nature of every ſublunary enjoyment; and of the wholeſome uſes of unpalatable ad-

adverſity. The "ſtanding" poſture, and the implements of travelling, ſpeak a plain and diſtinct language. "Ariſe ye, and de-"part, for this is not your reſt." "Here we "have no abiding city, but look for one "to come." "Now we deſire a better "country, that is, an heavenly." "Ariſe, "let us go hence." A proviſion was graciouſly made, for ſuch as might be ceremonially unclean, at the future ſeaſons of celebration; and the door of mercy and communion was opened to ſtrangers. Bleſſed prefiguration, of the remedy provided for the chief of ſinners; of the refuge opened for the reception of "aliens "from the commonwealth of Iſrael;" of the liberal, condeſcending, comprehenſive ſpirit of the goſpel! Chriſtians, ye "are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, "but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and "of the houſhold of God." "Thoſe "who *were* afar off, *are* made nigh by "the blood of Chriſt."

Men and brethren, the time is at hand, when a more fearful midnight cry ſhall be

LECT. VIII.

be heard, than even that which ſmitten, groaning Egypt, raiſed in the hour of vengeance. "The day of the Lord ſhall "come as a thief in the night." "Be-"hold he cometh with clouds, and every "eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo which "pierced him; and all kindreds of the "earth ſhall wail becauſe of him." Behold, a careleſs, ſlumbering world, a world lying in wickedneſs, is threatened with a death infinitely more dreadful, than that which deſtroyed the firſt-born. "The ſecond death." A living death of everlaſting baniſhment "from the preſence "of the Lord, and from the glory of his "power. From that laſt plague, there is no ſecurity but one; the ſecurity, of which, the "blood of ſprinkling" under the law, was but a type. "Run to "your ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope." "Flee, flee for refuge; lay hold of the "hope that is ſet before you," "Behold, "now is the accepted time; behold, "now is the day of ſalvation." "If "God be for us; who can be againſt "us?" "He that ſpared not his own "ſon,

"ſon, but delivered him up for us "all; how ſhall he not with him alſo "freely give us all things? Who ſhall "lay any thing to the charge of God's "elect? It is God that juſtifieth. Who "is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt "that died, yea rather that is riſen again, "who is even at the right hand of God, "who alſo maketh interceſſion for us*."

How many things in the ſcriptures; in Moſes, in the Prophets; in the law, in the goſpel; are dark, and hard to be underſtood? But the hour cometh, when the veil ſhall be removed from our eyes; when the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, ſhall ſtand confeſſed, without a myſtery; ſhall be ſeen and read of all men. "What" he doth, "ye know not now, but ye "ſhall know hereafter." "We know in "part, and we prophesy in part. But "when that which is perfect is come, "then that which is in part ſhall be done "away." "For now we ſee through a

* Rom. viii. 32. 33. 34.

"glaſs,

LECT. VIII. "glaſs, darkly; but then face to face; "now I know in part, but then ſhall I "know, even as alſo I am known†."

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

LEC.

LECTURE IX.

Exodus xiii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN PHARAOH HAD LET THE PEOPLE GO, THAT GOD LED THEM NOT THROUGH THE WAY OF THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES, ALTHOUGH THAT WAS NEAR: FOR GOD SAID, LEST PERADVENTURE THE PEOPLE REPENT WHEN THEY SEE WAR, AND THEY RETURN TO EGYPT. BUT GOD LED THE PEOPLE ABOUT, THROUGH THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS OF THE RED SEA; AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT UP HARNESSED OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. AND MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM: FOR HE HAD STRAITLY SWORN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, SAYING, GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU; AND YE SHALL CARRY UP MY BONES AWAY HENCE WITH YOU.

AND

LECT. IX.

AND THEY TOOK THEIR JOURNEY FROM SUCCOTH, AND ENCAMPED IN ETHAM, IN THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS. AND THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM BY DAY IN A PILLAR OF A CLOUD, TO LEAD THEM THE WAY; AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, TO GIVE THEM LIGHT; TO GO BY DAY AND NIGHT. HE TOOK NOT AWAY THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD BY DAY, NOR THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT, FROM BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

ALL that weak, ignorant, erring man can know, is a few of the ſmaller objects which are immediately around him; and of theſe, but a few of the more obvious qualities which they poſſeſs, and the relations in which they ſtand to one another. Remove them but a little, as to ſpace or time, and they gradually diſappear, till they are, at length, involved in total darkneſs. The diſtance of a few leagues terminates our viſion; the lapſe of a few years eraſes all traces from our memory. The cloud of night conceals, or changes the appearance of things the

nearest

neareſt to us, and the moſt perfectly known. Here, we are dazzled and confounded by an exceſs of light; there, we are checked and repulſed by dimneſs and obſcurity. The ſun forbids us to behold his face by reaſon of his ſplendour; the earth and the ſea preſent to us but their ſurface; and the heavens oppoſe to the eager eye a vault of chryſtal, ſaying "Hitherto "ſhalt thou come, but no further."--- We feel ourſelves hedged in, fettered, confined on every ſide. And our condition, in this reſpect, is that of every created, limited being. Open proſpect after proſpect; expand ſyſtem upon ſyſtem; add faculty to faculty; the proſpect is bounded at length. Suns and worlds are capable of being numbered, and there is a height and depth ſtill beyond, which the underſtanding of an angel cannot fathom.

There is only ONE Being whoſe duration is immeaſurable---whoſe ſpace is unconfined---whoſe power is uncontroled,---whoſe underſtanding is infinite.---

LECT. IX. With JEHOVAH, a thousand years are as "one day; and one day as a thousand "years." He alone can "declare the "end from the beginning, and from "ancient times, the things that are not "yet done, saying, My counsel shall "stand, and I will do all my pleasure*." HE is "above all, and through all, and "in all!" An impenetrable veil hides futurity from every created eye: but the Spirit of prophecy is pleased sometimes to remove it. Abraham saw the Redeemer's day afar off, and rejoiced. He saw in vision, the servitude, the affliction, and the deliverance of his posterity, at the distance of four hundred years. To mortal man, whose longest span of existence is diminished to much under a century, four hundred years have something like the appearance of an Eternity; but before God, time and space are contracted to a point, to a moment. With him, that which is to be done, is already done. Men shape events according to their fancy,

* Isaiah 46. 10.

their

their fears, their wiſhes, or their hopes. But "the counſel of the Lord, it ſhall "ſtand, and he fulfilleth all his plea-"ſure. What was the *word* of the Lord to Abraham? "And he ſaid unto "Abram, Know of a ſurety, that thy "ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land that "is not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them, "and they ſhall afflict them four hund-"red years. And alſo that nation "whom they ſhall ſerve will I judge: "and afterward ſhall they come out with "great ſubſtance*." What was the *doing* of the Lord, in conformity to that word? "And it came to paſs, that at midnight "the LORD ſmote all the firſt-born in "the land of Egypt, from the firſt-born "of Pharaoh that ſat on his throne, un-"to the firſt-born of the captive that "was in the dungeon, and all the firſt-"born of cattle." "And the children "of Iſrael did according to the word of "Moſes: and they borrowed of the E-

* Gen. xv. 13, 14.

LECT. IX.

"gyptians, jewels of ſilver, and jewels "of gold, and raiment. And the Lord "gave the people favour in the ſight of "the Egyptians, ſo that they lent unto "them ſuch things as they required: "and they ſpoiled the Egyptians."--- Iſrael came into Egypt, few in number, weak, and indigent; but they go out from the land of their oppreſſion, greatly increaſed, mighty, and formidable; laden with the ſpoils of their cruel oppreſſors, the well-earned reward of the labours of many years, and of much ſorrow.

It is repeatedly remarked, that the prediction relating to the deliverance of God's People, was fulfilled to a ſingle day. Of this we have a confirmation in the preceding chapter, and the forty-firſt verſe; "And it came to paſs, at the end "of the four hundred and thirty years, "even the *ſelf-ſame day*, it came to paſs, "that all the hoſts of the LORD, went "out of the land of Egypt." Again, at the 51ſt verſe; "And it came to paſs, "the *ſelf-ſame day*, that the LORD did "bring

"bring the children of Iſrael out of the "land of Egypt by their armies." And yet, on comparing numbers, in the prediction, and the hiſtory of its accompliſhment, we find a difference of thirty years. The Seventy Interpreters were aware of this difficulty, and have obviated it, by thus paraphraſing the paſſage in Exodus, "The ſojourning of the Chil-"dren of Iſrael, in the land of *Canaan*, "and in the land of Egypt, was four "hundred and thirty years." To juſtify which computation, we need but to obſerve, that Moſes, in the four hundred and thirty years, includes all the time that Abraham had paſſed in Canaan, previous to the birth of Iſaac. And a learned prelate of our own country, Archbiſhop Uſher, in his valuable chronology, has proved this calculation to be juſt. For Abraham was exactly twenty-five years in Canaan before Iſaac was born*.---

* Jacob was born to Iſaac when he was ſixty years old; and at the time he went down to Egypt, according to *his own declaration* to Pharaoh, he was

LECT. IX.

From the birth of Isaac to the Exodus from Egypt, was four hundred and five, which completes the four hundred and thirtieth year, mentioned in this passage, and by Paul, in the third of the Galatians, 17th verse. Thus perfect are all the ways and works of God: thus absolute his power, over all persons and all events! No skill, no ardour, no violent efforts on the part of Israel could accelerate their enlargement.---Nor could the combined strength of Egypt, of mankind, of created Nature, retard it, one single hour!

one hundred and thirty; which added to the twenty-five years of Abraham's pilgrimage, from his leaving Ur of the Chaldees, to the birth of Isaac, make two hundred and fifteen. He and his posterity continued in Egypt, a like period of two hundred and fifteen years. So that it is plain, Moses, reckoned in the whole sum of four hundred and thirty years, all the pilgrimages of Abraham and his posterity, from his first leaving his kindred and father's house in Mesopotamia, down to their triumphant exit from Egypt, and their setting out on the conquest of Canaan, whose iniquity though not before, was now full.

To

LECT. IX.

To preſerve to all generations, the memory of a period, ſo ſingular, and ſo important in their hiſtory, the ordinance of the paſſover, was to be honoured with an annual celebration; and, as poſitive and arbitrary inſtitutions derive all their value and uſe, from a right underſtanding of their meaning, and the deſign of their author, expreſs words are put into the mouths of parents and heads of families, for the inſtruction of generations to come, in the nature and reaſon of this ſolemn ſervice. "And thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſon "in that day, ſaying, *This is done*, be-"cauſe of that which the LORD did unto "me, when I came forth out of Egypt. "And it ſhall be for a ſign unto thee, "upon thine hand, and for a memorial "between thine eyes, that the Lord's "Law may be in thy mouth: for with "a ſtrong hand, hath the Lord brought "thee out of Egypt." And it ſhall "be when thy ſon aſketh thee, in time "to come, ſaying, What is this? that "thou ſhalt ſay unto him, By ſtrength "of hand, the Lord brought us out

LECT. IX.

"from Egypt, from the houſe of bond-
"age. And it came to paſs, when
"Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that
"the Lord ſlew all the firſt-born in the
"land of Egypt, both the firſt-born of
"man, and the firſt-born of beaſts: there-
"fore I ſacrifice to the Lord all that
"openeth the matrix, being males; but
"all the firſt-born of my children I
"redeem. Hence it appears that, be-
ſides this great annual ſacrifice, a law
was enacted, at this time, though
it was not to be enforced, until they
ſhould be put in poſſeſſion of the pro-
miſed land, that in grateful remembrance
of God's paſſing over their firſt-born,
when he deſtroyed thoſe of Egypt, the
firſt-born of the human ſpecies, and alſo
of the brute creation, through every age,
ſhould be dedicated and ſet apart as a
ſacred property. The great Legiſlator
was pleaſed afterwards, by a particular
injunction, to appropriate to himſelf one
whole tribe out of the twelve, in room
of the firſt-born out of every tribe, to
miniſter unto him in holy things; and in
this ordinance, the Church of God, at that
this

early period, both exhibited and enjoyed an emblematical representation of the evangelical priesthood; not vested in, and exclusively belonging to a particular description of men, but the common character and dignity of all Christians; a "generation chosen of God, in Christ, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a "peculiar people--that they should shew "forth the praises of Him, who hath "called them out of darkness into his "marvellous light."---And who are introduced before the throne, with this song of praise in their mouths, "Unto "Him that loved us, and washed us "from our sins in his own blood, and "hath made us kings and priests unto "God and his father; to him be glory "and dominion for ever and ever, Amen*."

Is it not worth while to compare, seeing the Spirit of God has thought it meet to transmit to us the very numbers, the entire state of Israel, as it were, at the time of its descent into Egypt, and at its departure thence. The whole num-

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

ber

LECT. IX. ber which accompanied Jacob from Canaan, when driven thence by the famine, himſelf included, was ſixty-ſix: Which, added to the family of Joſeph, already in Egypt, conſiſting of himſelf, Aſenath the daughter of the prieſt of On, adopted by marriage into the family of Abraham, and their two ſons, the amount is ſeventy—When they left that country, in a period of little more than two hundred years, they are increaſed to the amazing ſum of ſix hundred thouſand men of military age, without reckoning females, children of both ſexes, under twenty, and old men of ſixty and upward: for that was the age of ſuperannuation among this people. Taking therefore the calculation ſo low, as four of all the other deſcriptions, for one of the military age, that is, males from twenty to ſixty, the whole number of the deſcendants of Abraham that left Egypt muſt have been at leaſt three millions. So that, dividing the whole time of their ſojourning there, into periods of twenty years, it appears that their number multiplied nearly three times

every

every twenty years. Now if we consider, that the most rapid state of population, in the ordinary course of nature, and in circumstances the most favourable to it, is a *doubling* the number of inhabitants, every twenty years; and that, only in the earlier ages of a people or colony—What must we think of this amazing increase, in circumstances the most unfavourable: in a people cooped up in a narrow district; and that district not their own, but the property of a nation much more powerful than themselves; a people among whom marriage was grievously discouraged by the want of liberty, by hard and oppressive labour, by subjection to the despotism of a foreign prince, by penal edicts, which doomed all their male children to death, and by which, doubtless, multitudes perished, together with their natural increase? The multiplication of Israel, in a proportion so great, in a progress so rapid, in a situation so unfriendly, will be found a miracle, though less striking to a superficial observation, being

gra-

LECT. IX. gradually and imperceptibly performed, in reality, upon closer attention, a prodigy equal or superior to any that were wrought, in immediately effecting their enfranchisement. And this leads us to the grateful acknowledgment of God's wise and gracious Providence in its ordinary operations and effects. What is daily preservation, but Creation---one omnifick "LET THERE "BE,---daily, every instant repeated?--- What is the progress of vegetation, life and reason, but the continual interposition of the great source of all being, life and intelligence? What is dissolution and death, but the supporting, vivifying power of God, with-drawn from the body it just now inhabited?

This vast host, was accompanied with what Moses calls a mixed multitude. This is supposed to have been made up of the produce of marriages between Israelites and Egyptians; of Egyptians, who from the miracles they had seen wrought in favour of Israel, had been determined to follow the fortunes of that people;

people ; and of neighbours, who in the ordinary intercourſe of mankind might be brought into contact with them, and through fear, intereſt or curioſity, might be induced to follow their camp. LECT. IX.

Men, with their uſual ignorance and haſte, would have been for conducting this mighty army directly to Canaan. And no doubt, the ſame almighty arm which had thus aſſerted them into liberty, could have led them ſtraight on to conqueſt. But in ſtudying the hiſtory of the divine conduct, as ordering and governing the affairs of men, we find it is compoſed of the interpoſitions of heaven, and the exertions of men. Not *all* miracle : That were to encourage eternal indolence and ſtupidity in rational beings, formed after the image of God, and to reduce men to mere paſſive clods of earth : nor all, on the other hand, the effect of human ſkill, induſtry and diligence ; that were to reſign the government of the world to the frail and the fooliſh ; that were to weaken the power of religion, which is the life,

the

LECT. IX. the joy, the guide, the ſupporter of the univerſe. But we diſcover divine interpoſition to a certain degree, ſo as to inſpire a reaſonable confidence in, and dependance upon God; and the exertions of men, through the bleſſing of heaven upon them, ſo as to enforce the neceſſity of bringing out, and exerciſing the powers and faculties of our intellectual nature. Iſrael is delivered from Egypt at once; but is introduced into Canaan by degrees. The former, an act of ſovereign power unmixed with, independent upon human efforts; the latter, the leſs perceptible operations of omnipotence, blending themſelves with, ſubduing, directing, and promoting the deſigns and endeavours of reaſonable beings, who had a great object in view, and a clear rule to walk by. Thus, in a caſe of univerſal importance, juſtification and adoption, are acts of free, ſovereign grace, whereby ſin is forgiven, and the right and privileges of ſons conferred; whereas ſanctification is the gradual work of the ſpirit, ſupporting us by the way, overcoming our enemies by

little

little and little, and making us "meet to "be partakers of the inheritance of the "saints in light." LECT. IX.

A great multitude of people, is always an object of serious attention, and of deep anxiety. Many mouths were to be fed, many humours to be studied, many talents to be employed. Some were to be gained by love, others to be governed by fear; the impetuosity of one to be repressed, the timidity and diffidence of another to be countenanced and encouraged; care to be exercised about those who were either unable or unwilling, to exercise any about themselves. What a charge then, was that of Moses and Aaron! bearing on their shoulders the burden of such an assembly; agitated with the ordinary passions of human nature; unarmed, unaccustomed to discipline, untractable; one moment elated with extravagant hopes, the next, depressed with unreasonable fears. The wisdom of a Moses, had been unequal to the task, unsupported by the wisdom which sees all things at one view, and the power

which

LECT. IX. which "worketh all things after the counſel of his own will."

There is a happy diſpoſition in all the evils to which our nature and condition are ſubject, to find out and apply their own remedy. Neceſſity always ſets invention to work. Invention puts the machine in motion; and once in motion, every wheel keeps its place, exerts its power, performs its office. But here, the mighty machine, prepared in all its parts according to the plan of infinite wiſdom, put together and regulated by the hand of almighty power, and unchangeable truth and faithfulneſs, could not vary its motion, could not deviate from its deſign: and the paſſage of perhaps four millions of people, with their immenſe poſſeſſions of flocks and herds, and other property from Egypt to Canaan, will appear one of thoſe ſingular phœnomena in hiſtory, which no principles of human conduct, no natural and ordinary concurrence of events are able to explain; and which muſt finally be

reſolved

refolved into a wiſdom and power preternatural and divine. Accordingly we find Providence taking immediately the charge of them; but not in the uſual way: not by forming a regular diſcipline, and raiſing up commanders and magiſtrates of unuſual addreſs and ability, but declaring by ſenſible tokens, ſeen, read and underſtood of all, "I am the Leader and "*commander* of my people."

But before we proceed to the conſideration of this wonderful ſymbol of the divine preſence, we muſt attend our author, and take notice of a tender and touching circumſtance in the departure from Egypt; the removing of the bones of Joſeph. That truly great man, had been the ſaviour of his father's houſe, when he was alive, and the hope of Iſrael, after he was dead. In all their afflictions, his precious duſt had been to them the pledge of deliverance; and now that deliverance is come, they bear it with them to the land promiſed to their fore-fathers, for burial. Thus reſpectable and uſeful, in life and in death, are the wiſe and the good; thus anxious,

LECT. IX. ought we to be, to promote the beſt intereſts of mankind, not only while we are yet with them; but to leave ſomething behind us, that may benefit and inſtruct, after we are ſeen and heard no more. Chriſtians, we carry with us, as our hope in this wilderneſs, not the bones of a departed deliverer, but the memory of a riſen Saviour. The ſacred pledge of our final redemption, is depoſited not in a coffin, but in this precious record—but in the hiſtory of facts, well known and firmly believed by you—but in many great and precious promiſes given unto you. "For "if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe "again; even ſo them alſo which ſleep "in Jeſus will God bring with him." The aſhes of the patriarch Joſeph, could not reſt in the tomb, till Iſrael came to the poſſeſſion of their promiſed inheritance; ſo the Spirit and Providence of the great Redeemer, are in perpetual motion and exerciſe, till he have gathered into one, all his redeemed unto himſelf; till the youngeſt of his ſons, the meaneſt of his daughters, being glorified, take poſſeſſion of

of their purchaſed inheritance, "the "kingdom prepared for them, from the "foundation of the world." LECT. IX.

Thus then, Iſrael takes his departure; thus joyfully, thus triumphantly, thus increaſed; and "not one ſickly or feeble "among them;"—a wonder not inferiour to any of the reſt. But all "is of the Lord of hoſts, who is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working."

The plain of Ramaſes, was the firſt great rendezvous of the Lord's hoſt. They had built, as part of their taſk-work, a city of that name, at the command of Pharaoh. But it was alſo the name of a region of Egypt, elſewhere called Goſhen; the ſame which Joſeph choſe for the reception of his aged parent; becauſe being ſituated neareſt to Canaan, it diminiſhed the length and fatigue of his journey; and being a graſſy country, ſuited his family's employment as ſhepherds. The nearneſs to Canaan might, accordingly, be now again conſidered as

LECT. IX. a favourable circumſtance to the return of Iſrael thitherward. If we may credit Philo, the two countries were not above three days journey diſtant, the one from the other. And certain it is, that the Patriarchs, encumbered with a convoy laden with corn, eaſily performed a journey to a more diſtant part of Egypt, and back again, in the courſe of not many weeks at moſt. Moſes might therefore have, without much difficulty, conducted the people of his charge, to the place of their deſtination, in a very ſmall ſpace of time. But was the diſtance of place, the only difficulty which they had to encounter? How could men inured to ſlavery; men juſt eſcaped from the rod of a tyrannical oppreſſour, have the courage to meet the proweſs and diſcipline of the warlike nations of Canaan; unprovided with arms for the field, or military engines for the attack of fortified towns, had they been bold enough to attempt to take poſſeſſion by force. Some Interpreters indeed, render the word *harneſſed*, in the eighteenth verſe of the thirteenth chapter,

a line,

armed. But the term in the original, is ſo equivocal, and the learned attempts to determine its meaning ſo unſucceſsful, that we are left ſtill in the dark about it. The preſumption certainly is, that the Iſraelites were *not* armed. What had a nation of ſhepherds, living by ſufferance in a foreign land, to do with arms? Would the policy of Egypt have permitted it? But Moſes, the moſt accurate of hiſtorians, takes care to point out a circumſtance, which furniſhes the firſt idea of putting arms into the hands of Iſrael. After the waves of the red ſea had ſwallowed up the Egyptian army, their dead bodies with their arms were miraculouſly caſt on ſhore, and provided Iſrael, from their ſpoils.

It is evident that God intended to form the courage of his people in the wilderneſs; before he tried it upon thoſe nations whom they were deſtined to ſubdue. Nay, further, it was his deſign to ſettle their whole civil and religious polity, while they were yet in an erratic ſtate, that

LECT. IX. when they came to Canaan, there might be nothing to do, but to take possession, and execute the laws which they had already received. And alas, what shall we say? This swarm of people, numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore, with the exception of one or two, and Moses their leader among the rest, thus pompously and powerfully saved,—were saved from Egypt, but to die in the wilderness. Men die, but the Church lives: and the Church is the care of God. "Thy way, "O God, is in the sea, and thy path in "the great waters, and thy footsteps "are not known. Thou leddest thy "people like a flock, by the hand of "Moses and Aaron.*"

Instead then, of marching them straight northward, in the direction of Canaan, their course is bent Eastward, to the great wilderness, which bounds Egypt, and Arabia Petræa; God himself leading the

* Psalm 77. 19.

way

way, in a moſt wonderful diſplay of his glorious preſence, and power, deſcribed in the words which I read, at the opening of the lecture. "And they took "their journey from Succoth, and en-"camped in Etham, in the edge of "the wilderneſs. And the Lord went "before them by day in a pillar of "a cloud, to lead them the way; "and by night in a pillar of fire, to "give them light; to go by day and "night. He took not away the pil-"lar of the cloud by day, nor the "pillar of fire by night, from before "the people*." In this, God ſpake at once, to the underſtanding and to the ſenſes. Could any Iſraelite doubt, that the Lord was there? He had but to open his eyes, whether it were by day, or by night; and lo, a thick cloud obſcuring the brightneſs of the one, or a flaming fire, diſpelling the ſhades of the other, proclaimed the dread,

LECT. IX.

* Exodus iii. 20, 21, 22.

LECT. IX.

preſence of JEHOVAH. Could any one call in queſtion his kindneſs; when he ſaw darkneſs become a guide, and fire, a protector? Durſt any one preſume to approach too nigh, when dimneſs impenetrable, and light inacceſſible alternately guarded his pavilion? Was it poſſible for any heart to yield to fear, when the Moſt Mighty thus declared, in language more emphatical than can be conveyed by words---"Lo, I am for you!---"Who is he that can, that dare to be "againſt you?"

The appearances of God, are ſuited to the circumſtances of his people. Cloud by night, would have been to increaſe the horrour, and multiply the unwholſome damps of that ſeaſon. Fire by day, would have been adding fuel to a flame, already intenſely hot, in a burning climate, and parched ſoil. But, tempered, adapted, diſtributed according to Wiſdom not capable of errour, the peculiar inconvenience of each ſeaſon is relieved; and the

the ills of nature, are remedied by the dispensations of grace. The cloudy-fiery pillar, is a manifestation of deity, suited to a wilderness state. In heaven, a God of love, is light, without "any darkness at all"--In hell, a God of implacable Wrath is perpetual darkness, without one ray of light. On earth, a God of Justice and Mercy, is darkness and light, in successive and perfect harmony. In heaven a flame that irradiates, chears and quickens; in hell, a fire still consuming, never to be extinguished; on earth, fire in a cloud; Mercy flowing in a spacious channel, Judgment restrained. Men can only discover that of God, which he is pleased to reveal to them. Whether he turn his dark or bright side to us, we are stationed equally at a distance from him. To be sensible of our own darkness, is to be partakers of his marvellous light. All that the brightest noon of human reason can discover, is, that it is ignorance and folly when placed in comparison with the wisdom of God!

Might

LECT IX. Might not this wonderful pillar, prefigure to the ancient Church, the Person and office of the Redeemer of the world? the divine Essence, wrapped up *in*, and closely united *to*, a veil of flesh and blood? Deity raising our nature to incorruptibility and glory, "in CHRIST, "the first-fruits; and afterwards; in all "that are Christ's, at his coming." Do we not perceive in it, Humanity bringing down the divine nature, to our bearing and perception; "The only begotten "Son, who is in the bosom of the Fa-"ther, declaring him to us." "The "Word made flesh" instructing the ignorant, chearing the disconsolate, directing the wanderer, refreshing the weary; guiding our waking, guarding our sleeping moments. "A partaker of our flesh and blood, that he may be a merciful High-priest;"—Declared the SON of GOD with power; Men adoring, and submitting; the Powers of hell, broken and discomfited: the triumph of heaven complete. "The Lord our God is a sun and "shield: the Lord will give grace and "glory

" glory: no good thing will he with-
" hold from them that walk uprightly†."
Fear not, O Iſrael, The Lord is thy
" keeper: the Lord is thy ſhade upon
" thy right hand. The ſun ſhall not
" ſmite thee, by day; nor the moon by
" night. The Lord ſhall preſerve thee
" from all evil; he ſhall preſerve thy
" ſoul. The Lord ſhall preſerve thy
" going out, and thy coming in, from
" this time forth, for evermore‡."

† Pſ. lxxxiv. 11. ‡ Pſ. cxxi. 5. 6. 7. 8.

LEC-

IN the little benefits which men [illegible]
upon each other, it [illegible]
that some unpowerful [illegible]
are rich, and [illegible]
parties at least, [illegible]

LECTURE X.

EXODUS xiv. 21, 22

AND MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE SEA; AND THE LORD CAUSED THE SEA TO GO BACK BY A STRONG EAST WIND, ALL THAT NIGHT, AND MADE THE SEA DRY LAND, AND THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED. AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT INTO THE MIDST OF THE SEA, UPON DRY GROUND: AND THE WATERS WERE A WALL UNTO THEM ON THEIR RIGHT HAND, AND ON THEIR LEFT.

IN the little benefits which men confer upon each other, it generally happens, that ſome untoward circumſtance infinuates itſelf, and occaſions, to one of the parties at leaſt, mortification, diſappointment,

LECT. X.

ment or diſguſt; for nothing human is perfect. A gracious action, is frequently reſented as an injury, from the ungracious manner in which it is performed. I am charmed with both the matter of that kindneſs ſhewn me, and the affectionate diſpoſition which prompted it;—But alas, it arrived an hour too late! Another prevented my wiſhes; and I prized not the bleſſing, becauſe I was not inſtructed in its value, by feeling the want of it. This favour done me, is very great; but it is not preciſely the thing I looked for; or, it is ſo clogged with ſome unpleaſant condition, that I would rather be without it: it affords me preſent relief; but will it not involve me in greater difficulties hereafter? Had I failed in my expectations from this quarter, I ſhould eaſily have gained my end, by applying to another friend. In a word, there is a perpetual *ſomething*, in the friendly communications of men, which continually mars the worth of what is given and received. And no wonder, if we conſider that favours are not always granted from

affection,

affection, nor accepted with gratitude.— But the bounties of heaven possess every quality, that can enhance their value, and endear their Author to a sensible heart. Infinitely valuable in themselves, they flow from love. The "good and perfect gifts, which come down from the Father of lights," are given "liberally, and without upbraiding." Exactly what we need, they come precisely at the moment we want them most, or when they are most beneficial to us. Worthy of God to bestow, they cannot be unworthy of us to receive. Were he to withhold his gracious aid, in vain should we look for relief from any other quarter. Productive of present satisfaction and joy, his benefits involve us in no future distress, shame or remorse. Serviceable to the body, they are at the same time improving to the mind. Important and interesting for time, they have an influence upon eternity.

The gracious interpositions of Jehovah, in behalf of his chosen people, have this peculiar recommendation to our attention,

LECT. X. tention, as to that people's grateful obſervation and acknowledgment—that they were not in the uſual courſe of things; they were the fruits of the conſtant and unremitting care of a ſpecial providence; they were the ſuſpenſion or alteration of the eſtabliſhed laws of nature; they were the operation of a mighty hand and an out-ſtretched arm, ſenſibly controling the winds, the waves and the clouds; and ſubduing the moſt ungovernable elements to its purpoſe. Other parents are endued with tranſitory affections and attachments; ſuited to the tranſitory nature of the truſt committed to them. The hen tends her unfledged brood, with the vigilance of a dragon, and the boldneſs of a lion. But maternal tenderneſs and anxiety, diminiſh and expire with the occaſion of them, the weakneſs and inexperience of her young ones. When the ſon is become a man, paternal care relaxes, and parental authority is at an end. But, as the authority of our heavenly Father never ceaſes, ſo his bowels of compaſſion are never reſtrained; his

his vigilance is never lulled to reſt, his care never ſuſpended; becauſe his offſpring is, to the laſt, impotent, improvident, imperfect. LECT. X.

In vain had Iſrael, by a ſeries of miracles, unparalleled in the annals of mankind, been reſcued from Egyptian oppreſſion, had not the ſame Almighty Arm which delivered them at firſt, continued to protect and ſupport them. The ſtrength of Egypt, broken as it was, had been ſufficient to force them back. The wilderneſs itſelf had been fatal to them, without a foe. How eaſily are the greateſt deliverances forgotten; how ſoon are the moſt awful appearances familiarized to the mind! The very firſt threatening of danger, effaces from the memory of theſe Iſraelites, all impreſſion of the powerful wonders which, had juſt paſſed before them, and eclipſes the glory of that cloud which, at that very inſtant, preſented itſelf to their eyes, and overſhadowed their heads. But, let not ſelf-

LECT. X. flattery impoſe upon us, as if we were more faithful and obedient than them. It is the mere deception of vanity and ſelf-love to ſuppoſe, that "if one were "to ariſe from the dead, we would be "perſuaded;" that if we ſaw a miracle wrought, we would believe; that if we heard Chriſt teach in our ſtreets, we would "forſake all, and follow him." The man, whom the uſual appearances of nature do not move, would ſoon become inſenſible to more uncommon phœnomena. For, extraordinary things frequently repeated, are extraordinary no longer, and conſequently ſoon loſe their force. If the daily miracles of God's mercy and loving-kindneſs fail to convince men, what reaſon is there to hope, that mere exertions of power would produce a happier effect? If Chriſt, ſpeaking by his word and miniſtring ſervants, be treated with neglect, Is it likely that his *perſon* would be held in veneration? If men "hear not Moſes and the "prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, "though

"though one rose from the dead*." Is it not notorious, that Christ's personal ministrations were slighted, his miracles vilified, his character traduced?

Whose conduct is the more absurd and criminal—that of Pharaoh, in pursuing after and attempting to bring back a people, who had been a snare, and a curse to himself and his kingdom: or that of Israel, in trembling at the approach of an enemy, whom God had so often subdued under them? Frail nature looks only to the creature; surrounding mountains, opposing floods, persecuting foes:—hence terrour, confusion, and astonishment. But faith eyes the pillar, the residence of divine majesty, and then mountains sink, seas divide, the chariot and horseman are overthrown. Every passion, when it becomes predominant, renders us silly and unreasonable; and none more so than fear. In danger and distress, it is natural, but it is foolish, to impute to

* Luke xvi. 31.

LECT. X.

another, the evils which we fear or feel. It ſeems to be an alleviation of our own miſery, if we can contrive to ſhift the blame of it upon the ſhoulders of our neighbour. Hence Moſes is loaded with the imputation of a deliberate deſign, of involving his nation, in this dire dilemma, between Pharaoh and the red ſea, and of ſelling them to the foe. A high and reſponſible ſituation, is far from being an enviable one. If things go well, the conductor of the undertaking, receives but a divided, mutilated praiſe. If an enterprize fail, the whole blame of the miſcarriage is laid to his door. The aſtoniſhed multitude dare not directly attack God himſelf. No: the cloudy pillar hung over their heads, ready to burſt out in thunder and fire, on the man who preſumed to aim his ſhafts ſo high. But their impiety ſeeks the pitiful ſhelter of a ſubterfuge; they murmur againſt Moſes, becauſe they imagine, they can do it with impunity: and think to eſcape the reſentment of the maſter, though they are wounding him through the ſides of his ſervant.

ervant. Mark yet again, the folly and unreaſonableneſs of fear. "Becauſe "there were no graves in Egypt, haſt "thou taken us away to die in the wil-"derneſs? Wherefore haſt thou dealt "thus with us, to carry us forth out of "Egypt? Is not this the word that "we did tell thee in Egypt, ſaying, Let "us alone, that we may ſerve the Egyp-"tians? For it had been better for us "to ſerve the Egyptians, than that we "ſhould die in the wilderneſs." What were they afraid of now? A grave, in the wilderneſs. What do they put in compariſon with, and prefer to it? A grave in Egypt. It was a grave at the worſt. Their wretched lives had got at leaſt a ſhort reprieve. If they died now, they died at once; and died like men, defending their lives, liberty, and families: not pouring out life, drop by drop, under the whip of a taſk-maſter. But ſlavery has broken their ſpirit. They are reduced to the loweſt pitch of human wretchedneſs; for this, ſurely, is the laſt ſtage of it. --- "It had been better for

LECT. X. "us to ſerve the Egyptians, than that "we ſhould die in the wilderneſs."

To this abject view of degeneracy and dejection, two objects are placed in contraſt—The calmneſs and intrepidity of Moſes, and, The majeſty and power of God. In contemplating the former of theſe, as one great object of theſe Lectures, is to unfold human character, and to hold up to imitation and applauſe praiſeworthy conduct: Let me endeavour to fix your attention, upon the more obvious features, of the great man, who is here drawing his own portrait.

All the great intereſts of Moſes were embarked with thoſe of the commonwealth of Iſrael. His lot was caſt into the common lap. He had made a ſacrifice unſpeakably greater, than any individual of the congregation had done. His proſpects, for either himſelf or his family, were neither brighter nor more flattering than thoſe of the obſcureſt Hebrew among them. If there were danger from the

purſuing

purſuing hoſt of Pharaoh, his ſhare, moſt aſſuredly, was not leſs than that of any other man. He had rendered himſelf peculiarly obnoxious to that ſtern, unrelenting tyrant, and muſt have been among the firſt victims of his reſentment. But the preſſing danger of Moſes, did not ariſe from Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, but from an intimidated, diſtracted multitude, who were ready to wreak their vengeance on whoever might firſt meet their reſentment, or could be moſt plauſibly charged as the author of their misfortunes. The compoſure of Moſes in ſuch circumſtances, is therefore juſtly to be conſidered as an inſtance of uncommon heroiſm and magnanimity. But why do we talk of heroiſm? the man who fears God, knows no other fear. In the confidence of faith, though he knew not yet which way God was to work deliverance for Iſrael, he thus attempts to diffuſe the hope which he felt irradiating his own ſoul: "Fear "ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation "of the Lord, which he will ſhew to "you to day: for the Egyptians, whom "ye have ſeen to-day, ye ſhall ſee them

LECT X. "again no more for ever. The Lord "ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall hold "your peace."

Let me intreat you to obſerve, that the agent, in this great tranſaction, is alſo the hiſtorian of it; and that the reſolution and ſpirit of the one, is to be equalled only by the modeſty and ſimplicity of the other. In the hands of one of the eloquent orators of Greece or Rome, what a figure would this paſſage of the life of the Jewiſh Legiſlator have made, could we ſuppoſe them entering into the ſituation of a ſtranger, with the warmth which they feel, in delineating the characters and conduct of their own heroes: and embelliſhing the dignity of modeſt merit, with the glowing ornaments of rhetorick? But ſcripture ſays much, by ſaying little. And the meek reſerve, the unaffected conciſeneſs of the ſacred hiſtorian, infinitely exceed the diffuſive and laboured panegyrics of profane poetry or hiſtory. We have already, perhaps, deviated too far from that beautiful ſimplicity; and diminiſhed, inſtead of magnifying our object,

ject, by multiplying words. We haſten therefore, with our author, to contemplate an object of infinitely higher conſideration than himſelf; to which he conſtantly brings his own, and inſtructs us, to bring our tribute of praiſe.

Behold the obſtructions, which nature, and art, and accident have aſſembled to diſtreſs, to diſcourage, and to deſtroy the church of God! An impaſſable ridge of mountains, upon the right hand and upon the left; the roaring ſea in front; a powerful, exaſperated, revengeful enemy following cloſe behind; internal weakneſs, irreſolution, and diſſenſion: the voice of ſedition loud; Moſes on his face before God. In ſuch a ſituation as this, Omnipotence alone can ſave. No voice, but that of a God, is worthy of being heard. Be ſilent then, O heavens, and liſten O earth. It *is* God, who ſpeaks. "And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Where-
"fore crieſt thou unto me? Speak unto
"the children of Iſrael, that they go
"forward!" What ſublimity, ſimplicity,

LECT. X. city, and force are here! "Go forward!" What, into the raging billows? Great God, thy commands declare thy name and thy nature! What power except thine own, but muſt have been expoſed and diſgraced, by aſſuming ſuch a high tone of authority! But what obſtacle can oppoſe Him, who ſaid, "Let there be "light; and there was light?" "Who "ſpake, and it was done; gave com-"mandment, and it ſtood faſt?"

My heart is agitated with a mixture of fear and joy, as I proceed. "The Lord "God has given the word,---- Let the "people go forward." When lo, the conducting Pillar inſtantly changes its poſition, and ſolemnly retreats to the rear of the Iſraelitiſh hoſt. The word given clears all the way before them, and "the "glory of the Lord becomes their rere-"ward." Now, behold the double effect of this ſymbol of the divine preſence! To Iſrael the cloud is all light and favour; to the Egyptians, all darkneſs and diſmay. To thoſe "night ſhineth as the day---to

theſe

theſe there is obſcurity at noon-day! "And "the angel of God, which went before "the camp of Iſrael, removed, and went "behind them; and the pillar of the "cloud went from before their face, and "ſtood behind them. And it came between "the camp of the Egyptians, and the "camp of Iſrael; and it was a cloud and "darkneſs, *to them*, but it gave light by "night *to theſe*: ſo that the one came "not near the other all the night. Awful diſtinction! Where ſhall we find the ſolution of the difficulty? Where, but in this 'He will *have mercy*, on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth*."

To prepare us for the hiſtory of the miracle which follows, give, for a few moments, your attention, to what every man and woman among you may have obſerved a thouſand, and a thouſand times. Go to the bank of the river, go to the ſhore of the ſea, and twice in every twenty-four

* Rom. ix. 18.

hours

LECT. X.

hours, as certainly as light proceeds from the ſun, what is now dry land will be covered with water, and what is now overflowed, ſhall, infallibly, become dry ground. Farther, when a little wandering ſtar, called the moon, is in this direction, or in this, the whole waters of the globe, in the ocean, in the ſeas, in the rivers, are elevated or depreſſed to ſuch a certain degree. Let that planet be in an eaſtern, or a weſtern direction, the tide is preciſely at the ſame pitch of height or depth. After we have made this remark, which is obvious to the notice, and level to the underſtanding of a child; it will naturally occur, to aſk, What, does this never fail? May we depend, and act, upon the certainty of ſuch a regular ſucceſſion and change taking place? Do the waters of the earth thus certainly feel, or ſeem to feel the various appearances of the moon? Then it cannot be without the deſign and interpoſition of an intelligent, and powerful Cauſe, which never miſſes its aim, is never off its guard, is never thwarted or defeated by unfore-

ſeen

ſeen obſtacles. Then, that inviſible, unknown, incomprehenſible power, may exerciſe a diſcretionary influence over the ſtream of a particular river, over the billows of a particular ſea. He may, with, or without apparent ſecond cauſes, make the current overflow its banks, or the channel become dry.

Or, to make another appeal to common obſervation and experience. When the Sun is in ſuch a certain poſition with reſpect to our earth, and the wind blows in ſuch a direction, the water in that lake will be liquid and tranſparent, and the ſmalleſt, lighteſt pebble, will ſink to the bottom. But let the elevation of the ſun be changed to an angle, ſomewhat more acute, and let the wind ſhift into the oppoſite quarter, then, beyond all doubt, the ſelf-ſame water ſhall become ſolid as the rock, loſe its tranſparency, and become capable of ſuſtaining any weight that can be put upon it. How eaſy had it been for Him, who produces regularly theſe changes, every changing year, to have

given

LECT. X. given the globe ſuch a poſition, as would have rendered the hoary deep one vaſt mountain of ice, all the year round, or have prevented a ſingle drop of water from ever being congealed. And "wherefore ſhould it be thought a thing "incredible," that ſuch an one, willing to make his power known, and his grace felt, ſhould, at his own time, and in his own way, do that in a particular inſtance, which he could have done perpetually and univerſally. Grant me the uſual appearances and operations of nature, and I am prepared for all the uncommon, miraculous phænomena, with which the God of nature may ſee meet to preſent me. We come accordingly, to the hiſtory of dividing the red ſea, perfectly convinced that he who made it at firſt, can make of it, whatever he pleaſes; and thoroughly ſatisfied that the occaſion of ſuch a notable miracle, as it is related by Moſes, was entirely worthy of it.

If it be a juſt rule in criticiſm, that a Deity is never to be introduced, but when his

his interpoſition is neceſſary, and on occaſions becoming his dignity, the moſaic account of this wonderful event, ſtands fully juſtified in point of taſte, as well as authenticity. The powerful rod is once more ſtretched out. The eaſt wind blows. The ſea retires. And a ſafe and eaſy paſſage is opened for Iſrael, through the channel of the deep. "This alſo cometh "forth from the Lord of hoſts, which is "wonderful in counſel, and excellent in "working."

"Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that "they go forward." The word that commands the progreſs, alſo prepares the way. As, in latter times, by the effectual working of the ſame almighty power, the grace which cured the father's unbelief, the ſelf-ſame inſtant caſt the devil out of the ſon. It is the ſenſible language of the common proverb, "the *king* ſaid, Sail: but the *wind* ſaid, No." The command of the king of kings alone procures prompt obedience from every creature; for all are his ſubjects in fact,

as

LECT X. as well as in right. Thrones, principalities, and powers are ſubject unto him; and, "a ſparrow falleth not to the ground "without our heavenly father." When we behold our bleſſed Saviour, in the new teſtament, ſaying to the ſtormy wind, and the foaming billows, "peace, be ſtill," and a great calm inſtantly enſuing; and compare it with the work of the great Jehovah, under review, we are led directly to the concluſion of the Roman centurion, who obſerved the wonders attending the crucifixion. "Truly this was the ſon "of God."

In the hiſtory of our own country, there is a paſſage, which the event we are conſidering ſuggeſts to our thoughts, and which does honour to the piety, modeſty, and good-ſenſe of the prince whom it concerns.—Canute, one of the early kings of the ſouthern diviſion of England, juſtly diſguſted at the groſs and impious adulation of ſome of his courtiers, who aſcribed to him the attributes which belong only to God, and called him "Lord

of

of the earth, and of the ſea;" that he might check their folly, by ſomething more than a ſimple reproof, commanded his chair of ſtate to be placed on the beach, near Southampton, during the flowing of the tide. Arrayed in his royal robes, and attended by all the nobility and great men of his court, he ſat down with his face towards the ſea, and thus addreſſed it, "I charge thee upon thy allegiance, O "ſea to advance no farther. Here, I, thy "Lord, have thought proper to fix my "ſtation. Know thy diſtance: reſpect "my authority; nor dare to touch the "feet of thy ſovereign, under pain of "his higheſt diſpleaſure." The ſwelling billows, regardleſs of his command and threatenings, continued to ruſh in, advanced impetuouſly to the ſteps of his throne, and ſpeedily conſtrained the monarch and his train to retire. Upon which, turning round to his flatterers, he obſerved, "that He only deſerved to be "be acknowledged, as Lord of the land "and the ſea, whoſe will the winds and "the waves obeyed."

LECT. X.

The breadth of the paſſage opened, through the Red ſea, muſt have been very conſiderable indeed, to have afforded to ſuch a multitude as four millions of people, for leſs there could not be, ſpace to get over, in a ſingle night's time. To determine this, we muſt have recourſe to calculation. But, your time being far ſpent, this, together with an attempt to ſolve ſome of the difficulties of the diſpenſation, and to remove ſome of the objections which infidelity has raiſed to the credibility or miraculouſneſs of the hiſtory, muſt make a conſtituent part of another lecture.

In practically applying this ſubject, we may conſider the Red ſea, by which the armies of Iſrael were ſtopt ſhort, as an emblematical repreſentation of that great fight of affliction, that ſea of trouble, through which every believer muſt paſs, in his way to the heavenly Canaan. Through the furnaces of Egypt, through the paths of the Red Sea, through the ſwellings of Jordan, God's ancient people at length got poſſeſſion of the promiſed land. And

it

it is "through manifold tribulations we "must enter into the kingdom of God." —It is of importance not only that we be going forwards, but that we be making progreſs; that growth in grace, keep pace with the uninterrupted flux of human life.—The courſe which providence leads us, though neither the ſhorteſt, nor the moſt deſirable, will be found upon the whole, the ſafeſt, the ſureſt, and the beſt. —The poſſeſſion of Canaan is not always the next ſtep to our eſcape from Egypt. Juſtification by the grace of God, puts us beyond the reach of our enemies, and adoption makes good our title to "the inheritance of the ſaints in light;" but, it is ſanctification that makes us meet for the enjoyment of the purchaſed poſſeſſion. The Red ſea, ſeemed to put an end to Iſrael's progreſs, but actually ſhortened his diſtance. So affliction, while it appears intended to overwhelm, is accelerating the believer's ſpeed to his father's houſe above. "All theſe things are againſt "me," ſaith frail, faltering, erring man, in his haſte. "We know that all things

ECT X. "work together for good to them that "love God," ſaith the better informed, experience-taught chriſtian, on reviewing the myſterious ways of providence; having attained "the end of his faith, "even the ſalvation of his ſoul." If we look to the creature only, all is dark and comfortleſs; nothing but cloud. When through the creature, we look to an inviſible God, all is peace and joy. We cannot remove mountains, nor turn floods into dry ground. It is not meet we ſhould be truſted with ſuch power. Obedience is our proper province; ſubmiſſion to the will of God, our trueſt wiſdom, and, when we follow the direction of providence, our way cannot but be proſperous. "Lord, we will follow "thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt." Human conduct is a woful inverſion of this rule. We torment ourſelves about the event, over which we have no power; and trifle with the commandment, with which alone we have to do. We neglect our duty, and then fooliſhly and impiouſly complain, that we are unkindly dealt

dealt by, when Providence promotes not, or croſſes our inclinations. Let us ſhew chearful and unreſerved compliance; and, be the iſſue what it may, whether our wiſhes be oppoſed, or ſucceed, we ſhall, at leaſt, have the conſolation of reflecting, that the miſcarriage is not chargeable to our own perverſeneſs or folly. It is a dreadful, a two edged evil, at once to loſe our aim, and incur the juſt diſpleaſure of God by diſobedience." "Thy "will," O Father, "be done on earth, "as it is in heaven." Amen.

LEC-

[illegible] when Providence permits, not [illegible]
[illegible] inclinations. [illegible] us from
choosing [illegible] compliances; and
be the [illegible] it may, whether our
wishes be [illegible] or [illegible], we shall
at least, have the consolation or reflecting
that the misfortune is not chargeable to
our own [illegible] or folly. It is a
dreadful, a two edged evil, at once to
lose our aim, and learn the [illegible] tripli-
fire of God by disappointment. "Thy
will, O Father, be done on earth,
as it is in heaven." Amen.

TO [illegible]

LECTURE XI.

EXODUS XV. 1, 2.

THEN SANG MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THIS SONG UNTO THE LORD, AND SPAKE, SAYING, I WILL SING UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY; THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA. THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG, AND HE IS BECOME MY SALVATION, HE IS MY GOD, AND I WILL PREPARE HIM AN HABITATION; MY FATHER'S GOD, AND I WILL EXALT HIM,

TO no one man has the world been ſo much indebted, for rational pleaſure and uſeful knowledge, as to the inſpired author of theſe ſacred books, Moſes, as he is the moſt ancient, ſo he is

LECT. XI. by far the beſt writer that ever exiſted, Never, in one and the ſame character, were united, talents ſo various, ſo rare, and ſo valuable. He may without heſitation be pronounced, the moſt eloquent of hiſtorians, the ſublimeſt of poets, the profoundeſt of ſages, the moſt ſagacious of politicians, the moſt acute of legiſlators, the moſt intrepid of heroes, the cleareſt ſighted of prophets, the moſt amiable of men. The qualities of his heart, ſeem to ſtrive for the maſtery, with thoſe of the underſtanding. So that it is difficult to determine, whether, as the reputed ſon of Pharaoh's daughter, as a voluntarily exile from the ſplendour of a court, as the ſympathizing friend of his afflicted brethren, as the bold protector of virgin innocence, as the contented ſhepherd of Jethro's flock, as the magnanimous aſſertor of Iſraelitiſh liberty, or finally, as king in Jeſhurun, ruling the thouſands of Iſrael with meekneſs and wiſdom--he moſt challenges our admiration and praiſe. Had the world never been favoured with his works, or were it now to be deprived of that precious treaſure, the

the loſs were inconceivably great. Who does not ſhudder at the thought? What a fearful gap in the hiſtory of mankind! What a blow to taſte, what a blank in ſcience, what an impoveriſhing of the public ſtock of harmleſs pleaſure, what an injury to the deareſt, the beſt,—the everlaſting intereſts of mankind!

The venerable man, who has for ſo many evenings paſt, condeſcended to delight and inſtruct us, by the relation of events the moſt ſingular, intereſting, and important; aſſumes this night a new character: and in ſtrains, the ſweeteſt and boldeſt that bard ever ſung; in verſes the loftieſt that the imagination of poet ever dictated, rouſes, warms, tranſports the mind. We forget the diſtance of three thouſand years. We feel ourſelves magically conveyed to the banks of the Red ſea. We join in the acclamations of the redeemed of the Lord, as this ſong of Moſes ſwells upon our ear. "Then ſang Moſes "and the children of Iſrael this ſong unto "the Lord, and ſpake, ſaying, I will

ſing

LECT. XI

"ſing unto the Lord, for he hath tri-
"umphed glorioufly; the horſe and his
"rider hath he thrown into the ſea.—For
"the horſe of Pharaoh went in with his
"chariots, and with his horſemen into
"the ſea, and the Lord brought again the
"waters of the ſea upon them; but the
"children of Iſrael went on dry-land in
"the midſt of the ſea. The depths have
"covered them: they ſank into the bot-
"tom as a ſtone*." How wonderfully
ſuited to each other, the event and the
celebration of it!

In fulfilling the promiſe, made in the
concluſion of the laſt lecture, and executing
the buſineſs of the preſent, three objects
are propoſed. Firſt, to attempt a vindi-
cation of the hiſtory of the paſſage of the
Red ſea, from ſome objections which have
been made to the credibility or miracu-
louſneſs of it. Second, to make a few
criticiſms on the ſacred hymn which was
compoſed on the occaſion, and, now in part,
read in your hearing; in the view of point-

* Verſes 1. 19. 5.

ing

ing out a few of its more ſtriking beauties. And, Thirdly, to make a few remarks on ſacred poeſy in general, tending to evince its ſuperiour excellency; and the delicacy and difficulty of attempting to amplify or imitate, what the inſpired poets have written, as helps to devotion. In the firſt, I ſhall without ceremony or apology, borrow the aſſiſtance of the pious and learned author of *Diſſertations, hiſtorical, critical, theological, and moral, on the moſt memorable events of the* OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT *hiſtory*,—James Saurin, late miniſter of the French church at the Hague‡. In the ſecond, I ſhall ſubmit to be inſtructed by an ingenious, pious, and eloquent profeſſor of rhetoric in the univerſity of Paris, who has made choice of this paſſage, expreſſly for the purpoſe of exemplifying the majeſty, beauty, and ſimplicity of the ſcripture ſtyle*. And, in the third, I ſhall do little more than tranſcribe from an elegant, penetrating, and inſtructive

‡ Tom. i. Diſc. xlix.

* Rollin Bel. Let. tom. ii. Eloq. de Liv. Sacr.

moraliſt

LECT. X. moralist of our own age and country†—To return.

If we collect the several circumstances of this wonderful piece of history, it will readily be acknowledged, that there is here presented to the mind, one of the greatest, or rather a series of the greatest miracles, which the hand of Omnipotence ever wrought in behalf of any nation. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if the enemies of revelation have endeavoured to sully their lustre, and impeach their credibility.

Three methods have been employed for this purpose—To ascribe these events to natural causes—To put them on a footing with others related in profane history, and,—To represent them as contradictory and inconsistent. Three bulwarks of infidelity; as many grounds of triumph for truth.

First, these events, which we ascribe entirely to the almighty power of God,

† Johnson's life of the Poet Waller.

have

have been accounted for, from the common and natural operation of cauſe and effect. Euſebius has preſerved, and tranſmitted to us, a fragment from an ancient author, Artapanes*, to this purpoſe, "Thoſe "of Memphis, one of the chief cities of "ancient Egypt, alledge, that Moſes per-"fectly underſtood the country; that he had "accurately obſerved the ebbing and flow-"ing of the ſea, and took advantage of "the retreat of the tide, to lead the "people over. But they of Heliopolis, "relate the matter differently, ſaying, "that while the king was purſuing the Iſ-"raelites, Moſes by the command of hea-"ven, ſtruck the waters with a rod, upon "which they immediately ſeparated, and "left a ſpacious and ſafe paſſage for that "great multitude; and, that the Egyptians "attempting to follow them, the ſame way, "were dazzled and confounded by preter-"natural fires, loſt their way, and by the "reflux of the ſea, were overtaken in the "midſt of the channel, and thus all per-"iſhed either by water or by fire."

* Euſeb. Prepar, Lib. ix. Cap. xxvii.

Now

LECT. XI.

Now, granting to this quotation all the force that unbelief can give it, this evidently appears upon the face of it, that Moſes has vouchers of his divine legation, even in Egypt, even among the idolaters themſelves. If the Memphites accuſe our hiſtorian, of endeavouring to make a natural, paſs for a miraculous event, the Heliopolitans acknowledge, that it was preternatural, and aſcribe it, to an immediate interpoſition of heaven And this conceſſion is important, when we conſider, that it comes from the mouth of an enemy.

Again, the ſuppoſition of the Memphites muſt be rejected by all thoſe who pay any regard to the authority of Moſes, and of the other ſacred writers. He himſelf indeed admits, that the effect was forwarded by the aſſiſtance of a ſtrong Eaſt-Wind. And whatever he aſcribes to that, may ſeem, ſo far, to derogate from the greatneſs of the miracle. But it is no leſs true, that he throws out nothing like

like an insinuation, that the passage of the vast host of Israel was produced by the intervention of second causes. And all the inspired authors, who, after him, have mentioned it, or alluded to it, acknowledge *only* a supernatural agency. Thus, Joshua, who was an eye-witness and a party deeply concerned in the event. "For "the Lord your God dried up the waters "of Jordan from before you, until ye "were passed over, as the Lord your God "did to the Red sea, which he dried up "from before us, until we were gone over. "That all the people of the earth might "know the hand of the Lord, that it is "mighty; that ye might fear the Lord "your God for ever†." Thus, Psalm lxvi. 6. "He turned the sea into dry-land; "they went through the flood on foot, "there did we rejoice in him. And lxxviii 13. "He divided the sea, and caused "them to pass through, and he made the "Waters stand as an heap." And cvi. 9.

† Josh. iv. 23, 24.

"He

LECT XI. "He rebuked the red ſea alſo, and it was dri-
"ed up, ſo he led them through the depths
"as through the wilderneſs." And Heb.
xi. 29. "By faith they paſſed through
"the Red ſea, as by dry-land, which the
"Egyptians aſſaying to do, were drowned.
So that Moſes, Joſhua, David, and Paul,
have but one, and the ſame opinion, on this
ſubject.

But farther, the eſſence of a miracle,
does not always conſiſt in counteracting
or ſuſpending the laws of nature. One of
the moſt contemptible of the adverſaries
of religion, has weakly imagined‡, that by
a ſingle objection, he was able to invalidate
one of the bulwarks, and ſhake one of the
pillars of revelation. "Theſe miraculous
"effects, ſays he, are referred, by the con-
"feſſion of ſcripture-hiſtorians them-
"ſelves, to the operation of ſecond cauſes.
"It was by warming the body of a child,
"that Elijah brought him to life again.

‡ Spinoſa Tract. Theol. Polit. Cap. vi.

It

"It was by applying clay, or duſt min-
"gled with ſpittle, to the eyes of a blind
"man, that Jeſus Chriſt reſtored him to
"ſight. It was by a wind, that Moſes
"brought locuſts upon Egypt, and obtain-
"ed a paſſage through the Red ſea." To this it is replied-That the moſt common and natural things become miracles, when they preſent themſelves preciſely at the time, and in the manner, preſcribed by Him who commands their appearance, for the confirmation and eſtabliſhment of a certain doctrine. What ſo natural and common, for example, as to ſee the ſun ſhining, one moment, in full and unobſtructed glory, and the next, darkened and concealed by clouds? But, if a perſon publiſhing a new doctrine as divine, ſhould undertake to prove his miſſion, by changing the appearance of the bright orb of day, at his pleaſure, and by ſhewing him either in unclouded majeſty, or eclipſed and ſhorn of his beams, according as he gave the word; and, ſhould we behold this very ordinary natural phænomenon, actually and uniformly obeying the man-

LECT. XI. date, would not ſuch an event, however natural in itſelf, become preternatural and miraculous, from its circumſtances? Thus, there might be occaſion for the influence of the wind, to favour and facilitate the paſſage of Iſrael. But, how was it poſſible for their leader, by mere human ſagacity, to diſcover, that a wind from ſuch a quarter, ſpringing up exactly at ſuch an hour, ſhould harden the bottom of the deep?

But, ſuppoſing the philoſophy of Moſes ſufficiently accurate, to aſſure him, that at ſuch a time, he might in ſafety march over his cumberſome retinue; Could it inform him alſo, that Pharaoh and his captains would certainly be mad enough to follow them, through that dangerous route? Could it aſſure him, that the raſhneſs of the tyrant, and the law which regulated the flowing of the ſea, would exactly keep time, ſo as effectually to produce the deſtruction of his whole army? The flux and reflux of the tide were known to Moſes; but, Was it entirely unknown to the Egyptians? What,

What, in ſo great an army, led by the ſovereign in perſon, in a land renowned for natural knowledge, Was there no man aſtronomer enough to know, that the difference of a few hours is every thing in a caſe of this ſort; that to be in ſuch a ſpot, at ſuch a time, was inevitable deſtruction? Incredible! Impoſſible!

Finally, it is altogether inconceivable, that the ſpace of three or four hours, the utmoſt that an ebb merely natural could have afforded them, was ſufficient for the tranſition of ſuch an aſtoniſhing multitude, as that which Moſes conducted. The learned Calmet, has ſo fully demonſtrated this point*, as to enforce the concluſion, that no degree of human knowledge could have diſcloſed to Moſes, a foreſight of the events which proved ſo propitious to him. Not therefore to the ſuperiority of genius, but to a power divine, the praiſe is to be aſcribed. And, to the ſame principle we muſt recur, in

* Diſſert. ſur le paſſage de la Mer Rouge.

LECT. XI. order to explain the mighty difference which Providence puts between the Israelites, and the Egyptians, in the midst of the Red sea.

Attempts have been made to debase the dignity of this great event, by reducing it to the level of similar appearances, recorded by profane historians. That degenerate son of Israel, Josephus, first started this objection. These are his words, "This," speaking of the passage of the Red Sea, "I have related with "all the circumstances, as I find them "in our sacred authors. Nobody ought "to think it an incredible thing, that "a people which lived in the inno-"cence and simplicity of the first ages, "might have found a way, through the "sea, to save themselves. Whether it was, "that the sea itself, opened it for them, "or whether it was done by the will of "God: Since the same thing happened "long after to the Macedonians, when "they passed through the sea of Pam-"phylia, under the conduct of Alexander,

"when

"when God thought fit, to make use of "that people for the destruction of the "Persian empire, as it is affirmed by all "the historians, who have written the "life of that prince. However, I leave "all men to judge of this matter as they "think fit." Thus far Josephus†.

The other instances which some presume to be put in competition with this, are the approach of Scipio, with his army, to the attack of New Carthage, by means of an extraordinary ebb at the change of the moon, recorded by Livy*: A similar ebb of the river Euphrates, related by Plutarch, in his life of Lucullus: and, a flood altogether as singular, upon the coast of Holland, in the year 1672; which kept up for twelve whole hours, and was, apparently, the means of preserving that Republick, from the consequences of a joint attack of the fleets of England and France. It is handed down to us in the life of the famous admiral De Ruyter,

† Antiq. Jud. lib. ii. cap. vii.
* Lib. xxvi. cap. xlv.

who

LECT. XI. who had the command of the Dutch ſquadron at that time. Neither your time nor patience admitting of an enquiry into the truth of theſe ſeveral facts, we ſatisfy ourſelves with obſerving, that admitting them to be true, not one of them is any way worthy to be compared with the Moſaic account of the paſſage acroſs the Red ſea. The pointed and particular prediction of Moſes; the rod employed, and the inſtantaneouſneſs of the effect; the facility and ſpeed of the paſſage; the raſhneſs of the Egyptians; their tragical end; every thing in ſhort concurs to render this an unparalleled event. And nothing but an immoderate deſire of depreciating the miracles of the ſacred hiſtory, could have attempted to diminiſh this celebrated tranſit, into a compariſon with any of the other events which are alluded to.

The third objection is, to the truth of the hiſtory; pretended to be taken from the hiſtory itſelf. The time allotted by Moſes, by his own account, for the congregation, conſiſting of ſo many myriads to paſs over, is

is conſidered, by the objectors, as much too ſhort for the purpoſe. But in order to ſupport it, they are obliged to go into uncertain, fanciful and unſupported conjectures, about the breadth of the Red ſea, at the place where the paſſage was opened. They make the breadth of that paſſage, juſt what it ſuits their own arbitrary conjecture and calculation. They muſt needs conſtrain a great multitude, in very peculiar circumſtances, unaccuſtomed to diſcipline, ſtimulated by fear, and borne on the wings of hope, to move with the leiſure and deliberation of a regular army. They will not deign to acknowledge the power and grace of the Moſt High in every part of the tranſaction. They overlook the deſcription given of that people, Pſalm cv. 37. A people full of ſtrength and vigour, and "not one ſickly among "them." They forget what God himſelf, ſoon after, ſays of them, "You "have ſeen what I did unto the Egyp-"tians, and how I bare you on eagle's "wings, and brought you unto myſelf."

LECT. XI.

LECT. XI. We conclude, that, as the caſe taken all together, was ſingular, unprecedented and followed by nothing like it: ſo, the particular circumſtances of it, are likewiſe ſingular and unexampled; and will, with every candid perſon, bear out Moſes, the ſacred hiſtorian, againſt the charge o being inconſiſtent with himſelf.

We proceed to the ſecond object, which we propoſed, namely, To point out a few of the more ſtriking beauties of the ſacred Song, which was compoſed and ſung, in grateful acknowledgement of that great deliverance which we have been contemplating. What will undoubtedly give it a high value, in the eſtimation of many, is, that it is the moſt ancient morſel of Poetry the world is in poſſeſſion of: being three thouſand, three hundred, and thirty-ſeven years old, that is, ſix hundred and forty-ſeven years, before Homer, the moſt ancient and the beſt of heathen bards, lived or ſung. But its antiquity is its ſlighteſt excellency. The general turn of it is great, the thoughts nobly ſimple, the ſtile ſublime,

ſublime, the expreſſion ſtrong, the pathos ſweet, the figures natural and bold. It abounds throughout, with images which at once ſtrike, warm, aſtoniſh, and delight. The occaſion of it you well know. The poet's view is to indulge himſelf in tranſports of joy, admiration and gratitude, and to inſpire the people with the ſame ſentiments. Accordingly he thus impetuouſly breaks out,

LECT. XI.

Verſe 1. "I will ſing unto the Lord, "for he hath triumphed glorioufly: the "horſe and his rider hath he thrown into "the ſea." In which, the tremendous majeſty of God the deliverer, and the lively gratitude of the people ſaved, the leading object of the piece, are placed inſtantly and powerfully in ſight; and they are never dropt for one moment, to the end. *I*, in the ſingular number, is much more energetic and affecting, than *we* in the plural, would have been. The triumph of Iſrael over the Egyptians, did not reſemble the uſual triumphs of nation over nation; where the individual is overlooked

LECT. XI. looked and loſt in the general. No: every thing here is peculiar and perſonal. Every Iſraelite for himſelf, reflects with joy, on his own chains, now for ever broken in pieces. He ſeems to exult over his own tyrant-maſter, now ſubdued under him; and hails his perſonal liberty now effectually ſecured. For it is natural to the heart of man, in extreme danger, to refer every thing to himſelf, and to conſider himſelf as all in all. "The *horſe* and his rider "hath he thrown into the ſea:" For the ſame reaſon the *horſe* is much more forcible than *horſes* would have been; it marks ſtrongly the ſuddenneſs, the univerſality, the completeneſs of the deſtruction. The Egyptian cavalry, numerous, formidable, covering the face of the ground, is repreſented, in a moment, by a ſingle effort, at one blow, overthrown, overwhelmed, as if they had been but *one* horſe and *one* rider.

Verſe 2. JEHOVAH is my ſtrength and "ſong, and he is become my ſalvation: He

"He is my God, and I will prepare him "an habitation; my father's God, and "I will exalt him."—Is it lawful to ſay, that the poet employs the moſt exquiſite art, in repreſenting this great deliverance, in every part, and every view of it, as the work of JEHOVAH: the great "I AM "THAT I AM:" that Name of GOD, by which he choſe to be known to Iſrael, through the whole of thoſe memorable tranſactions? My *ſtrength*, that is, the ſource, or cauſe of my ſtrength: and it points out the great God, as the courage and force of Iſrael, without the neceſſity of their exerting any of their own. "*My* "*Song*," that is, the ſubject of it. No inſtrument divides the praiſe with him. No power, no wiſdom is employed but his own. He planned, arranged, executed every thing by himſelf. "HE is become "my *ſalvation*." The fine writers of Greece or Rome would probably have ſaid, "He hath ſaved me." But Moſes ſays much more. The Lord hath undertaken himſelf, to work deliverance for me: He hath made my ſalvation his own, his perſonal

LECT. XI. ſonal concern, and is become to me every thing I can want.

"*He is* MY GOD." Every word is emphatical. "*He*," in oppoſition to the gods of Egypt, which cannot hear, nor ſee, nor ſave.—"*My* God:" All-attentive to *my* intereſt and ſafety, as if he had no creature but *me* to care for: and therefore *my* God: For I acknowledge not, I never will acknowledge, any other.—"*My Father*'s God." This repetition is moſt beautifully tender and pathetic. He whoſe Greatneſs I adore, is not a ſtrange God, unknown till now; a protector for a moment. No, he is the ancient patron of my family, his goodneſs is from generation to generation. I have a thouſand *domeſtic* proofs of his conſtant, undiminiſhed affection; and he is now making good to me, only that which he ſolemnly promiſed to my *foreſathers*. And how has he effected this?—

"The LORD *is a Man of War*."

An

An ordinary writer would probably have represented the Almighty here as the God of armies; and as such, discomfiting the host of Pharaoh. But Moses does more; he brings him forth as a champion, a soldier; puts the sword into his hand, and exhibits him fighting his battles, the battles of Israel.

The fourth and fifth verses contain a very fine display and amplification of the simple idea suggested in the first, "The "*horse* and his *rider*."

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath "he cast into the sea: his chosen cap- "tains are also drowned in the Red sea, "the depths have covered them, they sank "into the bottom as a stone." Image rises and swells above image.---Pharaoh's *chariots*, his *hosts*, his *chosen captains*—*cast* into the sea, *drowned* in the Red Sea--- "*Covered* with the depths, *sunk* to the "bottom, at once, as a *stone*.—Notwithstanding their pride and insolence, they can make no more resistance to the power of

LECT. XI. of Jehovah, than a ſtone, launched from the arm of a ſtrong man, into the flood.

Every writer but a Moſes muſt have ſtopped ſhort here, or flattened his ſubject, by repeating, or extending the ſame ideas. But the ſeraphic poet, upborne by an imagination which o'erleaps the boundaries of the world, and an enthuſiaſm which cannot reſt in any creature, ſprings up to the Creator himſelf, in theſe rapturous ſtrains:

"Thy Right hand, O Lord, is be-
"come glorious in thy power: Thy
"right hand, O Lord, hath daſhed in
"pieces the enemy. In the greatneſs
"of thine excellency, Thou haſt over-
"thrown them that roſe up againſt thee."

When the heart is full of an object, it turns it round, as it were, on every ſide, returns to it again and again; never tires in contemplating it, till admiration is loſt in aſtoniſhment. Moſes after this effuſion of joy and praiſe, returns again to the matter of fact: but not in the language

guage of mere deſcription, as in the 4th verſe; but in a continuation of his bold, animated addreſs to God himſelf; which gives it a life and fervour ſuperiour to any thing human. As if the ſtrength of one element had not been ſufficient to deſtroy God's enemies, every element lends its aid. The deep opens its mouth, the fire conſumes, the wind rages; all nature is up in arms, to avenge the quarrel of an incenſed God. The poet ennobles the wind, by making God the principle of it; and animates the fire, by making it ſuſceptible of fear. In the ſame ſtyle of addreſs to God, he throws himſelf, as it were, into the perſon and character of the enemy, previous to their defeat; and pours forth their ſentiments of threatening and ſlaughter: the more ſtrongly to mark their diſappointment, by contraſting the folly and impotence of man, with the power and juſtice of God. "The enemy ſaid, I "will purſue, I will overtake, I will di-"vide the ſpoil: my luſt ſhall be ſatisfied "upon them; I will draw my ſword, my "hand ſhall deſtroy them." You ſee here

LECT. XI. here vengeance haſtening to its object, regardleſs of oppoſition. The words unconnected with a conjunction, ſeem to hurry on like the paſſion that prompts to them. And in what does it iſſue? "Thou didſt "blow with thy wind, the ſea covered "them."--And the picture is finiſhed with this happy ſtroke, "They ſank as lead "in the mighty waters."

But I feel I have undertaken a taſk far beyond my ability, and the limits of your time. And therefore, break off with another borrowed remark, namely, that whatever grandeur and magnificence we may diſcover in this ſong, as it ſtands in ſuch a place and connection; it's beauty and force muſt greatly riſe upon us, were we permitted to penetrate through the myſterious ſenſe, concealed behind the veil of this great event. For it is certain, that this deliverance from Egypt, covers, and repreſents ſalvation of a ſuperiour and more extenſive nature. The apoſtle of the Gentiles teaches us to conſider it, as a type of that freedom which the Chriſtian obtains by

by the waters of baptiſm, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, from the yoke of the prince of this world. And the prophet, in the book of Revelation, makes it to ſhadow forth, the final, and great deliverance of the redeemed; by introducing the aſſembly of thoſe who have overcome the beaſt, holding the harps of God in their hands, and ſinging "the "ſong of Moſes, the ſervant of God, and "the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great "and marvellous are thy works, Lord "God Almighty; juſt and true are thy "ways, thou King of ſaints! Who "ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glo-"rify thy name? For thou only art holy; "for all nations ſhall come and worſhip "before thee; for thy judgments are "made manifeſt*." Now, as the ſcriptures declare, that the wonders of this ſecond deliverance, ſhall infinitely ſurpaſs the firſt; and ſhall entirely obliterate the remembrance of it: we may eaſily believe that the beauties of the *ſpiritual* ſenſe of this

* Rev. xv. 3. 4.

LECT. XI. divine poem, may totally eclipſe thoſe of the *hiſtorical.*

Having endeavoured, imperfectly, to unfold ſome of the excellencies of this ancient ſacred compoſition, I ſhould proceed, as I propoſed, to point out the delicacy of attempting, and the difficulty of ſucceeding, in imitating or extending devotional poetry: but your time and patience, perhaps, will be better employed in hearing me read to you a ſhort paſſage, containing the ſentiments of an excellent modern critic‡, on the ſubject; with which I ſhall conclude this exerciſe.

"It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verſe has been too little applied to the purpoſes of worſhip; and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry. That they have very ſeldom attained their end is ſufficiently known; and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miſcarried.

‡ Dr. Samuel Johnſon.

"Let

"Let no pious ear be offended, if I advance, in oppoſition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often pleaſe. The doctrines of religion, may, indeed, be defended in a didactick poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verſe, will not loſe it, becauſe his ſubject is ſacred. A poet may deſcribe the beauty and grandeur of nature, the flowers of ſpring, and the harveſts of autumn, the viciſſitudes of the tide, and the revolutions of the ſky; and praiſe the maker for his works, in lines which no reader ſhall lay aſide. The ſubject of the diſputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the deſcription is not God, but the works of God.

"Contemplative piety, or the intercourſe between God and the human ſoul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher ſtate than poetry can confer.

LECT. XI.

"The eſſence of poetry is invention; ſuch invention as, as by producing ſomething unexpected, ſurpriſes and delights. The topics of devotion are few; and being few, are univerſally known; but few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of ſentiment, and very little from novelty of expreſſion.

"Poetry pleaſes by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themſelves afford. This effect proceeds from the diſplay of thoſe parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of thoſe which repel the imagination; but religion muſt be ſhewn as it is; ſuppreſſion and addition equally corrupt it; and ſuch as it is, it is known already.

"From poetry the reader juſtly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehenſion, and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped for by Chriſtians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great,

great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved. LECT. XI.

"The employments of pious meditation are faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man, may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God, can only cry for mercy.

"Of sentiments, purely religious, it will be found, that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more

LECT XI. excellent than itſelf. All that verſe can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear; and for theſe purpoſes it may be very uſeful; but it ſupplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Chriſtian Theology are too ſimple for eloquence; too ſacred for fiction; and too majeſtick for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the ſidereal hemiſphere."

LEC-

LECTURE XII.

EXODUS XV. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

AND WHEN THEY CAME TO MARAH, THEY COULD NOT DRINK OF THE WATERS OF MARAH; FOR THEY WERE BITTER: THEREFORE THE NAME OF IT WAS CALLED MARAH. AND THE PEOPLE MURMURED AGAINST MOSES, SAYING, WHAT SHALL WE DRINK? AND HE CRIED UNTO THE LORD; AND THE LORD SHEWED HIM A TREE, WHICH WHEN HE HAD CAST INTO THE WATERS, THE WATERS WERE MADE SWEET. THERE HE MADE FOR THEM A STATUTE AND AN ORDINANCE, AND THERE HE PROVED THEM, AND SAID, IF THOU WILT DILIGENTLY HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD THY GOD, AND WILT DO THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IN HIS SIGHT, AND WILT GIVE EAR TO

HIS

HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND KEEP HIS STATUTES; I WILL PUT NONE OF THESE DISEASES UPON THEE, WHICH I HAVE BROUGHT UPON THE EGYPTIANS: FOR I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE. AND THEY CAME TO ELIM, WHERE THERE WERE TWELVE WELLS OF WATER, AND THREESCORE AND TEN PALM-TREES: AND THEY ENCAMPED THERE BY THE WATERS.

LECT. XII.

UNLESS the mind be under the regulating power of religion, it will be perpetually losing its balance, and changing its tenour. At one time, accelerated into indecent and dangerous speed, through the impulse of desire, ambition, or revenge: at another it is chilled into languor and inaction, through fear, despondency, and disappointment. We shall behold the same person, now, believing things incredible, and attempting things impracticable; and anon, staggering at the shadow of a doubt, and shrinking from the slightest appearance of difficulty and danger. Insolent, fierce, and overbearing in prosperity; the unsteady

creatur-

creature becomes grovelling, dispirited, and mean in adversity. "It is a good thing," therefore, "that the heart be established "by grace:" Grace, that calm, steady, uniform principle, which veers not with every wind of doctrine; rises not, nor falls, like the Mercury in the tube with every variation of the atmosphere, according to the alternate transitions of disappointment and success, censure and applause, health and sickness, youth and age. In the day of prosperity, religion saith to the soul, where it dwells, "Re-"joice" and in the day of adversity, "Consider;" for a wise and a merciful God hath set the one over against the other. This divine principle corrects immoderate joy, saying to the happy, "Be "not high minded, but fear;" it consoles and supports the miserable, by breathing the sweet assurance that the "light "affliction, which is but for a moment, "worketh for us a far more exceeding "and eternal weight of glory †.

The

† 2 Cor. iv. 17.

LECT. XII.

The want of this balance of the ſoul, and the dangerous conſequences of that want, are ſtrikingly exemplified in the hiſtory of the choſen people, which providence, by a ſeries of miracles, undertook to conduct from Egypt to Canaan. Elated or depreſſed, by the aſpect of the moment; we find them haughty in the hour of victory, and ſunk into deſpair by a defeat. The *deepneſs* of the waters of the Red Sea, and their miraculous ſeparation, afford matter of triumph to day: the *bitterneſs* of the waters of Marah cauſes univerſal diſcontent and dejection to-morrow. But, alas! we need not recur to diſtant periods of hiſtory, for an example of the ruinous effects, produced by a deſtitution of religious principle, and of the fatal power of unbelief. The hiſtory of every man's own experience, is illuſtration ſufficient. To what muſt we aſcribe, the envy, jealouſy, rage, pride, reſentment, timidity, diffidence and dejection, which ſucceſſively and unremittingly agitate the human mind? Men walk by ſight, not by faith. They feel the powers of the world that

is,

is, inſenſible of that which is to come. They look at "things temporal," and neglect thoſe "which are unſeen, and "eternal." They ſtand in awe of the creature, and deſpiſe the Creator. While then, we diſcover, deplore and condemn a ſelfiſh, a perverſe, and diſcontented ſpirit, an unbelieving heart, in others; let us ſtudy, by the grace of God, to reform the ſame, or like diſpoſitions in ourſelves.

What a magnificent concert filled the ſhores of the Red Sea, after Iſrael was paſſed over! Every thing was ſuited to another. The words were adapted to the occaſion; the muſick to the words; the performers to the muſick. There, Moſes, leading the bolder, rougher notes of manly voices. Here, Miriam the propheteſs, his ſiſter, in ſweet accord, blending the ſofter harmony of female ſtrains, with the notes of the timbrel, in praiſe of their great deliverer. Never, ſurely, did ſuch muſick ſtrike the vault of heaven, and never ſhall again, "till the ranſomed of the Lord "ſhall return, and come to Zion with "ſongs,

LECT. XII

"ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their "heads; when they ſhall obtain joy and "gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall "flee away†:" Never, till the ſong of Moſes be cloſed, with the ſong of the Lamb.

At length, they quit the ſcene of their terrour and their triumph; for the world admits not of a long continuance of either; and advance three days march into the wilderneſs. Eſcaped, effectually, and for ever, from the oppreſſion of Egypt; no more oppoſed in front, by an unſurmountable barrier, hemmed in on either ſide by impaſſable mountains, or purſued by a numerous and well diſciplined army; but the ſea, once their hinderance, now their defence; every foe ſubdued; and the road to Canaan ſtraight before them, What can now give diſturbance? On how many circumſtances, does life, and the comfort of it depend! The failure, or diſagreeable quality of one ingredient, corrupts and deſtroys the whole. In Shur they found

† Iſa, xxxv. 10.

found *no* water; in Marah they find water, but it is *bitter*. The unavoidable condition of a wilderneſs ſtate! Always too little, or too much! Here, children, and penury; there, affluence and ſterility. This year, drought, parching and conſuming every plant of the field: the next, an overflowing flood, ſweeping every thing before it; and unhappy mortals, eternally augmenting the neceſſary and unavoidable evils of human life, by peeviſhneſs and diſcontent.

Oblige an ungrateful perſon ever ſo often, and diſappoint or oppoſe him once, and lo, the memory of a thouſand benefits is inſtantly loſt. All that Moſes, all that God has done for Iſrael is forgotten the moment that a ſcarcity of water is felt. For, it is with this ſpirit, as with that of ambition. Nothing *is* attained in the eye of ambition, while there is yet one thing *to be* attained. All the favour of Ahaſuerus avails Haman nothing, while Mordecai the Jew ſits in the King's gate. So, ingratitude ſays, nothing is granted, while one thing is denied

LECT. XII.

denied me. One ſcanty meal in Shur, or one unpalatable beverage at Marah, has obliterated all remembrance of the recent wonders of Egypt; and the more recent miracles of the Red ſea. And, as one evil quality is ever found in company with its fellows; we here find ingratitude and impiety toward God, blended with unkindneſs and unreaſonableneſs toward man. And cowardice pitifully levels its keen arrows, at the ſervant, not daring to attack the maſter. "The "people murmured againſt Moſes." A worldly mind under diſtreſs, either flies to the creature for help; or accuſes the creature as the cauſe of its woe. Piety leads the ſoul directly to God; it views the calamity as his appointment; and finds its removal, its remedy, or its compenſation in the divine mercy. Iſrael taſtes the bitter water, deſponds, and charges Moſes fooliſhly. Moſes cries to God, and is enlightened.

Obſerve the goodneſs and long-ſuffering of God. Readier to liſten to the entreaties of

of Moſes, than to puniſh the perverſeneſs and unbelief of the people, He inſtantly directs to a cure for the nitrous quality of the waters of Marah. "The "Lord ſhewed him a tree, which when "he had caſt into the waters, the waters "were made ſweet."

Of little conſequence is it to enquire, becauſe impoſſible to determine, whether the wood of this tree had in it, an inherent virtue, which naturally corrected the brakiſh taſte of the water; or, whether the ſweetening quality were preternaturally communicated to it, to fulfil the preſent deſign of providence. Whether I ſee water ſweetened by a log of wood caſt into it, or iſſuing from the flinty rock, or flowing naturally in the brook; whether I ſee Iſrael fed with bread from heaven, or Moſes and Chriſt ſubſiſting forty days without bread at all; or mankind in general, ſupported by bread growing gradually out of the ground; I ſtill behold but one and the ſame object; "good gifts "coming down," but in ſo many different

LECT. XII.

ent ways, " from the Father of lights." The wiſe man, in the apocryphal book of Eccleſiaſticus, has made a happy uſe of this paſſage, to inculcate the neceſſity of uſing appointed means, in order to obtain ſucceſs. " The Lord," ſays he, " hath created medicines out of the earth, " and he that is wiſe will not abhor " them. Was not the water made ſweet " with wood, that the virtue thereof " might be known? and he hath given " men ſkill, that he might be honoured " in his marvellous works. With ſuch " doth he heal men, and taketh away " their pains. My ſon, in thy ſickneſs " be not negligent: but pray unto the " Lord, and he will make thee whole."

A fondneſs for allegory, has repreſented the effect produced by this tree caſt into the waters, as emblematical of the virtue of the croſs, in ſweetening and ſanctifying affliction to the believer, and taking the ſting out of death. Undoubtedly, when an object ſo important, and a doctrine ſo inſtructive, can by whatever means

means be impreſſed upon the heart, we ought not too ſqueamiſhly to reject applications and illuſtrations of this ſort. In order to promote the ends of true piety, what though we relax a little of the laws of rigid criticiſm? If imagination ſerve as an handmaid to virtue and devotion, let men be as fanciful as they will. If a ſerious ſoul be edified or comforted, ſhall I mar his joy, and diſturb his tranquillity, by forcing him to comprehend the meaning of Greek and Hebrew particles? --- Whether it be warrantable, or not, to give this evangelical turn to the paſſage before us, its moral intention and import will hardly be diſputed. It exhibits the reluctance which men feel to encounter affliction; their impatience and unreaſonableneſs under it; the wiſe deſign of Providence in afflictive diſpenſations, namely to "prove men, whether they will diligently hearken to "the voice of the Lord their God, and "do that which is right in his ſight:" And, finally, it illuſtrates the power, wiſdom and goodneſs of God in counter-

LECT XII.

LECT. XII.

acting one natural evil, by another evil; making poiſon ſerve as an antidote to poiſon, and healing the greater plague of ſin, by the leſs, that of ſuffering.

Some commentators have conjectured, that it was about this very ſpot, that Hagar was relieved and ſupplied with water, ſhe and her ſon, by the angel of the Lord, when they were baniſhed from Abraham's houſe; and they reprove the incredulity of the Iſraelites, by the example of her faith. After all, it was undoubtedly a very ſevere trial; whether we conſider how much, water, ſweet water, is connected, not merely with the convenience and comfort, but with the very exiſtence of human life; the immenſe quantity neceſſary for the ſupport of ſuch a vaſt multitude of men and women, beſides cattle; or, the peculiar demand occaſioned by a vertical ſun, and a parched ſoil. We paſs on from Marah, as men, and as the inhabitants of more favoured regions, praiſing God, "who "walks upon the clouds," and refreſhes us from heaven above; guſhes upon us in

in a thouſand ſtreams of limpid comfort from the earth beneath, and gently flows through every field in a tide of delight; and, as Chriſtians, we flee for refuge and refreſhment to that *wonderful man*, deſcribed, in prophetic viſion, in ſuch beautiful figures as theſe, "A man ſhall "be as an hiding-place from the wind, "and a covert from the tempeſt: as "rivers of water in a dry place; as the "ſhadow of a great rock in a weary "land*." Gold, ſilver and precious ſtones, are produced in ſmall quantities, and are of difficult and dangerous inveſtigation. And, happily the life of man conſiſts not in ſuch things as theſe. Whereas, the things which really miniſter to human comfort, and conſtitute the real ſupport of human life, are poured down upon us with unbounded profuſion. The choiceſt bleſſing which ever was beſtowed upon the world, is common and free to all, as the water in the ſtream; as the light and air of heaven.

* Iſaiah xxxii. 2.

LECT. XII.

But, though the bitter waters are ſweetened for preſent uſe, Iſrael muſt not think of continuing encamped by them. They are to be but the tranſient refreſhment of the way-faring man, not the ſtated ſupply of the Land of Promiſe. Whatever we have attained, whatever we enjoy, the voice of Providence ſtill ſummons us away, ſaying, "Ariſe ye, and "depart, for this is not your reſt."

Their next journeying is from Marah "to Elim; where were twelve wells of "water, and threeſcore and ten palm-"trees: and they encamped there by "the waters." In the preceding ſtation, their proviſion was partly from nature, partly from the kindneſs of a gracious Providence. Nature furniſhed the ſubſtance, a miracle indowed it with the ſuitable qualities. But at Elim, Nature ſeems to do the whole, with her "threeſcore "and ten palm-trees, and twelve wells "of water." And what is Nature, but the great JEHOVAH, performing the moſt aſtoniſhing wonders, in a ſtated and regular

gular course? Water issuing from a rock, when smitten by a rod, is not in itself a whit more miraculous, than the continually supplying one little stream from the same spring. Being arrived at Elim, they encamped "by the waters." The word "Elim," standing in our version untranslated, is generally considered as the proper name of a place; but it is by some, and with a great appearance of reason rendered, "*the forests*." This is supported by a passage of Strabo‡, the famous geographer and historian of Cappadocia, to this purpose; that "at "five days journey from Jericho, there is "a forest of palm-trees, which is held "in great veneration throughout all "that country, on account of the springs "of water, which are found there in "great abundance." The numbers *twelve* and *seventy*, in the sacred text, instead of signifying a determinate quantity, may undoubtedly denote, indefinitely according to a license common in all

LECT. XII.

‡ Lib. xvi.

LECT. XII. languages, a large abundance. And then the account of Strabo, and the narration of Moſes, will mutually confirm and ſtrengthen each other. Two writers of no leſs eminence and credit than Tacitus† and Plutarch*, plainly allude to this paſſage, when they ſay, that "the Jews "being ready to periſh with thirſt, hap-"pily diſcovered ſprings of running water."

But, inſtead of ſettling the geography of the ſpot, and the import of the word Elim, let us look into the fact recorded; and through it, into the volume of human nature. "They encamped there by the "waters." The ſelf-ſame ſpirit which murmured at the taſte of a bitter ſtream, diſpoſed them to ſeek repoſe by the ſide of one ſweet and placid. Miſtaken in both! A carnal mind is eaſily unhinged, and ſoon ſatisfied. Like children, they are put out of humour with a ſtraw; and preſently pacified, they know not why; and, behold unbelief lying at the root of both

† Hiſt. Lib. V.
* Tom. II. Sympoſ. Lib. IV.

one

one and the other. Now, eager to get home before the time; by and by, drowning all thoughts and hopes of it, in the bauble of the preſent hour. See Iſrael at one time, diſconcerted and chagrined, to find that the wilderneſs did not produce every thing to a wiſh; at another, ready to forego the proſpect of Canaan for Egypt; and to accept the land of dates and water, for that flowing with milk and honey. Never did any good come of ſitting down contentedly in temporal poſſeſſions. No ſooner do men become eaſy and comfortable in their circumſtances, than they grow capricious and fantaſtical in their wiſhes and deſires. If providence viſit them not with ſcarcity, or unpleaſantneſs of water; their own reſtleſs appetite ſhall viſit them with an abſurd and unreaſonable craving for fleſh. The fruit and ſhade of the palm-tree, and the deliciouſneſs of a freſh ſpring, pleaſe not long. Put an end to novelty, and farewel delight. But a month and fourteen days have elapſed, ſince with ſo much joy they quitted the houſe of bondage: and they are weak and wicked enough to

LECT. XII.

LECT. XII.

wiſh themſelves thither again. And why? becauſe, in a march of a few ſhort weeks, at moſt, through a wild and deſart country, they wallowed not in the profuſion of Egypt, which they were obliged to purchaſe at the price of their liberty and blood.

When we hear of ſuch an univerſal mutiny, for it was not the murmuring of a few factious diſcontented ſpirits, but of the whole congregation of Iſrael, What have we not to fear from the juſt reſentment of a holy and righteous God, thus inſulted by miſtruſt and unbelief? We find him immediately taking up the cauſe, and, in a manner peculiar to himſelf. Wonder, O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed, O earth. "And the Lord ſaid "unto Moſes, behold I will rain"—what? Fire and brimſtone from heaven, upon this generation of incorrigible rebels, until they be utterly conſumed? No, but "I will rain bread from heaven upon "you." Is this thy manner with men, O Lord God? Surely, "it is of thy mercy

we

"we are not consumed, because thy com-
"passions fail not."

The historical fact which follows, as the accomplishment of this promise, is one of the most singular upon record; and so mixes itself with the leading objects of the New Testament dispensation, that it well merits a separate and particular consideration.

Being arrived at another of the great epochas, or periods of ancient history, The going out of Egypt; we shall make a brief recapitulation of the whole, from the beginning. The first great period of the history of the world, is, from the creation down to the deluge; containing the space of one thousand, six hundred, and fifty-six years; and a succession of eight lives, from Adam, to the six hundredth year of Noah. The second is, from the flood, to the calling of Abraham, and contains four hundred and twenty-seven years; and a succession of ten lives, from the hundred and eighth

year

LECT XII. year of Shem, the Son of Noah, to the ſeventy-fifth of Abraham; the father and founder of the Jewiſh nation: Six of the patriarchs, after the flood, being now dead, Noah, Phaleg, Rehu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah; and four of them ſtill living, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, and Heber. So that one life, that of Shem, connects the antedeluvian world, and the call of Abraham. For he was ninety-eight years old before the flood came; and lived till Abraham was one hundred and fifty, and Iſaac fifty years old. The third grand period of the world, containing four hundred and thirty years, commences on the fifteenth day of the month Abib, which anſwers to the end of our April, or the beginning of May. And ſome learned chronologiſts have undertaken to prove, from the ſcripture hiſtory, and aſtronomical calculations, that Abraham departed from Haran, the paſchal Lamb was ſacrificed in Egypt, and Chriſt expired upon the croſs, as the propitiation

tion for the ſins of the world, on Calvary, the identical month of the year, day of the month, and hour and minute of the day. This period contains a ſucceſſion of ſeven lives, including Abraham's, from his ſeventy-fifth year, to the eightieth of the life of Moſes.

From the creation, then, to the Exodus, is the ſpace of two thouſand, five hundred, and thirteen years; and a ſucceſſion of twenty-four lives. The date of this event, in relation to other important and well known events in the hiſtory of mankind, ſtands, as follows. It happened after the death of Abraham, three hundred and thirty years. After the death of Iſaac, two hundred twenty-five. After the death of Jacob, one hundred ninety-eight. After the death of Joſeph, one hundred forty-four. Before the deſtruction of Troy, about three hundred. Before the firſt Olympiad, or earlieſt reckoning of time, among the Greeks, ſeven hundred and fourteen. Before the building of the temple, when the

Iſrael-

LECT. XII. Israelitish glory was in its zenith, five hundred and six. Before the Babylonish captivity, nine hundred and sixty-three. Before the building of Rome, seven hundred thirty-eight. Before Christ was born at Bethlehem, one thousand, five hundred, fifty-one. Before the present year 1786, three thousand three hundred, thirty-seven.

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? "A thousand years," O Lord, "in thy sight are but as yesterday, when "it is past, and as a watch in the night."* —"Our fathers, where are they? the "prophets, do they live for ever?"— "Seeing then, that all these things shall "be dissolved, what manner of persons "ought ye to be, in all holy conversation "and godliness, Looking for, and hast-"ing unto the coming of the day of "God, wherein the heavens being on "fire shall be dissolved, and the ele-"ments shall melt with fervent heat? "Nevertheless, we, according to his

* Psal. xc. 4.

promise,

" promiſe, look for new heavens and a
" new earth, wherein dwelleth righte-
" ouſneſs†."—" So teach us to number
" our days, that we may apply our
" hearts unto wiſdom||."—" Many ſhall
" come from the eaſt, and weſt, and
" ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac,
" and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*",
—" The law was given by Moſes, but
" grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt§."
—" And he that ſat upon the throne,
" ſaid, Behold, I make all things new."
—" He which teſtifieth theſe things,
" ſaith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen.
" Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.‡"

† 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12, 13. || Pſ. xc. 12.
* Mat. viii. 11. § John i. 17. ‡ Rev. xxii. 20.

LECTURE XIII.

EXODUS xvi. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES, SAYING, I HAVE HEARD THE MURMURINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; SPEAK UNTO THEM, SAYING, AT EVEN YE SHALL EAT FLESH, AND IN THE MORNING YE SHALL BE FILLED WITH BREAD: AND YE SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT AT EVEN THE QUAILS CAME UP AND COVERED THE CAMP: AND IN THE MORNING THE DEW LAY ROUND ABOUT THE HOST. AND WHEN THE DEW THAT LAY WAS GONE UP, BEHOLD UPON THE FACE OF THE WILDERNESS THERE LAY A SMALL ROUND THING, AS SMALL

AS

AS THE HOAR-FROST ON THE GROUND. AND WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SAW IT, THEY SAID ONE TO ANOTHER, IT IS MANNA: FOR THEY WIST NOT WHAT IT WAS. AND MOSES SAID UNTO THEM, THIS IS THE BREAD WHICH THE LORD HATH GIVEN YOU TO EAT.

LECT. XIII.

MAN, compoſed of body and ſpirit, is giving continual indication of the origin from which he ſprings. His creative imagination, his penetrating underſtanding; his quickneſs of apprehenſion, loftineſs of thought, eagerneſs of deſire, fondneſs of hope; nay, even his erect figure, and a countenance turned upward to the ſkies, beſpeak the Son of God; into whoſe noſtrils Jehovah has breathed the breath of life; and whom he has framed after his own image. On the other hand, appetites perpetually craving a ſupply out of the earth; the law of his nature, which ſtretches him in a ſtate of inſenſibility upon the lap of his mother, for one third of his exiſtence, in order to ſupport the employments of the other two; and rational

rational powers ſubjected to the will of ſenſe, ſhew us a creature, taken *from* the duſt of the ground, always dependent upon it, and haſtening to return thitherward again.

LECT XIII.

Providence permits us not for a moment to forget, who, and whence we are. Have we laboured an hour or two? Hunger, and thirſt, and wearineſs, irreſiſtibly draw us to the groſſer elements of which we are compounded. A little bread and water having diſpenſed their nouriſhing virtue; a ſhort ſleep having reſtored our waſted powers, the ſoul ſtarts up into conſcious immortality; ſprings forward to eternity, graſps the globe, expatiates from ſphere to ſphere, aſcends to the throne of God himſelf. At one time, we behold a grovelling contemptible being, all body, abſorbed in the low and groſs deſire of the moment, a fit companion to the beaſts that periſh: and anon, we ſee that very ſame wretched creature, becoming all ſpirit, leaving the earth behind him, mixing with angels, and holding fellowſhip with the Father of ſpirits.

LECT. XIII. Religion is conſtantly aiming at the reſtoration of our fallen nature; ſtill exerting her quickening power, to raiſe the beſtial into rational, the rational into divine; graciouſly employs herſelf, in gradually detaching us from things ſeen and temporal, and in uniting us to thoſe which are unſeen, and are eternal. The world, on the contrary, is as conſtantly ſtriving to degrade, to depreſs, to extinguiſh the immortal principle, and to ſink the man in the brute. Hence we ſee the worldling dreaming of much goods, laid up for many years; endeavouring to confer duration, even upon his ſenſuality; while Chriſt teacheth his diſciples to pray, ſaying, "Give us this day "our daily bread." And by this admonition, he powerfully checks immoderate anxiety about the future. "Therefore, I ſay "unto you, take no thought for your life, "what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; "nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put "on: Is not the life more than meat, "and the body than raiment? Behold "the fowls of the air: for they ſow not,

"not, neither do they reap, nor gather "into barns; yet your heavenly Father "feedeth them. Are ye not much bet- "ter than they*?

To teach men their conſtant dependance, their proviſion is beſtowed in a gradual, daily ſupply; not in heaps but in handfuls. And, when God was pleaſed miraculouſly to feed Iſrael in the wilderneſs, for forty years together, the food of every day came in its day. All attempts to hoard were defeated. Every one's portion was ſufficiently ample: And accumulation became a nuiſance, inſtead of wealth.

Men under the impulſe of their paſſions ſluggiſhly crawl, or eagerly run to the objects of their purſuit; but God is ever advancing towards his, in the ſame ſteady, majeſtic pace. When we hear of the birth of Moſes, the deliverer of Iſrael, we immediately conclude, that the time

* Matt. vi. 25, 26.

LECT. XIII. of their redemption is now at hand. But, behold forty years elapſe before a ſingle effort is made for this purpoſe. And, it is then, the feeble effort of a ſolitary individual, to avenge a private wrong; and the general enfranchiſement ſeems rather retarded, than accelerated by it; and another period of forty years paſſes, without one apparent ſtep taken towards public liberty. The fetters of Egypt are at length broken, and Iſrael is enlarged; but the poſſeſſion of Canaan is ſtill at a diſtance; and a third ſpace of forty years, conſumes that whole generation in the wilderneſs; and Moſes, their conductor dies, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, before the ſole of one foot enters the land of promiſe, as an inhabitant. So unlike are the preconceptions of erring men, to the deſigns of the infinitely wiſe God.

When we behold that vaſt congregation, with ſuch a diſplay of omnipotence, reſcued from bondage, conducted through the Red ſea, made to triumph over all their enemies,

enemies, we are apt to consider them as the favourites of heaven, destined to personal honours and possessions. But, the event teaches us to correct our hasty judgment, and instructs us, that not the particular interests of individuals, but the great interests of the church of God are the care of heaven; that, though Aaron and his sons may die, the priesthood ever lives; and, that while prophet after prophet retires, it is only to make room for the prince and lord of all the prophets.

Of little consequence is it to obtain possession of expected good, unless we be fitted for the enjoyment of it. A nation of slaves, was unqualified to exercise the rights, and to enjoy the privileges of citizens. Israel had no existence in Egypt, but merely a natural one. They had no civil constitution, no laws, no government. To have been conducted directly to Canaan in such a state, had been the reverse of a benefit. Providence therefore thought proper, to employ a

LECT. XIII

ſeries of years in the wilderneſs, in training the people for empire; in modelling a government ſuitable to their future condition; and, by enacting wiſe laws, reſpecting both religion and civil polity, prepared them for that exalted rank which they were to hold among the nations; and that duration of power and importance, with which the ſalvation of the whole human race was ſo cloſely connected. Thus, the eternal decree makes the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan ſure to every heir of glory: which the juſtifying grace, and adopting love of his heavenly Father, declare and confirm; but he is not brought home to his Father's houſe above, till through the ſchool of diſcipline, and by the ſpirit of holineſs, he is "made meet to be a partaker of the "inheritance of the ſaints in light."

Men, through impatience and peeviſhneſs, miſs the very end at which they aim. Canaan flies but the farther off, from being graſped at too ſoon. The homely proviſion brought from Egypt was now ſpent,

ſpent: the milk and honey of Canaan were not yet beſtowed. The wilderneſs naturally produced nothing for food, hardly water to quench their thirſt. The wonders of Egypt; the parting of the Red ſea; the ſweetening of the bitter waters of Marah; all, all is forgotten the moment diſtreſs comes upon them. "And the whole "congregation of the children of Iſrael "murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron "in the wilderneſs."—God immediately takes up the cauſe as his own; but, inſtead of expreſſing the reſentment of an inſulted ſovereign and benefactor, declares his gracious reſolution, to overcome this ungracious ſpirit, by compliance and kindneſs; and men, unworthy of the meaneſt earthly fare, have a promiſe of a daily ſupply of bread from heaven. But, as God does not always withhold in diſpleaſure; ſo he does not always grant from love. When providence deigns to indulge the humours, and gratify the luſts of men, it is far, very far, from being a token for good. A promiſe of bread in the morning, is a precious gift;

LECT. XIII.

but the addition of flesh to the full, in the evening, wears rather the appearance of a threatening. When our desires exceed the bounds of wisdom, the accomplishment, not the disappointment of them, becomes our punishment.

It is remarkable too, that the luxurious part of their demand, was granted before that which was necessary. The quails came in the evening; the manna appeared not till the next morning. Another proof, that the supply which was granted, flowed not from unmixed affection.

Without going, at present, into any of the critical enquiries, which have been pursued, respecting either the name, or the nature of this wonderful bread, we proceed to make a few practical observations upon it, founded upon the letter of the history, as it stands in our bible.

First. Then, and then only, is faith warranted to expect relief from a miracle, when means have been tried without

out effect; or, in a ſituation, when no means can be uſed with a probability of ſucceſs.—If God, in his providence, has brought us into the wilderneſs, where no corn can grow, where no water flows, we may reaſonably look for an interpoſition from above, for our ſupport; which we ſhould expect in vain, in a land of grain and vineyards. Where there is a field for the exerciſe of foreſight, induſtry and diligence; we tempt God, inſtead of honouring him, when we caſt our work, inſtead of our care, upon him. And yet it is not uncommon to ſee a liſtleſs, indolent diſpoſition, wanting to paſs itſelf for reliance on the goodneſs of heaven. Herod deſired to ſee Chriſt, merely in the view of gratification to an idle curioſity, in hope of ſeeing a miracle performed: but his motive being wrong, and unworthy, his deſire was not indulged. The Phariſees, from a captious, unbelieving ſpirit, tempted Chriſt, "aſking "a ſign from heaven;" but though ſigns innumerable were every day exhibited, in compaſſion to the miſerable, and con-

de-

LECT. XIII. descension to the weak, no sign but that "of the prophet Jonas," was given to the self-conceited infidel. JEHOVAH performs the wonders of his power and goodness, neither to save the exertions of the lazy, nor to tickle the imaginations of the curious. His object is not to make men stare and wonder; but to do them good.

Second. Man's happiest estate, is to feel his daily, constant dependance upon his Maker, and to see the regular promised supply, evincing the truth and faithfulness of its bountiful author. With a monitor for God, pressing in upon us, through every avenue of the soul, we are nevertheless apt to be inattentive and unthankful. It is, therefore, an instance of great goodness, when God is pleased to force himself upon our thoughts; and to invite us to communion with "the Father "of our spirits," in the commerce of a constant habitual friendship. Here, then, the poor have infinitely the advantage over the rich. They see, or they are blind indeed, they see their "dry morsel and

"their

"their dinner of herbs," coming, at the expected hour, from the bounty of indulgent heaven. They are not suffered to be careless, impious, and ungrateful. Their homely fare is garnished and seasoned, with what gold cannot purchase, nor power compel, the gentle whispers of a Father's love, the kindly welcome of an affectionate friend. And yet, the bulk of mankind is striving and straining to get out of this happy state; eagerly catching at a situation, which would infallibly betray them into self-sufficiency, insolence, and irreligion. That proud word, independance, is continually in their mouths; and the thing itself in their hearts; not considering, that the real happiness of men consists, in mutual connection and dependance; and, that the glory and felicity of every rational being, is founded upon union with, and a sense of his constant and entire dependance on, his Creator.

Third. No fulness, nor excellency of created comforts, will produce real happiness

LECT. XIII.

pineſs to rational beings; without the aid of religion. During the abode of Iſrael in Egypt, the obſervance of the ſabbath had been greatly neglected, if not altogether diſuſed. The religious principle of courſe muſt have been much weakened; if not wholly deſtroyed. There was nothing done then, till this matter was reeſtabliſhed. For, there can be no good government, but what is founded upon religion; and religion cannot long exiſt in any degree of either fervour or purity, where no attention is paid to the Lord's day. Providence, therefore, employed a certain method, to point out that day to Iſrael, and to inforce the obſervance of it. On that day no manna fell. But, to compenſate the failure, a double quantity was given the day before; and the manna of that day, contrary to its uſual cuſtom, retained its ſweetneſs during the ſabbath: it neither melted away, nor became putrid. But alas, long diſuſe had ſo much diminiſhed public reſpect for the ordinance, that a diſcipline of forty years is ſcarcely ſufficient

ficient to reſtore it to its ancient dignity and eſtimation. The reſtraints of religion are no encroachments on human liberty. "The ſabbath was made for "man," a ſeaſon of reſt for his body; a ſeaſon of contemplation for his mind. It was intended to be his comfort, as a citizen of this world; and his condition as a candidate for another country, that is an heavenly, is cloſely connected with it. Can the great God be honoured by our reſting from the uſual employments of life, for a ſeventh part of our time? Surely not: but God is honoured and glorified, when man is made wiſe, good, and happy.

Fourth. The folly and perverſeneſs of men, exhibit a melancholy contraſt to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God. The promiſe of the Almighty gave full aſſurance of a daily, certain, ſtated ſupply. But, either through miſtruſt at one time, they attempt to hoard up to-morrow's proviſion from the ſuperabundance of to-day; or, through impiety at another, they violate the divine appointment, by going out to gather,

on

LECT. XIII. on that day, when they were expreſſly aſſured they needed to expect none. Thus we are always doing too little or too much; impatiently and impetuouſly outrunning providence, or ſluggiſhly and careleſſly lagging behind. And what do we get to ourſelves, in either caſe, but diſappointment and diſhonour? The man who diffidently laboured to accumulate, for five days of the week, when he looks upon his ſtore, finds he has been treaſuring up to himſelf nothing but ſtench and putrefaction; and the Iſraelite, who preſumptuouſly truſted his ſabbath-day's entertainment to the manna of that day, muſt faſt for his folly.

Fifth. Obſerve the care of providence, to preſerve among this highly favoured people, a conſtant ſenſe of their equality. All had their conſtant ſupply; every one was entitled to his fair proportion; and no good purpoſe did it anſwer, to graſp at a double portion. For the hand which miraculouſly rained down this heavenly bread, miraculouſly modified it to every one's

one's uſe. "He who gathered much "had nothing over, and he that gathered "little had no lack." Now, if we attend to the conduct of providence, to this day, and in every ſtate of the world, we ſhall find the ſame equality of diſtribution ſtill going on. A man has juſt what he uſes, and no more. With a cheſt full of gold, he has a deſire to eat, but twice or thrice a day at moſt. With a thouſand ſuits of apparel in his wardrobe, he can uſe but one at a time. His neighbour, therefore, who has but one dinner, and one coat at once, is, upon the whole, juſt as rich as he. Beyond what nature requires, reaſon approves, and the Almighty crowns with his bleſſing, all is childiſh and fantaſtical. "There is that ſcattereth, and yet "increaſeth; and there is that withhold-"eth more than is meet, but it tendeth "to poverty†." If this were felt and underſtood, as it ought, we ſhould ſee leſs eagerneſs, rapacity and ſelfiſhneſs in one part of mankind; and leſs unthankfulneſs and diſcontent in another.

LECT. XIII.

† Prov. xi. 24.

Sixth,

LECT. XIII.

Sixth. Mark the danger of giving way to a light, wanton, fanciful disposition. Even manna pleased not long. An imagination filled with the luxurious dainties of Egypt, soon spurned at it, as "light "bread." There is no end to wishing and desiring. Unadulterated nature craves but little, and is not difficult to please. But once give the reins to fancy, and the wealth of Crœsus, the magnificence of Solomon, the elegance of Lucullus, and the luxury of Heliogabalus, will soon stink and be despised. Men ate angels food, and loathed it. Of what importance then must it be, to check in ourselves, and to repress in those, whose virtue and happiness are intrusted to our care, the first workings of a wild and fantastical appetite. Children cannot be too simply clothed and fed. Solicit the palate by delicacies, and you kindle a fire in the imagination, to which no wealth can administer a sufficient supply of fuel, which no reason can keep within bounds; which will certainly produce a thousand real evils, and render the possession of the

real

real felicities of life taſteleſs, and inſipid. Teach young ones to value themſelves on dreſs and appearance, and you undermine the fabric of their true conſequence. In proportion as you lead them to derive their importance from the adorning of their bodies, you ſtrip and expoſe their minds.

Seventh. The ſame power which corrupted the manna on the ſecond day, and which preſerved it from corruption every ſeventh day, commanded a ſmall portion to be laid up for a memorial to future generations; and for that purpoſe, miraculouſly kept it in its original ſtate of ſweetneſs and perfection. In this, we ſee the abſolute ſubjection of all things to the power of God. They grow and decay, they continue and paſs away, they live and periſh, juſt as he will. "I know that "thou wilt bring me to death, and to "the houſe appointed for all living." and, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and "that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day up-"on the earth. And though after my

LECT. XIII. "ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in "my fleſh ſhall I ſee God." No power nor ſkill can redeem the body from the power of the grave; the arm of an archangel is unable to confine it there.

But finally. The manna from heaven too, is an image of better things to come. The bread of angels could not confer immortality on thoſe who did eat it; but "the true bread which came down from heaven," communicates eternal life to all who partake of it. But the words of our Saviour himſelf, will beſt explain this ſubject. "Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am "the bread of life; he that cometh to "me ſhall never hunger, and he that "believeth on me ſhall never thirſt. "Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that "believeth on me hath everlaſting life. "I am that bread of life. Your fathers "did eat manna in the wilderneſs and "are dead. This is the bread which "cometh down from heaven, that a man "may eat thereof and not die. I am the "living bread which came down from "heaven.

" heaven. If any man eat of this bread, " he ſhall live for ever; and the bread " which I will give is my fleſh, which I " will give for the life of the world. " The Jews, therefore, ſtrove among " themſelves, ſaying, how can this man " give us his fleſh to eat? Then Je- " ſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I " ſay unto you, except ye eat the fleſh, " and drink the blood of the Son of " Man, ye have no life in you. Who- " ſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my " blood, hath eternal life; and I will " raiſe him up at the laſt day; for my " fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is " drink indeed. He that eateth my " fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth " in me, and I in him." " As the liv- " ing Father hath ſent me, and I live by " the Father, ſo he that eateth me, even " he ſhall live by me. This is the bread " which came down from heaven, not " as your fathers did eat Manna, and " are dead. He that eateth of this bread " ſhall live for ever*."

* John vi. 47, &c.

LECT. XIII.

Having thus finiſhed the courſe of lectures propoſed for this ſeaſon ‡, What remains, but that with a grateful heart, I firſt acknowledge the great goodneſs of almighty God, who has graciouſly lent health and ſtrength for carrying on this undertaking, thus far. If any ſavour of divine things has been felt, or communicated; if ſcripture truth has to any been ſet in a new, or an agreeable light; if a taſte for ſacred reading and meditation

‡ For the reaſon aſſigned, when theſe diſcourſes were firſt ſubmitted to the public eye, ſome of the occaſional addreſſes from the pulpit, were retained in the publication. But the lectures of a ſeaſon, not correſponding exactly to the uſual ſize of a volume, it became, at length, a matter of doubt, whether theſe addreſſes, ſhould be altogether ſuppreſſed, modelled into a more proper diction and ſtation from the preſs, or given exactly in the order and words, in which they were delivered. The doubt iſſued, in reſolving, upon the laſt. This lecture concluded the courſe of Spring 1783. The courſe of the enſuing ſeaſon commenced with that which follows. Perhaps it was unneceſſary to ſay ſo much, in explanation of a matter ſo little important, as the concluſion of one diſcourſe, and the introduction to another.

has

has been conveyed; if the connection between the old and new teſtament has been pointed out, and impreſſed upon any heart; and, if the young in particular, have been induced, by any thing ſaid in this place, to think for themſelves, and to compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual; —the lecturer has gained his end, and is already in poſſeſſion of his reward. The praiſe he cheerfully renders to him to whom it belongs.

To you, my very dear friends, my thanks are, in the next place, unqueſtionably due, and are rendered with unfeigned gratitude. Your patient attendance, and candid attention, during ſeven months together, I ſhall ever conſider as a proof of attachment the moſt flattering, and the moſt encouraging. Why ſhould I conceal my feelings on the occaſion? I engaged in this undertaking, at firſt, with fear and trembling; I proceeded with ſolicitude; but, I conclude with heartfelt ſatisfaction; becauſe the countenance I have met with, encourages me to hope that my labours may have been doing

LECT XIII.

ſome good. If there be one circumſtance that gives me pain, it is the exceſs of that liberality and approbation which has ſo far over-rated and over-paid my endeavours, to convey to you uſeful and pleaſing inſtruction. In return, all I can do, is to wiſh and pray that your kindneſs may be returned a thouſand fold into your boſoms, in temporal, ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings. And now, my beloved brethren, farewell.—To the grace of God I commend you all: Even, "to him that is "able to keep you from falling, and to "preſent you faultleſs before the pre-"ſence of his glory with exceeding joy. "To the only wiſe God our Saviour.*" That we ſhall never all meet again in an earthly temple, is certain. For time is haſtening to ſilence the tongue of the preacher; and to cloſe the hearer's ear. But we have everlaſting conſolation and good hope, through grace, of meeting together, and worſhipping in that temple, "which has no need of the ſun, neither "of the moon, to ſhine in it; for the

* Jude 24, 25.

"glory

" glory of God doth lighten it, and the " Lamb is the light thereof. And the " nations of them which are ſaved, " ſhall walk in the light of it: and the " kings of the earth do bring their glory " and honour into it. And the gates of " it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day; for " there ſhall be no night there‡". Let us, therefore, " be ſtedfaſt, immoveable, " always abounding in the work of the " Lord; foraſmuch as we know that our " labour is not in vain in the Lord.§"

‡ Rev. xxi. 23, 24, 25. § 1 Cor. xv. 58,

LECTURE XIV.

EXODUS xvii. 1, 2,—5, 6.

AND ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL JOURNEYED FROM THE WILDERNESS OF SIN, AFTER THEIR JOURNIES, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD, AND PITCHED IN REPHIDEM: AND THERE WAS NO WATER FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK. WHEREFORE THE PEOPLE DID CHIDE WITH MOSES, AND SAID, GIVE US WATER, THAT WE MAY DRINK. AND MOSES SAID UNTO THEM, WHY CHIDE YOU WITH ME? WHEREFORE DO YE TEMPT THE LORD? AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, GO ON BEFORE THE PEOPLE, AND TAKE WITH THEE OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL AND THY ROD, WHEREWITH THOU SMOTEST THE RIVER, TAKE IN THINE HAND,

AND

AND GO. BEHOLD I WILL STAND BEFORE THEE THERE UPON THE ROCK IN HOREB; AND THOU SHALT SMITE THE ROCK, AND THERE SHALL COME WATER OUT OF IT, THAT THE PEOPLE MAY DRINK. AND MOSES DID SO IN THE SIGHT OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL.

LECT. XIV.

THE reconciliation of interrupted friendſhip, is one of the chief delights of human life. The extatic pleaſure of meeting again, after long abſence, perſons whom we dearly love, obliterates in a moment the pain of ſeparation; and one hour of ſweet communication compenſates the languor, ſolicitude, and gloom of many years. After an interval of five months, I return, to converſe with Moſes, and to talk of him to you, with the ſatisfaction of one who has been upon a long journey, and, returning home, finds again thoſe whom he left, thoſe whom he loves; and finds them ſuch as he wiſhes them to be. Let us, my dear friends, with increaſed ardour, affection, admi-

admiration, and gratitude, renew our intimacy with the venerable man to whom we are indebted for ſo much rational pleaſure; for ſo much uſeful inſtruction. —Moſes, thou prince of hiſtorians, ſublimeſt of poets, ſageſt of legiſlators, clereſt ſighted of prophets, moſt amiable of men! To thee, we owe our knowledge of the ages beyond the flood! Thou firſt taughteſt to ſtring the ſacred lyre, and to adapt the high praiſes of God to the enchanting concord of ſweet ſounds. By thee, King in Jeſhurun, all ſucceeding princes have been inſtructed how to govern; and lawgivers are formed to political wiſdom and ſagacity. By thee, Jews were led to expect, and Gentiles are encouraged to rejoice in, MESSIAH, the Great Prophet, after thy ſimilitude; by whom, alone, thou art excelled. And by thee, ſweeteſt, meekeſt, gentleſt of mankind, the endearing charities of private life, are moſt engagingly exemplified, and moſt powerfully recommended.

LECT XIV.

But

LECT. XIV. But chiefly, thee, O ſpirit! thee only, we adore,

——— "Who didſt inſpire
"That ſhepherd who firſt taught the choſen ſeed,
"In the beginning, how the heavens and earth
"Roſe out of chaos."

Whatever wiſdom we have learned, whatever pleaſure we have enjoyed, whatever comfort we poſſeſs, whatever hope we feel—all, all, is of thee, pure, eternal, unchanging ſource of light, and life, and joy.

Moſes, in the paſſage of his writings which I have now read, is carrying on his own intereſting eventful hiſtory. At the head of the myriads of Iſrael, he is now purſuing his march from Egypt to Canaan, following a guide who would not miſlead them, and whom they could not miſtake; protected by a power, which, like a wall of fire, bid defiance to every threatening foe; and, from day to day, ſupplied by a bounty incapable of being exhauſted. All theſe preſent and ſingular advantages, had

had the ſweetneſs of hope mingled with them. They had juſt eſcaped from the moſt humiliating and oppreſſive of all ſervitude, and they were haſtening to the inheritance of their fathers: yet we find them a people as peeviſh, irritable, and difficult to pleaſe, as if they had never known adverſity; as if they had juſt iſſued from the lap of eaſe and indulgence. One day, the bread is dry and ſtale; the next, the water is bitter; the third, there is a ſcarcity of it. The water is ſweetened; manna deſcends; quails fall around their camp; but there is ſtill "a cruel ſome-"thing unpoſſeſſed," and all that went before is forgotten; all that is in poſſeſſion becomes inſipid. Beſtow on the ungrateful perſon, nine hundred and ninety-nine favours, and withhold the thouſandth, and all you have done for him is loſt. The preſent preſſure always ſeems the heavieſt. Mouldy bread, and brakiſh water in the wilderneſs, are conſidered as evils more intolerable, than all the rigours of ſlavery in Egypt.

LECT. XIV.

Where

LECT XIV.

Where does this cenſure fall? On that moody murmuring race, the Jews, only? Alas, it overwhelms ourſelves; it bears hard, not upon individuals here and there; but upon mankind! We expect more from the world, than it poſſibly can beſtow; and, when we diſcover its inſufficiency, we charge God fooliſhly; and becauſe we have not every thing that we wiſh, we are ſatisfied with nothing. Solacing ourſelves, like Jonah, under the ſhadow of a gourd: we fancy it is a perennial ſhelter. We ſee not the worm which is gnawing its root; and when it is ſmitten down and withers, we are ready to ſay, with the ſullen, teſty prophet, "we do well to be angry."

But, Was the want of water a ſlight evil? And, is it ſinful to complain under the preſſure of a calamity like this? And, Was this the *firſt* time Iſrael had been in diſtreſs, and found relief? Who was it that ſweetened the waters of Marah? Who divided the Red ſea? Who rained bread from heaven? And, who ever mended

mended his condition by murmuring and diſcontent? Had God intended to deſtroy that people, Why all this exertion of a ſtrong hand, and ſtretched out arm to deliver them? God, in the failure of our earthly comforts, means not our mortification and ruin, but our wiſdom and improvement. He thereby teaches us our dependence; ſummons us to the obſervation of his providence; and levels, not the hope and joy, but the pride and ſelf-ſufficiency of man.

Water! Precious fluid! Infinitely more valuable than the blood of the grape, than rivulets of oil, or honey from the rock; refreſhed, ſuſtained every moment by thee—we are every moment, waſting, neglecting, forgetting thee. We prize thee not, becauſe of thy rich abundance; and, becauſe thou entereſt into every other mean of food and comfort, thy importance is unobſerved, thy benefits forgotten. May I never know thy value, from the "want of thee."

"There-

LECT. XIV.

"There was no water for the people to drink. "Wherefore the people did chide with "Moſes, and ſaid, give us water that "we may drink. And Moſes ſaid unto "them, why chide you with me? Where-"fore do ye tempt the Lord? If, in their calmeſt moments, men are often incapable of reaſoning juſtly, and diſtinguiſhing accurately, is it any wonder to find them, in the very tide and whirlwind of paſſion, acting fooliſhly and unreaſonably? Who would envy preeminence ſuch as that which Moſes enjoyed? Is glory obtained? He comes in but for a moderate ſhare. Is blame incurred, or diſtreſs felt? All is imputed to him. To what a ſevere trial was the temper of this meekeſt of all men, now put! What ſo provoking as to meet with cenſure, when we are conſcious of meriting praiſe? What ſo galling as to have our calamities, charged upon us as crimes; to be accuſed as culpable, merely becauſe we have been unfortunate? Surely the great are ſet in "ſlippery "places"; and uneaſy muſt the head lie that wears a crown.

We

We ſee Moſes flying in the hour of danger, whither the people ought to have fled in the hour of their affliction. "He "cried unto the Lord." Religion opens a refuge, when all other refuge fails; and adminiſters a remedy, to ills otherwiſe incurable. I tremble for the life of Moſes. He trembles for himſelf. "They are almoſt "ready to ſtone me." The voice of Jehovah is again heard, and Moſes is in ſafety. But I tremble now, for theſe murmuring, unbelieving, rebellious Iſraelites. Is not the thunder of his indignation going to burſt out? Is not the fire haſtening to conſume? Or, is the earth going to open her mouth, and ſwallow them quick up into the pit? Behold a ſolemn preparation making! But it is an arrangement of love. It is the voice of God, I hear:---but it ſpeaks mercy and peace. The tremendous rod of God, wherewith he bruiſed and broke Egypt, is again employed; but not as the inſtrument of puniſhment to Iſrael. It ſmites, not a ſinful people, but the flinty rock; and draws forth not a ſtream of blood from the heart of the offender, but

LECT. XIV. a ſtream of water to cool his tongue, and reſtore his fainting ſoul. Surely, O Lord, "thy ways are not as our ways: for as "the heavens are higher than the earth, "ſo are thy ways higher than our ways, "and thy thoughts than our thoughts." "Behold, therefore, the goodneſs and ſe-"verity of God: on them which fell, ſe-"verity; but towards thee, goodneſs, if "thou continue in his goodneſs: otherwiſe, "thou alſo ſhalt be cut off†." Aſtoniſhing inſtance of the power and ſovereignty of the Moſt High! The ſame rod which ſmote the river, and it became blood, ſmites the rock, and it becomes ſtreams of water. Who is to be feared, who is to be truſted, but the God who can do theſe great things?

How honourable had it been for Iſrael, to have had this ſtage of their marching through the wilderneſs, diſtinguiſhed by a name, which betokened and commemorated their faithfulneſs, obedience, and

‡ Iſa. lv. 8, 9. † Rom. xi. 22.

ſub-

ſubmiſſion. Inſtead of this, the names *Maſſah* and *Meribah*, muſt tranſmit to all generations, the memory of *temptation*, *chiding*, and *ſtrife*. Happily, the monuments of human frailty, folly and guilt, are alſo the monuments of the divine patience, forbearance and tender mercy. But "the law had only a ſhadow of good "things to come." Where Moſes leaves us, Iſaiah takes us by the hand, and leads us on our way; pointing to Him, whom all prophecy revealed, and ſaying, "Be-"hold, a King ſhall reign in righteouſ-"neſs; and princes ſhall rule in judg-"ment. And a man ſhall be as an hid-"ing place from the wind, and a covert "from the tempeſt; as rivers of water "in a dry place; as the ſhadow of a "great rock in a weary land*." And, the apoſtle of the Gentiles conducts our weary wandering ſteps from the rock in Horeb, to the rock Chriſt, from whence iſſues the mighty "river, which makes glad the city of our God;" and which affords,

* Iſa. xxxii. 1, 2.

LECT. XIV. not a tranſitory, temporary refreſhment, but a perpetual never-failing ſupply. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that "ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all "our fathers were under the cloud, and "all paſſed through the ſea; and were "all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, "and in the ſea; and did all eat the "ſame ſpiritual meat; and did all drink "the ſame ſpiritual drink: for they drank "of that ſpiritual rock which followed "them; and that rock was Chriſt*." The words of the apoſtle inſinuate, that the ſtream which iſſued from the rock in the wilderneſs, continued to flow, and accompanied their progreſs through the deſert, during the remainder of their long pilgrimage; till, being arrived at the Land of Promiſe, a land watered with the dew of heaven, and the abundance of the rivers, a miraculous ſupply, being unneceſſary, was withdrawn.

Thus was the goſpel preached to them of old time. The ſolid rock became, as

* 1 Cor. x. 1, &c.

it

it were, moveable; "and followed "them," wherefoever they went. The Adamant was melted into a pool, for their refreſhment. Bleſſed type of him, who, in his own perſon, accommodated the immutability of the divine nature, to the neceſſity and the relief of human miſery! Bleſſed type, of that ſtream of blood, flowing from the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world; and, "which tak-"eth away the ſins of the world!" Bleſſed type, of that "conſolation that is in Chriſt "Jeſus," for the weary and heavy laden, for the guilty and the wretched, for the faint and dying! Bleſſed type of that precious ſtream, which has flowed in every age, and is flowing to every nation and people under heaven; and which never leaves the path of the Zion traveller, till, through the midſt of Jordan, he ſtands on the delightful ſhore of the Canaan that is above, where it becomes "a pure ri-"ver of water of life, clear as cryſtal, "proceeding out of the throne of God, "and of the Lamb. In the midſt of the "ſtreet of it, and on either ſide of the

LECT. XIV.

"river, there is the tree of life, which "bears twelve manner of fruits, and yield-"eth her fruit every month: and the "leaves of the tree are for the healing "of the nations. And there ſhall be no "more curſe: but the throne of God "and of the Lamb ſhall be in it: and his "ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they "ſhall ſee his face: and his name ſhall "be in their foreheads. And there ſhall "be no night there; and they need no "candle, neither light of the ſun; for "the Lord God giveth them light: "and they ſhall reign for ever and "ever*.

In the recapitulation of this wonderful hiſtory, in the book of Numbers, an intereſting and important circumſtance is recorded, which in Exodus is ſuppreſſed; and which we muſt here inſert, that we may view the event complete in all its parts, and, that we may feel it, in all its force.—The miracle of extracting water from the rock, which proved ſo ſalutary to the

* Rev. xxii. 1, &c.

people

people, became fatal to Moſes himſelf. And this, he, with his native candour and ſimplicity, thus relates, "And Moſes took "the rod from before the Lord, as he com- "manded him. And Moſes and Aaron "gathered the congregation together, be- "fore the rock, and he ſaid unto them, "Hear now, ye rebels; muſt we fetch "you water out of this rock? And "Moſes lifted up his hand, and with "his rod he ſmote the rock twice; "and the water came out abundantly, "and the congregation drank, and their "beaſts alſo. And the Lord ſpake unto "Moſes and Aaron, Becauſe ye believed "me not, to ſanctify me in the eyes of "the children of Iſrael; therefore ye "ſhall not bring this congregation into "the land which I have given them‡." —For the illuſtration and improvement of which, we beg your attention to the following remarks.

Obſerve firſt. The credit which is due to the ſacred writers in general, and

‡ Num. xx. 9, &c.

to

LECT. XIV.

to Moſes in particular; for their fidelity and integrity, in relating thoſe particulars of their temper and conduct, which are the object of cenſure and condemnation; as well as thoſe which merit applauſe. Indeed they do both, with the ſame "ſimplicity and godly ſincerity." They never appear ſolicitous to celebrate their own praiſe; and, if glory redound to God, and edification to men, they honeſtly publiſh their own ſhame. Unlike the generality of mankind, who are perpetually catching at opportunities to introduce their dear ſelves, to be valued and admired: and, with equal anxiety, drawing a veil over their errours and imperfections. But theſe holy men delivered not their teſtimony "according to the "will of man," nor in the ſpirit of the world; but "ſpake as they were moved "by the Holy Ghoſt." And, with candid judges, this candour of theirs will be deemed no ſlight argument of their veracity in general; and no ſlender proof of the credibility of the ſcripture hiſtory.

Secondly,

Secondly. Remark, the mixture of frailty and imperfection which enters into every human character. Moſes himſelf is not faultleſs. And what is more obſervable ſtill, he fails on the ſide of his greateſt excellency; is found weak there, where he ſeemed moſt ſtrong. "Now the man "Moſes was very meek, above all the "men which were upon the face of the "earth†." Nevertheleſs, What ſaith the hiſtory? He loſes temper, and ſpeaks unadviſedly with his lips; "Hear now, "ye rebels; muſt we fetch you water "out of this rock‡?" He takes glory to himſelf, inſtead of aſcribing it to "God: Muſt *we* fetch you water?" He preſumptuouſly exceeds his commiſſion. He lifts up his hand and *ſmites* the rock *twice* with his *rod*, whereas he was commanded only to *ſpeak* unto it, before the eyes of the people.†

Seems it not, as if God intended to write vanity and ſhame on all the glory

† Numb. xii. 3. ‡ xx. 10.

of

LECT. XIV

of man; "that no flesh should glory "in his presence?" by shewing us, faithful Abraham mistrusting his God, and seeking refuge in falshood: The patient Job, growing peevish, and "cursing his day:" The affectionate and zealous Peter, basely denying his master; and the meek and gentle Moses, waxing warm; and, in his haste, speaking disrespectfully of God, and unkindly of men. —"Be not high-minded, but fear." "Let "him who thinketh he standeth, take "heed, lest he fall." "Keep thy heart "with all diligence; for out of it are the "issues of life*." "Set a watch, O "Lord, before my mouth, keep the door "of my lips†."

Observe, Thirdly, The delicacy, and the danger, of assuming a latitude and a liberty in sacred things. In what concerns the conduct of human life, and our intercourse one with another as the citizens of this world, many things must

* Prov. iv. 23. † Psal. cxli. 3.

be

be left to be governed by occaſion and diſcretion; but, in what relates to the immediate worſhip of God, and where the mind of the Lord has been clearly made known, to aſſume and exerciſe a diſpenſing power, is criminal and hazardous. The Tabernacle muſt be conſtructed, to the minuteſt pin and loop, according to the pattern delivered in the Mount. If Uzzah preſume to put forth his hand to ſupport the tottering Ark, it is at his peril. A holy and a jealous God, will be ſerved only by the perſons, and in the manner, which he himſelf has appointed; and the intruder into ſacred offices and employments, is ready to be broken in upon, in hot diſpleaſure. Has God ſaid, "*Speak* to the rock." Who has the boldneſs to *ſtrike* it? Moſes dares to do it; and his raſhneſs forfeits his title to a part and lot in the promiſed inheritance. Into Canaan he ſhall never enter, but only ſee it at a diſtance with his eyes. The offending, chiding, murmuring congregation is pitied, forgiven and relieved. The offending, haſty, preſumptuous prophet

LECT. XIV. phet is punifhed. "Our God, is a con-
"fuming fire." "It is a fearful thing
"to fall into the hands of the living God.
"Who can underftand his errors?
"Cleanfe thou me from fecret faults.
"Keep back thy fervant alfo from pre-
"fumptuous fins, let them not have
"dominion over me; then fhall I be
"upright, and I fhall be innocent from
"the great tranfgreffion."

Remark, in the Fourth place, The rafhnefs and folly of man, fhall not, cannot render the purpofe of God, of none effect. A whole people fhall not be permitted to perifh for thirft, becaufe the prefcribed mode of relief has not been exactly followed. Though the rock be ftricken, inftead of being fpoken unto, it fhall not fail to yield the promifed fountain of water. Mofes is frail, but God is good. There has prevailed, fince the beginning, a ftrange contention between the folly and perverfenefs of the fallen apoftate creature, and the wifdom and goodnefs of the gracious Creator. And,

glory

glory be to God, our evil is overcome of his good. And when all ſtruggle and oppoſition are at an end; when the will of God, ſhall finally prevail, "and every "high thought ſhall be brought into "captivity to the will of Chriſt," it ſhall then be found, that "the wrath of man" has all along been "working the righte-"ouſneſs of God;" that, the elementary ſtrife, which was permitted to take place in the natural world; the jarring, diſcordant paſſions which ſeemed to convulſe and diſturb the moral government of God, and even the infernal devices of the powers of darkneſs, were all, without their deſign, nay contrary to their intention, carrying on the great plans of the divine providence, to their conſummation. Glorious, tranſporting thought! I will henceforth command my troubled ſoul into peace. I will calmly wait the iſſue; and leave it to the great God, in his own time and way, to explain the reaſons of his conduct, and fully vindicate his ways to men. The troubles which I ſee, the troubles which I feel, the troubles which

LECT. XIV.

LECT. XIV. I fear, though they may come nigh, ſhall not overwhelm my ſoul; "I ſhall not "be afraid when I hear of evil tidings: "my heart is fixed, truſting in the "Lord*." "We know that all things "work together for good, to them that "love God, to them who are the called "according to his purpoſe‡." "For "our light affliction, which is but for "a moment, worketh for us a far more "exceeding and an eternal weight of "glory†."

Fifthly. When we behold a holy and righteous God, thus ſeverely puniſhing, what may be deemed, by ſome, a ſlight offence, in one of the deareſt and beſt of his children; let none dare to trifle with his juſtice. If Moſes, in one raſh moment, by one unadviſed ſtep, incurred a diſpleaſure, which he could never remove; forfeited an inheritance, which he never was able to recover—What haſt thou, O man, to expect, whoſe whole life has been an

* Pſ. cxii. 7. ‡ Rom. viii. 28. † 2 Cor. iv. 17.

accu-

accumulation of offence; has been the addition only of ſinfulneſs to weakneſs; and of preſumption to folly? "If the righteous "ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear*." Take care how you eſtimate the malignity, guilt and danger of ſin, by the erroneous and fluctuating ſtandard of your own weak underſtanding, or ſtill weaker paſſions. Not according to theſe, nor the maxims of the world, nor the prejudices of a miſguided ſpirit; but by a ſteadier rule, by an unchanging law, thou ſhalt be judged, and finally juſtified or condemned. If Moſes loſt an inheritance in an earthly Canaan, for neglecting to give glory to God in one inſtance; tremble to think of being eternally excluded from "the inheritance of the ſaints in light," for ten thouſand offences of the ſame nature. Beware of reckoning any tranſgreſſion ſmall, any ſin venial, any temptation contemptible. Behold, the mighty fallen, and be humble.

LECT. XIV.

* 2 Pet. iii. 18.

LECT. XIV.

It is truly affecting, to find Moſes, in the ſequel, earneſtly entreating a remiſſion of the ſentence; but entreating in vain. And, when unable by ſupplication to prevail; ſubmiſſively reſigning himſelf to the will of God. But the world has ſeen a ſtill more awful demonſtration of God's diſpleaſure at ſin. When the Lord laid upon the head of the great atonement, "the iniquity of us all; it "pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and "put him to grief." "God ſpared not "his own ſon, but gave him up for us "all." Is it poſſible to conceive a motive ſo cogent, to abſtain from evil, and even the appearance of it; and to lothe, and put off from us, the garment ſpotted with the fleſh?

But again, one offence, though it may provoke the anger, and call down the chaſtiſement of a holy God, breaks not off all intercourſe, and for ever, between him and a good man. With the firmneſs of a wiſe and juſt Father, he denounces the puniſhment, and inflicts it. With the

the tenderneſs and love of a gracious and relenting Parent, he carries on the correſpondence; and even admits the offending child to cloſer intimacy, and to familiarity more endearing. For the great God is not like them, who mar and embitter their pardon with hard conditions, cruel upbraidings, and mortifying recollections; and, who plainly ſhew, that though they may be capable of forgiving, they know not what it is to bury injuries in everlaſting forgetfulneſs. The conduct of Moſes too, under the weight of this awful diſpleaſure, is amiable and inſtructive. He mutters not, with ſullen Cain, "my puniſhment is greater than I can bear:" he ſinks not into dejection; he replies not in reſentment. While he deprecates the penalty, he attempts not to extenuate the guilt of his crime; and though well aſſured he is not to have the honour of conducting Iſrael into Canaan, nor the happineſs of enjoying a perſonal poſſeſſion in that promiſed inheritance, yet he withdraws himſelf from no particular

LECT. XIV. cular of duty; relaxes not his diligence; cools not in his zeal; he labours to the laſt, does what he can, though he be not permitted to do what he would; goes before Iſrael to the Land of Promiſe, though acceſs into it was denied. This, as much as any thing, in his hiſtory, marks his character, and evinces the greatneſs of his ſoul. And, this teaches a leſſon of no mean importance, in friendſhip among men; namely, to cultivate with diligence and aſſiduity, the charities which we have in common; and to ſuffer thoſe things to reſt and ſleep, which, if ſtirred and awakened, are likely to diſturb and ſeparate us.

It is not the deſign of Providence, that we ſhould think exactly the ſame way on all points. But, ſhall I agree with my brother in nothing, becauſe we happen to differ in one thing?

I detain you only till I have made one remark more upon the whole hiſtory. The diſtreſs

diſtreſs of the cattle, for want of water, is mentioned as a circumſtance of importance both in the books of Exodus and Numbers; and, is eſpecially attended to, in the miraculous relief which heaven provided. Is the great God degraded, when he is repreſented as "caring for oxen, and feeding the ravens, and hearing the young lions when they cry?" No, no; theſe minuter views of his providential care and kindneſs, endear him but the more to the underſtanding that diſcerns, and the heart that feels. I know not a more tender ſtroke of the pathetick eloquence, than that which we have in the prophecy of Jonah; when God extended mercy, in a manner peculiar to himſelf, to Nineveh, that great and ſinful city. "Then ſaid the Lord, thou haſt had "pity on the gourd, for the which "thou haſt not laboured, neither madeſt "it grow, which came up in a night, "and periſhed in a night: And ſhould "not I ſpare Nineveh that great city, "wherein

LECT. XIV. "wherein are more than threeſcore thou-
"ſand perſons, that cannot diſcern be-
"tween their right hand and their left
"hand,—and alſo much cattle?*"

One ſtage more will bring us with Iſrael to the foot of Sinai, to obſerve and to improve, one of the moſt notable diſpenſations of Providence upon record; "The giving of the Law." But here let us pauſe, with devout acknowledgment of that bountiful hand, which fed the ſeed of Abraham, immediately from the clouds, for forty years together; and which feeds us through ſomething of a longer proceſs, by blending and compounding the qualities and influences of earth, air, and water. While we adore the providential care which refreſhed Iſrael by ſtreams from the rock; let us rejoice together, that it refreſhes us, by keeping our rivers ever flowing, our fountains conſtantly ſupplied; and the clouds of our atmoſphere, in their ſeaſon,

* Jonah vi. 10, 11.

always

always impregnated with the rain and the dew. "With the bread that perisheth," Gracious God! grant us that "which "endureth to life everlasting." Amen.

LEC-

LECTURE XV.

EXODUS xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

THEN CAME AMALEK, AND FOUGHT WITH ISRAEL IN REPHIDIM. AND MOSES SAID UNTO JOSHUA, CHOOSE OUT MEN, AND GO OUT, FIGHT WITH AMALEK: TOMORROW I WILL STAND ON THE TOP OF THE HILL, WITH THE ROD OF GOD IN MINE HAND. SO JOSHUA DID AS MOSES HAD SAID TO HIM, AND FOUGHT WITH AMALEK: AND MOSES, AARON, AND HUR WENT UP TO THE TOP OF THE HILL. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN MOSES HELD UP HIS HAND, THAT ISRAEL PREVAILED: AND WHEN HE LET DOWN HIS HIS HAND, AMALEK PREVAILED. BUT MOSES' HANDS WERE HEAVY; AND THEY TOOK A STONE, AND PUT IT UNDER HIM, AND HE SAT THEREON: AND AARON AND

HUR

HUR STAYED UP HIS HANDS, THE ONE ON THE ONE SIDE, AND THE OTHER ON THE OTHER SIDE; AND HIS HANDS WERE STEADY UNTIL THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN. AND JOSHUA DISCOMFITED AMALEK AND HIS PEOPLE WITH THE EDGE OF THE SWORD.

LECT. XV.

NOTHING can be more afflicting to a humane and ſerious mind, than to reflect, on that ſtrife and contention which have, in every age, deluged the world with human blood. Who could believe, if all hiſtory did not prove it; and who can think of it, without horrour, that men ſhould be continually lying in wait, like beaſts of prey, to catch and devour men: that the ſtrong, the cunning, and the fierce, ſhould be for ever on the watch, to take advantage of the weak, the ſimple, and the good-natured? And muſt it be? Father of Mercies! muſt it needs be that war ſhould continue to waſte the nations? Shall the earth be for ever a field of blood?

blood? Muſt the peace of private families, and the repoſe of kingdoms, be eternally diſturbed by luſt and pride, avarice and ambition, envy and revenge? Bleſſed God! Send forth the Spirit of thy Son into the hearts of men. Prince of Peace! Command this troubled ocean into a calm. Spirit of love! Put a full end to bitterneſs and wrath. Subdue this carnal mind, which is enmity againſt God. Glorious Goſpel of Salvation! as thou bringeſt good-will from God to men, reſtore good-will to men among themſelves.

It is difficult to ſay, whether men ſuffer moſt from their own folly, or from the cruelty and injuſtice of others. It is generally found, that when evil from without, would, for a while, permit wretched mortals to breathe and be at peace, they perverſely become ſelf-tormentors, and ingeniouſly contrive ſources of vexation to themſelves. And, Which is the greater evil of the two? That, undoubtedly, of which we are the authors to our-

LECT. XV.

ourſelves. We have, then, to encounter an enemy from whom we cannot hope to eſcape, and whom, we are unable to overcome. From a conflict with Amalek, Iſrael comes off, with both credit and comfort; but a ſtrife of diſcontent, impatience and rebellion againſt God, muſt of neceſſity iſſue in ſhame and loſs.

—God, rich in mercy, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, has graciouſly forgiven the murmuring at Horeb, and extracted water from the rock, for the relief of his people. But this woe is no ſooner paſt, than another overtakes them. "Then came Amalek, and fought with "Iſrael in Rephidim." The tranſaction recorded here, ſo ſimply and uncircumſtantially, is mentioned again in Deuteronomy, with many circumſtances of aggravation, which greatly increaſe our deteſtation of this conduct in Amalek, and explain the deep reſentment which a holy and righteous God himſelf expreſſes upon the occaſion; and which, by a poſitive ſtatute, he tranſmits to Iſrael. "Re-

"Remember what Amalek did unto thee "by the way, when ye were come forth "out of Egypt; How he met thee by "the way, and ſmote the hindmoſt of "thee, even all that were feeble behind "thee, when thou waſt faint and weary; "and he feared not God. Therefore it "ſhall be, when the Lord thy God hath "given thee reſt from all thine enemies "round about, in the land which the "Lord thy God giveth thee for an inhe-"ritance to poſſeſs it, that thou ſhalt "blot out the remembrance of Amalek "from under heaven; thou ſhalt not "forget it†.

Amalek, the father of this nation, as we learn from Geneſis, xxxvi. 12. was grandſon to Eſau, and ſon to Eliphaz, by a concubine named Timna. The Amalekites indeed are mentioned much earlier in ſcripture; even in the days of Abraham, when Chederlaomer is repreſented, with his victorious army, as

† Deut. xxv. 17, 18, 19.

ravaging

LECT. XV.

ravaging all their country. But it is well known, that the ſacred writers, when treating of various periods, give appellations to regions and countries, which did not belong to them, till ages afterwards, but by which they were better known, at the time when the hiſtorian wrote. They poſſeſſed a large tract of country, extending from the confines of Idumea, to the eaſtern ſhore of the Red ſea; and from their neighbourhood to, and commerce with Phœnicia, they are by ſome called Phœnicians.

Immediately on their paſſing through the Red ſea, it behoved the children of Iſrael to enter into this territory, on their way to Canaan. And probably the paternal relation which ſubſiſted between them and Amalek, encouraged the poſterity of Jacob to advance on their way, with greater confidence. "It is the land "of our brethren through which we are "to paſs;" would they ſay, one to another. "The heart of Eſau himſelf re-"lented, when he ſaw his brother Jacob "return-

"return, encumbered with a train of "women, and children, and cattle. He "forgot his resentments; he became the "protector of the man, whom he had "vowed to destroy. The injury done "him in the matter of the birthright, "and of the blessing, he generously for-"gave. Surely the posterity of Esau, "after many generations, will not revive "a quarrel, extinguished and forgotten, "first in the reconciliation, and then, in "the death of the original parties to it. "After a servitude so long, and so bitter, "in Egypt, we shall, at length find a "time and a place to breathe; and the "soothings of fraternal love, shall con-"sole us for the rigours of oppression."

Vain expectation! What foe so dreadful as a brother disaffected! Egypt smote with the rod; Amalek smites with the sword; He basely, cruelly seizes the moment of Israel's languor, weakness and dejection; and attempts to crush those whom a sanguinary tyrant had persecuted, and whom heaven itself had bruised.

The

LECT. XV. The cowardice of this behaviour is equal to the unkindneſs of it. Had they boldly appeared at the firſt, to diſpute the paſſage of the Red Sea, and to repel by force of arms the invaſion of their country, their conduct, though ungenerous and unkind, had been ingenuous and manly. But, either through fear, or policy, they permit Iſrael to advance; they watch the moment of their difficulty and diſtreſs; and, like daſtards, ſteal upon the rear of an army, whoſe front they dared not to oppoſe.

Neither good qualities, nor bad, are found ſingle in the human breaſt. And, in the nation, whoſe character is now the object of our cenſure, we find a combination of the worſt qualities of which our nature is capable; all originating in the deficiency of one great principle; which is at the root of all the evil which men commit, "he feared not God." Why did Amalek rake up the aſhes of an ancient grudge? "He feared not God." Why did he join to afflict the miſerable, and

and the oppreſſed? "He feared not God." Why did he meanly attack the weaker and more vulnerable part of his adverſary, in the hope of ſafety and impunity? "He "feared not God." Wherefore, in general, are men ſubtle, revengeful, cunning, and ſelfiſh? They, "fear not "God;" they "harden themſelves a-"gainſt him;" and yet think "to proſ-"per. They, "love not their brother "whom they have ſeen," becauſe they are wilfully ignorant of, or hate God, "whom they have not ſeen."

LECT. XV.

Such is the union which Providence has eſtabliſhed between all the parts of the natural, and of the political body, that the weakneſs or diſtreſs of one member, is the infirmity and ſuffering of the whole. The hindmoſt and the feeble of Iſrael are ſmitten; the foremoſt and the ſtrong, feel, and immediately reſent it. "And Moſes ſaid unto Joſhua, Chooſe "out men, and go out, fight with "Amalek: to-morrow I will ſtand on "the top of the hill, with the rod of "God,

LECT. XV. "God in mine hand." We have here a combination, which ought never to be ſeparated: and, in which ſafety and ſucceſs are ever to be found; the acknowledgement of heaven, and the uſe of appointed means: The ſword in the hand of Joſhua: The rod in that of Moſes. The embattled hoſt below in the valley: The interceſſor with God "wreſtling," and "making ſupplication" upon the hill. In vain had Moſes prayed, if Joſhua had not fought. Deſtitute of "the effectual "fervent prayer of the righteous man," the ſkill and courage of the warriour, had failed before the enemy. The rod of God! In how many different ſervices is it employed! How many various purpoſes does it anſwer! It ſmites the river of Egypt, and it becomes blood! It ſmites the rock in Horeb, and it ſends forth a ſtream of water! It is extended towards heaven, on the top of the hill, and Amalek is deſtroyed. Striking and inſtructive type of that "Rod of God's "mouth" wherewith "he ſlays the "wicked:" of that ſword of the Spirit, "which

"which is the word of God: of that "hammer, which breaketh the rock "in pieces:" of that gospel, which is "a "savour of God in them that believe, and "in them that perish."

Observe, how God appoints to every man his station of usefulness and importance. It was not for want either of zeal or courage, that Moses takes his post, at a distance, on the hill. It is not for want of piety, that Joshua leads on the armies of Israel, on the plain. The mistakes and miscarriages of the world, arise from the weakness and wickedness of men; at one time over-rating their talents, and thrusting themselves forward into situations for which they are wholly unfit; and, at another, through timidity, shrinking from the duties of that station which providence has assigned them: and, at a third, treacherously, through some bias of private interest, passion or party, selling the trust committed to them, to the foe. Happily, in the case before us, the head which directed, and the

LECT XV. hand that executed, were in perfect uniſon. The ſpirit that fought, and the ſpirit that prayed, were one.

Let us firſt aſcend the hill with Moſes and his two friends; and adopt the feelings of men, who, at once, felt for the publick cauſe, were not without well-founded apprehenſions from the common enemy; and, at the ſame time, feared and truſted the Lord. Moſes has given his orders to Joſhua; and he has ſo far done well: but, to ſtop there, had been doing nothing. He has ſet the means to work; and now he can confidently look up to heaven, for that bleſſing which can give ſucceſs to the means. He aſcends to meet God, but aſcends not alone. As wickedneſs ſeeks to fortify, and to keep itſelf in countenance, by the ſociety of the wicked; ſo the fire of devotion keeps itſelf alive by the ſacred communication of a kindred flame. The hands of Moſes alone, had ſoon become feeble, and muſt have dropped down, and Amalek finally have prevailed; ſupported by Aaron and Hur,

Hur, they continue "ſteady, till the going "down of the ſun;" and Amalek, and his people, are diſcomfited with the edge of the ſword.

LECT. XV.

Of Aaron, one of the companions of Moſes upon the mount, we know much; of Hur, the other, the ſcripture account is more ſparing. Thoſe, who are never at a loſs, ſo long as fancy and invention can create; make him the ſon of Caleb, and the huſband of Miriam, the ſiſter of Moſes and Aaron. It appears from the hiſtory, that he was the father of Uri; and the grandfather of Bezaleel, the famous artiſt, employed, by ſpecial endowment and appointment of heaven, for the conſtruction of the more curious and coſtly furniture of the tabernacle and ſanctuary. But, it is of more importance, for us to know him, and for him to be reported, as a perſon of the firſt quality; and that quality ſupported, by that which gives rank its higheſt luſtre, genuine piety. Moſes left him in commiſſion with Aaron, to judge the people, when,

LECT. XV.

a ſhort while after this, he went up alone into mount Sinai to meet God. This is argument ſufficient of his high rank; and the aſſumption of him, to aſſiſt his devotion in mount Horeb, while Iſrael was engaged with Amalek, is a proof equally clear and deciſive, of his extraordinary piety.

Behold then, the man of God, ſupported and encouraged by two ſuch companions; diſcovering all the honeſt anxiety of the patriot; together, with all the confidence and fervour of the ſaint; with his eyes eagerly bent on the conflicting armies in the plain below; and his hands, with his heart, lifted up to God in the heavens, from whom his help came. It was clearly the intention of Providence, that the deliverance which was to be wrought for Iſrael on this occaſion, though not wholly independent on the uſe of means, ſhould evidently appear to flow chiefly, and only from the interpoſition and grace of heaven. "It came to paſs, when "Moſes held up his hand, that Iſrael "prevailed;

" prevailed: and when he let down his " hand, that Amalek prevailed."

This was the first battle which Israel was called to fight; and it was designed to be a model of all that should follow; of assured success to them, and victory over all their enemies; provided they constantly acknowledged God, with hands continually lifted up to heaven. And, it had undoubtedly a farther view, namely, to represent in general, the powerful and certain effect of prayer to God, and of a sense of dependance upon him; to shew, that our strength is in exact proportion to our perception of our own weakness, and to our confidence in almighty grace. The lesson inculcated in this history, is the same which Christ taught his disciples in the parable of the unjust Judge and the importunate Widow, " That " men ought always to pray, and not to " faint*." If importunity, and the love of ease have power to constrain a man

* Luke xviii. 1.

LECT. XV

to do his duty, though he have no inclination to it; how much more certain the effect of earneſtneſs and importunity with the Hearer of prayer, the Father of Mercies; who is ever more ready to grant, than man to aſk? "If ye then, "being evil, know how to give good "gifts unto your children, how much "more ſhall your Father which is in "heaven, give good things to them "that aſk him."‡

Have you conſidered then, my Chriſtian friend, what a powerful inſtrument is put into your hand, mighty as the rod of God in the hand of Moſes, wherewith he did wonders? "Elias was a "man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, "and he prayed earneſtly that it might "not rain; and it rained not on the "earth for the ſpace of three years, "and ſix months. And he prayed again, "and the heaven gave rain, and the "earth brought forth her fruit†." Surely

‡ Matt. vii. 11. † James v. 17, 18.

then

then, "the effectual fervent prayer "of a righteous man availeth much*." God has not given you aſſurance of ſucceſs in all your undertakings, but he has beſtowed upon you the privilege, and promiſed you the ſpirit of prayer, by which you ſhall certainly obtain one of two things; either, that bleſſing from above, upon your honeſt endeavours, which maketh rich, which inſures ſucceſs, and makes it durable; or, that reſignation of ſpirit, and ſubmiſſion to the will of God, which ſubdue misfortune, and turn calamity and diſappointment themſelves into advantage. God has not given thee, my friend, the promiſe of riches; but he has given thee, what is much better, the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, to form thy ſoul to contentment. You have no ſecurity given you againſt pain and ſorrow; but you have that which produces patience and fortitude. You cannot promiſe yourſelf long life; but habitual intercourſe with

* James v. 16.

God,

LECT. XV. God, by prayer, overcomes the fear of death.

Glorious privilege! Whatever my ſituation be, here is ſomething to improve it, if good; ſomething to mend it, if evil. Here is the ornament and eſſence of proſperity; the cure and cordial of adverſity. Here is the guardian, and the guide of life; the ſweetener and ſubduer of death. Prayer brings all the glorious perfections of deity into our poſſeſſion. "If "any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk "it of God, that giveth to all men liber-"ally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall "be given him*." "When I am weak, "then am I ſtrong;" "for, I can do all "things through Chriſt which ſtrength-"eneth me." Is not the thorn removed, the meſſenger of Satan rebuked, though the Lord be thrice beſought, that they may depart? No matter. Is it not ſaid, "My grace is ſufficient for "thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect

* James i. 5.

"in

"in weakneſs. Moſt gladly, therefore, "will I glory in my infirmities, that "the power of Chriſt may reſt upon "me*."

But where are the hands which never hang down? Thoſe of Moſes himſelf, became heavy. "The ſpirit indeed is "willing; but the fleſh is weak." Fatal omen to Iſrael! Amalek inſtantly gains the aſcendant. But happily, Moſes was not alone in the mount: "And "they took a ſtone, and put it under "him, and he ſat thereon; and Aaron "and Hur ſtayed up his hands, the one "on the one ſide, and the other on the "other ſide; and his hands were ſteady "until the going down of the ſun." "As "iron ſharpeneth iron, ſo a man ſharp-"eneth the countenance of his friend;" and ſo devotion kindles and keeps alive devotion. Secret prayer, like the melody of one ſweet-toned voice, ſtealing upon the ear, gently wafts the ſoul to heaven;

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

ſocial

LECT. XV

ſocial worſhip, as a full chorus of harmonized ſounds, pierces the ſky, and raiſes a great multitude of kindred ſpirits to the bright regions of everlaſting love; and places them together before the throne of God. How happy are Aaron and Hur, in lending this aid to the wearied hands of Moſes, and the declining intereſt of the Iſrael of God! How happy is Moſes to be thus ſupported! But there is an Interceſſor, whoſe hands never hang down, whoſe fervour never cools; whoſe mediation never fails; whoſe attention is never relaxed. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt, "the righteous." Him, "the Father "heareth always:" "as a Prince, he "hath power, and prevaileth."

Let us now turn our eyes to the ſtruggle in the valley below. There we meet "the confuſed noiſe of the warriour, and "garments rolled in blood:" the alternate ſhouts of acclamation and triumph, mingling with the piercing ſhrieks of the wounded, and the groans of the dying.

Iſrael

Iſrael, now hurrying on to victory; and anon, flying before the inſulting foe. The event, for a while, is awfully in doubt; turning upon the ſtrength and feebleneſs, not of thouſands, but of one ſingle arm; decided, not by the edge of the ſword, but the elevation or depreſſion of a rod; and that rod ſwayed, not by the ſkill and proweſs of Joſhua, but the firmneſs and devotion of Moſes.

At length, doubt and anxiety are at an end. The hands of Moſes are propped up, and Iſrael finally prevails. And what heart, but that of an Amalekite, muſt rejoice in the iſſue? "The cunning is taken in his own craftineſs." A deſign of violence and blood falls upon the head of him that contrived it. The righteous and innocent cauſe bears down pride and cruelty. We behold the deſtination of heaven ſtanding good, the birthright ſold away, the bleſſing anticipated; the elder made ſubject to the younger. "God is wiſe in heart, and "mighty in ſtrength: Who hath hardened

LECT. XV. "dened himſelf againſt him, and hath "proſpered* ?"

Iſrael has conquered. But it is impoſſible to miſtake the means by which he has gotten the victory. "The hand of "the Lord, and his holy arm, they have "gotten him the victory." The altar therefore, which was built to celebrate this ſignal ſucceſs, ſhall by its name perpetuate the remembrance of God the deliverer. Jehovah-Niſſi, "the Lord my "banner," was inſcribed upon it by the divine appointment; and a reaſon is aſſigned in the ſixteenth verſe. "For he "ſaid, Becauſe the Lord hath ſworn that "the Lord will have war with Amalek "from generation to generation."

Theſe words, having been variouſly rendered, have given occaſion to various opinions among interpreters. Some read the paſſage thus, "becauſe the hand of "Amalek is againſt the throne of the

* Job ix. 4.

"Lord

"Lord, the Lord will have war, with "Amalek from generation to generation." This reading, resolves the guilt of Amalek, not into an insidious and cruel design against Israel, but, into a rash and impious attempt to defeat the plan of Providence, which was to bring Israel into the quiet possession of Canaan, and, to exalt that nation favoured of God, but envied of man, to wealth, power and empire. God therefore, was pleased to vindicate in person, the cause which was his own, and to write disappointment, and a curse, upon every plan which Amalek could form, of greatness and prosperity. So "fearful a thing it is to fall into the "hands of the living God," so dangerous to form a combination "against the "Lord, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, "and cast away their cords from us. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall "laugh: the Lord shall have them in "derision§."

§ Ps. ii. 2. 3, 4.

Others

LECT. XV. Others literally tranſlate the words thus, "with the hand upon the throne "of the Lord, *He* hath ſworn that, he will "have war with Amalek from generation "to generation." *He*, that is, Moſes, hath ſworn, with the moſt awful ſolemnities, and recorded the oath in a book, for perpetual preſervation, that there ſhall be no peace between Iſrael and Amalek till he be utterly deſtroyed. The hand which was extended towards heaven, the throne of the great and terrible God, with the rod in it; the inſtrument of a victory which was interrupted by the going down of the ſun, has been lifted up, to "ſwear by Him that "liveth for ever," that the triumph of that day ſhall be followed up, till the hated name of Amalek be extinguiſhed from under heaven.

Some make Jehovah himſelf to be the perſon who binds himſelf by this ſolemn oath.—"*The* hand," that is, Jehovah's own hand, upon the throne of the Lord. Be-"cauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he hath "ſworn by himſelf, that *He* will have war "with Amalek from generation to genera-

tion."

"tion." We have a prophecy in the mouth of Balaam, to the ſame effect, "And when "he looked on Amalek, he took up his "parable, and ſaid, Amalek was the firſt "of the nations, but his latter end "ſhall be that he periſh for ever*."

The execution of this dreadful ſentence was reſerved to the days of Samuel, four hundred and twelve years after; and was committed to Saul, who through an impolitic and ſinful lenity, failed to fulfil the deſign of providence, and thereby incurred the diſpleaſure of heaven, and forfeited his life and crown by his diſobedience.

"Samuel alſo ſaid unto Saul, The Lord "ſent me to anoint thee to be king over "his people, over Iſrael; Now therefore "hearken thou unto the voice of the "words of the Lord. Thus ſaith the "Lord of hoſts, I remember that which "Amalek did to Iſrael; how he laid "wait for him in the way when he

* Numb. xxiv. 20.

"came

LECT. XV.

"came up from Egypt. Now go, and "ſmite Amalek, and utterly deſtroy all "that they have, and ſpare them not; "but ſlay both man and woman, infant "and ſuckling, ox and ſheep, camel and "aſs†." This order, Saul obeyed but in part. He aſſumed and exerciſed a diſpenſing power, and it became a ſnare to him. He took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive; and reſerved the beſt of the ſpoil. The prophet is ſent of God to reprove his diſobedience; which Saul attempting to palliate, brings down this cenſure upon his head. "When thou "waſt little in thine own ſight, waſt "thou not made the head of the tribes "of Iſrael, and the Lord anointed thee "king over Iſrael? And the Lord ſent "thee on a journey, and ſaid, go and "utterly deſtroy the ſinners, the Ama-"lekites, and fight againſt them until "they be conſumed. Wherefore then "didſt thou not obey the voice of the "Lord, but didſt fly upon the ſpoil,

† 1 Sam. xv. 1, 2, 3.

"and

" and didſt evil in the ſight of the Lord. " And Samuel ſaid, Hath the Lord as " great delight in burnt-offerings and " ſacrifices, as in obeying the voice of " the Lord? Behold, to obey is better " than ſacrifice; and to hearken, than " the fat of rams. For rebellion is as " the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubborn- " neſs is as iniquity and idolatry. Be- " cauſe thou haſt rejected the word of " the Lord, he hath alſo rejected thee " from being king*." Has God commanded to deſtroy? Who ſhall preſume to ſave? Has he commanded to ſpare? Who dares deſtroy? " I ſay unto you, my " friends, Be not afraid of them that kill " the body, and after that have no more " that they can do. But I will forewarn " you whom you ſhall fear: fear him, " which, after he hath killed, hath " power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay " unto you, fear him."†

* 1 Sam. xv. 17, &c. † Luke xii. 4, 5.

LEC-

LECTURE XVI.

EXODUS xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

AND MOSES WENT OUT TO MEET HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, AND DID OBEISANCE, AND KISSED HIM: AND THEY ASKED EACH OTHER OF THEIR WELFARE: AND THEY CAME INTO THE TENT. AND MOSES TOLD HIS FATHER-IN-LAW ALL THAT THE LORD HAD DONE UNTO PHARAOH, AND TO THE EGYPTIANS, FOR ISRAEL'S SAKE, AND ALL THE TRAVEL THAT HAD COME UPON THEM BY THE WAY, AND HOW THE LORD DELIVERED THEM. AND JETHRO REJOICED FOR ALL THE GOODNESS WHICH THE LORD HAD DONE TO ISRAEL: WHOM HE HAD DELIVERED OUT OF THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS. AND JETHRO SAID, BLESSED BE THE LORD, WHO HATH DELIVERED YOU OUT OF THE

HAND

HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH, WHO HATH DELIVERED THE PEOPLE FROM UNDER THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS. NOW I KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GREATER THAN ALL GODS; FOR IN THE THING WHEREIN THEY DEALT PROUDLY, HE WAS ABOVE THEM. AND JETHRO, MOSES' FATHER-IN LAW, TOOK A BURNT OFFERING AND SACRIFICES FOR GOD; AND AARON CAME AND ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL, TO EAT BREAD WITH MOSES' FATHER-IN-LAW BEFORE GOD.

LECT. XVI.

THE great Author and Ruler of the world has evidently in view, the pleasure and happiness, as well as the wisdom and virtue of his rational creatures. We find, through the widely expanded frame of nature, and the extensive plan of Providence, as many sources of joy, as there are means of improvement. What an infinite, beautiful and pleasing variety, in the works, and in the ways of God! all ministring to human comfort; all aiming

ing at making men good. The mind of man is formed to desire, and to relish variety. The objects, with which he is conversant, are therefore varied without end, to gratify that desire, and to correspond with that relish. The glare of perpetual sunshine, and the fervid heat of an eternal summer, would speedily oppress and destroy mankind: but, relieved by the tranquillity of darkness, the freshness of Spring, the sedateness of Autumn, and even the gloom of Winter, they become no less grateful, than they are beneficial. In surveying the globe, the eye is not permitted to tire, by having to crawl along a boundless plain; but sparkles with delight, as it springs from valley to valley, and from hill to hill. And even the glories of the starry heavens, are rendered still more glorious, by being kept in continual motion; and, thereby, made continually to exhibit a different appearance.

The events of human life, for the same reason, are endlessly variegated, like the objects of sense. Wretched were the

dull

LECT. XVI.

dull ſtagnation of conſtant proſperity, ſucceſs and eaſe. Intolerable would be the agitation and diſtreſs of unceaſing, unabating, unrelenting toil, pain, diſappointment and vexation of ſpirit. But, one thing being ſet over againſt another, the great, the proſperous, and the happy, are for ever admoniſhed, reproved and brought low: the poor, the deſpiſed, and the miſerable, are cheered, ſupported and exalted.

The word of God, exhibits a reſemblance to the ſyſtem of nature, and to the conduct of Providence. In it, we have the ſame pleaſing, engaging variety: the ſame happy accommodation to the taſtes, occaſions, and neceſſities of mankind. The antiquarian, and the naturaliſt; the politician, and the legiſlator; the poet, and the philoſopher; the moraliſt, and the divine; the man of retirement, and the man of the world; the man of reaſon, and the man of fancy; all find in ſcripture, an helper toward the diſcovery of truth, and the attainment of happineſs; a guide to the under-

underſtanding, a corrector and ſupporter of the imagination, a comforter of the heart; a teacher of wiſdom, a rule of faith, a ſource of joy.

The very ſtructure of the ſacred compoſitions, are inimitably calculated, by a beautiful and eaſy tranſition from ſubject to ſubject, and from ſcene to ſcene, to relieve, and yet preſerve, the attention; preſenting always a new and intereſting object; or, the ſame object, placed in a new and intereſting light. Thus, the tumultuous, noiſy and bloody ſcenes of Horeb and Rephidim — Scenes of murmuring, rebellion and war, are happily relieved, by ſcenes of domeſtick tranquillity, love and joy; and we are prepared to attend Moſes, to meet God in the mount, by mixing in the virtuous, cheerful and affectionate intercourſe, of his private family.

Let us then, thankfully take the relief which a gracious God has in his word provided for us; and contemplate one of

thoſe

LECT. XVI. those calm, but neither unintereſting nor uninſtructive repreſentations of human life, which come home to the boſom, and the fire-ſide, of every man who has a heart, who has a relation, who has a friend.

The hiſtory of Moſes now looks back, and reminds us of his being "a ſtranger "in a ſtrange land;" namely, of his fleeing from Egypt into Midian; of his arriving there, conducted of Providence, juſt at the moment, to render a ſeaſonable ſervice to the daughters of Raguel, or Jethro, the Prieſt of Midian; of the hoſpitable reception afforded him by that worthy man; and, of the alliance which he formed with him, by marrying his daughter Zipporah. Upon his being called back to Egypt, to undertake the weighty charge which God had aſſigned him, he had intended, and attempted, to carry his wife and children along with him. But, being reproved of God by the way, for neglecting in his own family the rite of circumciſion, the ſeal of God's

God's covenant; and, either ſpecially admoniſhed from heaven, or following the dictates of human prudence, he ſends them all back to his father-in-law, as likely to prove either a burden or a hinderance to himſelf, in the diſcharge of his great truſt. For, true piety, while it repoſes entire confidence in God, will never preſumptuouſly load providence with what is the proper work and buſineſs of man. Diligence and foreſight, as well as faith and hope, are its genuine offspring. But the tempeſt being now blown over; and Moſes, of a meſſenger and a ſuppliant unto Pharoah, being now become the head and leader of a great nation; it was natural for him, and for his family, mutually to deſire to be reſtored to each other. Jethro, therefore, having received information where Iſrael was, and what the Lord had done for them, takes his daughter and grand-children, and carries them with him to the camp of Iſrael.

The innocent endearments of natural affection, and the honeſt communications of

LECT. XVI. of private friendſhip, are graciouſly intended to alleviate the cares of public life, and to ſtrengthen, by diverting the mind, from inceſſant and intenſe application to ſerious buſineſs. No man can always be a general, a ſtateſman, or a king. And happy it is for thoſe who occupy theſe exalted, but troubleſome ſtations, that they are frequently permitted to ſink the publick, in the private character; and to drop the hero, the ſenator, the judge, the ſovereign, in the man. Diſtance has not alienated affection between the man of God, and his family. A ſlighter affection is effaced and deſtroyed by abſence; a ſtronger love is confirmed and inflamed by it. Good old Jethro ſatisfies not himſelf with ſending by the mouth of another, a compliment of congratulation to his ſon-in-law; neither will he permit Zipporah and her ſons to go unaccompanied, unprotected, through the wilderneſs; but aged and infirm as he was, chuſes himſelf to be their companion and their protector.

Moſes

Moſes ſeems to take delight, in delivering to us this paſſage of his life. He is amiably minute and circumſtantial in the detail of it. He dwells upon the tender and affecting recollections, of ſorrows and of joys that are paſt. His heart is in it. He ſtops in his narration, to tell us the names of his two ſons; and his reaſon for giving them thoſe names. "The name of the one was "Gerſhom: for he ſaid, I have been an "alien in a ſtrange land: And the "name of the other was Eliezer; for "the God of my fathers, ſaid he, was "mine help, and delivered me from the "ſword of Pharaoh." Is this beneath the dignity of hiſtory; of ſacred hiſtory? No, it is the moſt honourable province of hiſtory, to exhibit the honeſt unſophiſticated feelings of nature; the genuine workings of the human heart; the real, though humbler ſcenes of human life. What ſignifies to us the meeting of two old men three thouſand three hundred years ago? Much every way. One of them is a Moſes, and that Moſes is deſ-

cribing

LECT. XVI.

cribing his own ſentiments; unveiling his own heart. He can ſerve as an inſtructor and an example to none, in reſpect of the prophetic dignity, as the bearer of the potent rod, as the man whoſe face ſhone, by forty days intimate communion with God. He can inſtruct but a few, by his wiſdom and ſagacity as a prince and a law-giver. But as a ſon, a huſband, and a father, he is a pattern to myriads; and ſhall continue to teach, to the end of the world.

How pleaſant it is to find this great man, the ſame in retirement and privacy, that he is upon the great theatre; and delineating a battle, a triumph, and a family-meeting, with the ſame ſimplicity and godly ſincerity! Public men have too often, two different characters. Plauſible and ſpecious; humble, modeſt and inſinuating before the world: they are ſelf-willed and tyrannical; confident, aſſuming and brutal, in private; fawn where they fear, and domineer where they have power. Not ſo the meek and

gentle

gentle prophet, and judge of Iſrael. He waits not in ſtate, till his relations are admitted to pay their homage. He reckons it nothing derogatory to his high dignity, to go forth to pay the reſpect due to age; and to humble the ſon, however high in place, at the feet of the parent. "And Moſes went out to meet "his father-in-law, and did obeiſance, "and kiſſed him; and they aſked each "other of their welfare; and they came "into the tent." Were it after the ſeparation of but a day, friends have a thouſand queſtions to aſk, a thouſand little incidents to relate; about their health, their entertainment, their dangers, their deliverances; the obſervations which they have made, the projects they have formed. What muſt it then have been, for two ſuch friends; for ſuch a father and ſon, after a ſeparation of many months, during which, events of ſuch high moment to both, had taken place, to meet together again in health and comfort, to communicate mutually the full ſoul, to retire into the tent, to ſhut out the world,

LECT. XVI. world, and give vent to the overflowings of tenderness and affection!

And O, with what a subject of conversation were they furnished! "And "Moses told his father-in-law all that the "Lord had done unto Pharaoh, and to "the Egyptians, for Israel's sake, and "all the travel that had come upon "them by the way, and how the Lord "delivered them." The most trifling incidents which befal a brother, a friend, a child, are interesting and important. What must then have been the emotions of Jethro, to hear the wonders of Egypt: The great things of God, astonishing in themselves, and acquiring an additional weight, creating a new interest, from the person who related them, and who was himself so deeply concerned in the event?

But the good man is elevated, as he wondering listens to the wonderful tale, above all personal and selfish regards; above the partiality of private friendship; above the

the tenderness of natural affection. His heart dilates at the thought of a whole nation delivered, of a tyrant trampled in the dust, of the power, wisdom, and mercy of God magnified. "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness "which the Lord had done for Israel; "whom he had delivered out of the "hands of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who "hath delivered you out of the hand "of the Egyptians, and out of the hand "of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the "people from under the hand of the "Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord "is greater than all gods; for in the thing "wherein they dealt proudly, he was "above them."

This friendly interview issues in a solemn religious service; in which, Aaron and all the elders of Israel are called to assist. What a blessed influence has true religion, in conciliating kindness, and confirming friendship! When men cordially agree in the same glorious object of worship, the

little

LECT. XVI. little peculiarities of form, will not obſtruct the mutual attraction of brotherly love. Prejudice will droop and die; and charity draw a veil over its neighbour's ſingularities and imperfections. Happy the family, whoſe union is cemented by piety; whoſe happineſs and peace is built upon the love of God; whoſe employments, communications and purſuits, are improved and ſanctified by prayer!

Due attention having been paid to the calls of hoſpitality, the dictates of private friendſhip, and the demands of filial duty, Moſes reverts next day betimes, to the diſcharge of the duties of his public ſtation. The time, the talents of the miniſter of God, are not his own; they belong to mankind. Superficial obſervers, who conſider but the eminence of the place which a magiſtrate fills, the robe which he wears, the reſpect with which he is attended; look up to him with envy, and call him bleſſed. They think not of the thouſand ſacrifices which he is conſtrained to make of his caſe, of

his

his inclination, of his health, of his natural propenſities, of his private attachments. They talk of the honours and emoluments of his office; but they overlook his anxious days, his painful toils, his ſleepleſs nights. The cauſeleſs hatred which he incurs; the unprovoked inſults he muſt bear; and muſt not reſent. The ſurrender he muſt make of ſolid and ſubſtantial felicity; and the exchange of real and uncertain tranquillity, for uncertain uſefulneſs, or precarious reputation. Who would not be Moſes, to ſit on high and judge the people? But who would be Moſes to have the people ſtand by him for judgment, "from the morning unto the evening!"

The obſcure part of mankind are little ſenſible what they owe to providence, for their obſcurity. They can go out, and come in, unnoticed. They can go to reſt when they will, and continue it as long as they pleaſe. They have no vigilant, jealous, envious eye over them. They are free from the dreadful conflict of inclination and duty, of intereſt and conſcience; of reverence for God, and

 reſpect

LECT. XVI. respect for man. They can enjoy their families and friends. What they have, however little, they can call their own. What, compared to these, and such advantages as these, is the ermine cloak, the ivory sceptre, the gem-encircled crown? Rejoice, O man, that the world knows thee not; cares not for thee; condescends not to trouble thy repose. Creep thy way silently, I beseech thee, to heaven; unafraid of being overlooked, neglected and forgotten in the multitude of the redeemed, who there, live, and reign, and "rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Observe, how even a Moses may err, in an excess of zeal; through ignorance, inexperience, or inattention. Desirous of doing good by administering justice impartially, he cares not what trouble and labour it may cost himself. The service of fear or of necessity is slow, reluctant, partial and imperfect; the labour of love is cheerful, active, and persevering. Moses is in the way of his duty, early and

and late. If the Public be ſerved faithfully, if equity be diſpenſed, if God be glorified, he is willing to ſpend, and to be ſpent in ſuch a cauſe. "And Moſes "ſaid, unto his father-in-law, Becauſe "the people come unto me to enquire "of God: When they have a matter, "they come unto me, and I judge be-"tween one and another, and I do make "them know the ſtatutes of God, and "his laws*."

We have ſeen Jethro, in the character of a pious man, an affectionate neighbour, and a kind relation. We ſee him now blending, with theſe excellent qualities, the character of an able ſtateſman and ſagacious politician. There is no man ſo wiſe as not to need inſtruction; and none ſo ſimple, as to be incapable of ſometimes giving advice. Jethro plainly perceived that the courſe of life which his ſon-in-law was purſuing, muſt ſoon prove fatal to him. That, by attempting

* Ver. 15, 16.

LECT. XVI. what was beyond his ſtrength to bear or perform, he was in the way of quickly rendering himſelf unable to do any thing at all. He therefore propoſes a ſubdiviſion of the toil, by the appointment of proper men to the office of Judge, who might try and determine the cauſes of leſs importance, and apply to Moſes, and to God through him, only in matters of high moment, and as the laſt reſort. Thus Moſes would be greatly relieved, many good men would be trained up to the uſeful, honourable and important employment of judging between his brethren, and the people, mean while, ſuſtain no damage.

The qualities which he points out, as requiſite to conſtitute this character, ſhew how carefully he had conſidered the ſubject, and how well fitted he was to adviſe in a matter of this kind. Let thoſe who have the appointment of Judges ſtudy well what he ſays, and act accordingly. "Thou ſhalt provide, out of all the "people, able men, ſuch as fear God, "men

"men of truth, hating covetouſneſs: "and place *ſuch* over them, to be rulers "of thouſands, and rulers of hundreds, "rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens*."

The firſt requiſite in a judge, according to Jethro, is *ability*. He muſt be a man of ſenſe, penetration and diſcernment. Becauſe, with the beſt intentions, a ſtupid, weak, or diſſipated man, will be apt to err in judgment; either, becauſe he is unable to comprehend the cauſe, or, will not employ the neceſſary time and pains to underſtand it.

But what are the greateſt and moſt ſhining abilities, deſtitute of a principle of conſcience? They are but a miſchievous weapon in the hands of a bad man. A judge, therefore, ought to be a man that *fears God*. A man, not only reſtrained by reſpect to the world, or actuated by regard to reputation: theſe are found feeble and inefficacious in the

* Ver. 21.

LECT. XVI. hour of temptation; these are fluctuating and unsteady, as the opinions, passions and interests of men; but the fear of the Lord, is a perpetual, unchanging motive and restraint; the same in darkness as in the light, the same in secret, as before the eyes of the whole world.

This principle is closely connected with, and indeed it naturally produces, a third quality, of primary importance, in this character. A judge must be *a man of truth.* A sacred observer of truth, in what he says himself; a diligent promoter of truth, and an impartial avenger of falsehood and injustice in others. Even a regard to some of the principles of religion, unconnected with the love of truth and justice, which are of the number of those principles, might be apt to mislead a man. Compassion, for example, might dispose a judge to favour the poor man, though he has the worst cause. The all-wise God therefore, thought it necessary to throw in a special caution to this purpose, lest a principle, amiable and excellent in itself,

should

ſhould be perverted into a ſource of injuſtice; and has enjoined, by a poſitive ſtatute‡, that the cauſe, not the perſon or condition of the man, be conſidered by him who ſits in judgment.

Jethro finally lays it down as eſſential to the character of a judge, that he be a man who *hates covetouſneſs*. In which there is a ſtrong inſinuation, that where the love of money predominates, the exerciſe of all other neceſſary and ſuitable qualities are likely to be obſtructed or perverted; ability, rendered only more dangerous and hurtful; the fear of God, lulled aſleep; the heart hardened; the conſcience, by the ſtrong opiate of gold, reduced to a ſtate of inſenſibility; and, truth and juſtice hoodwinked, on the tribunal.

The hiſtory of our own country affords a melancholy example of the truth of

‡ "Neither ſhalt thou countenance a poor man "in his cauſe, Exod. xxiii 3.

LECT XVI. this obſervation; in the conduct of that greateſt, wiſeſt, meaneſt of mankind, Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, and Lord High Chancellor of England, in the reign of James I. Who, with a ſoul that comprehended, filled, extended, and enlarged the circle of ſcience; a genius that penetrated through the whole vaſt ſyſtem of nature, an imagination that tranſcended the flaming boundaries of the world, and a heart devoted to the love of God and mankind—baſely received the wages of unrighteouſneſs, accepted a bribe to pervert juſtice, was accuſed and convicted of corruption, in the execution of his high and important truſt, acknowledged his own ſhame, and, was deſervedly driven, with diſgrace to himſelf, and with the indignation, ſhame, and pity of a mortified and aſtoniſhed world, from an honourable ſtation, which he filled ſo unworthily.

But alas, after all, when we read of the appointment of judges and of generals, and of their requiſite qualities, of what does it remind us, but that men are ſelfiſh,

fiſh, covetous, litigious, and violent: tenacious of their own, and ready to encroach upon others? Wherefore is law; wherefore are there tribunals? They are for "the lawleſs and diſobedient." Make men juſt, gentle, kindly affectioned; make them Chriſtians indeed, and then war is at an end; the courts are ſhut up; then, there would be no need of judge, becauſe no offender.

The advice which was wiſely and kindly given, is graciouſly and candidly received. A proud and ſelf-ſufficient ſpirit would have rejected the counſel, however ſalutary, becauſe tendered by a ſtranger. But, true wiſdom only conſiders, whether the hint be uſeful, practicable and neceſſary; without regarding from what quarter it comes. And ſuch was the wiſdom of Moſes; and he was prepared for converſe with God, who had learned deference and reſpect for the opinions of men. And thus, the very firſt rudiments of the Jewiſh conſtitution, were ſuggeſted by the obſervation

and

LECT. XVI. and experience of a ſtranger, and a Midianite. And the great Jehovah diſdained not, to permit his prophet to be taught, and his people to be governed by the wiſdom and intelligence of a good man; though he was not of the commonwealth of Iſrael. If men were capable of learning to be wiſe and good, He who is wiſdom and goodneſs itſelf, would vouchſafe to teach them, not by precept only, but by example alſo. As Jethro ſuggeſted, ſo it was done. Moſes was eaſed of a burthen intolerable, the courſe of Juſtice was not ſtopped, God was glorified, and the world edified.

—You muſt have obſerved, that I have once and again, held out to your expectation, a ſubject of diſcourſe, from which I have once, and a ſecond time, ſhrunk back. It is ſtill before me, and I feel myſelf as reluctant as ever to proceed. Who is not ready to ſink under the awful terrours of the diſpenſation of the Law from Sinai? "Who is ſufficient for ſuch things?" But I muſt venture to go on,

on, and endeavour to carry you with me to the foot of that tremendous mountain. And, I flatter myſelf, you have not been altogether diſappointed nor injured, in being ſtopped a little by the progreſs. With recruited ſtrength and ſpirits, we ſhall attempt to advance on our way. But we ſhall firſt, from this eminence, ſurvey the ground over which we have travelled. Eminence, did I ſay? No. Let us join the innocent, cheerful ſociety in the tent of Moſes, and learn to cultivate the endearing charities of private life And, having conſidered it well, retire, making ſuch reflections as theſe—

That, it is not fortitude, but folly, unneceſſarily to expoſe ourſelves, or thoſe whom we love, to hardſhips and danger. "If any provide not for his own; and "especially for thoſe of his own houſe, "he hath denied the faith, and is worſe "than an infidel†." It is our care, not our labour and reflection, which we are encouraged to caſt upon God.

† 2 Tim. v. 8.

That

LECT. XVI. That, It argues a deficiency in ſome moral principle or another, when perſons whom nature, and the obligations of ſociety, have united, diſcover an inclination to live aſunder. Wiſdom, or neceſſity, may impoſe a temporary ſeparation. But well diſpoſed minds, ever look to, and eagerly lay hold of, the means and the ſeaſon of reſtoration and union.

That, Regard to public utility, exalts and improves private friendſhip.

That, To promote the glory of God, his own virtue, and the good of his fellow creatures, is the great and conſtant aim of every good man.

That, As none is too wiſe to learn, it is a proof of affection, to communicate uſeful hints; and a high proof of wiſdom, to take and uſe them, from whatever quarter they come. There is one Being only, who is not to be inſtructed. "How unſearchable are his judgments, "and his ways paſt finding out! For who

" who hath known the mind of the
" Lord? Or who hath been his coun-
" ſellor* ?

And that, Though we cannot ſucceſſfully imitate eminent men, in every particular of conduct, or in the diſplay of talents which may be denied to ourſelves; we are not thereby precluded from the exerciſe of the inferiour talents which we poſſeſs, and from a virtuous emulation, where it is poſſible for us to ſucceed. Let me ſtrive to be a Moſes, in ſome things, though I be conſcious I muſt fall inconceivably behind him, in moſt. Amen.

* Rom. xi. 32. 34,

LEC-

LECTURE XVII.

EXODUS xix. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE THIRD DAY IN THE MORNING, THAT THERE WERE THUNDERS AND LIGHTNINGS. AND A THICK CLOUD UPON THE MOUNT, AND THE VOICE OF THE TRUMPET EXCEEDING LOUD, SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLE THAT WAS IN THE CAMP TREMBLED. AND MOSES BROUGHT FORTH THE PEOPLE OUT OF THE CAMP TO MEET WITH GOD, AND THEY STOOD AT THE NETHER PART OF THE MOUNT. AND MOUNT SINAI WAS ALTOGETHER ON A SMOKE, BECAUSE THE LORD DESCENDED UPON IT IN FIRE: AND THE SMOKE THEREOF ASCENDED AS THE SMOKE OF A FURNACE, AND THE WHOLE MOUNT QUAKED GREATLY. AND WHEN THE VOICE OF THE TRUMPET SOUNDED LONG,

LONG, AND WAXED LOUDER AND LOUDER, MOSES SPAKE, AND GOD ANSWERED HIM BY A VOICE. AND THE LORD CAME DOWN UPON MOUNT SINAI, ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNT: AND THE LORD CALLED MOSES UP TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNT, AND MOSES WENT UP. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, GO DOWN, CHARGE THE PEOPLE, LEST THEY BREAK THROUGH UNTO THE LORD TO GAZE, AND MANY OF THEM PERISH. AND LET THE PRIESTS ALSO, WHICH COME NEAR THE LORD, SANCTIFY THEMSELVES, LEST THE LORD BREAK FORTH UPON THEM.

LECT. XVII.

IN man, as he came perfect from the hands of his Creator, the immortal principle, the "breath of life," "the living soul" exercised its just dominion over the earthly and sensual part of his nature. In man, degraded by sin, we behold the grosser domineering over the purer, the heavenly subjected to the terrestrial, the soul a slave to the senses. When our nature, through grace shall be restored, the soul shall resume its empire; the body itself become spiritual, shake off the power of

of gravitation, and "ascend to meet the "Lord in the air;" being "fashioned "like unto Christ's glorious body." LECT. XVII.

The dispensations of heaven are suited to the condition of man. "God knows "our frame, and remembereth that we "are dust." He makes sense his road to the mind; he seizes the conscience, and melts the heart, by speaking to the eyes and the ears. And, when we consider how easily, and through how many different channels, he can force his way to the inmost recesses of the man, who but must shudder at the thought of meeting the Father of spirits, ourselves disembodied spirits; of dropping the clay tabernacle in its native dust, and of becoming all eye, to see God as he is; all ear, to hear his voice, all soul to perceive and comprehend him! If God, encouraging and amiable in purifying and directing fire in the cloudy pillar; and in harmless, unconsuming fire, in the bush at Horeb, be awful; if dreadful at Sinai, coming in flashing, dazzling, threatening fire, to

LECT. XVII. promulgate his law; What muſt he be, "coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and "that obey not the goſpel of our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt?" If the ſound of that trumpet, which proclaimed the approach of God to Iſrael, was ready to kill the living with fear; What muſt be the trumpet which ſhall awake the dead? Whatever majeſty and ſolemnity appear, in the giving of the law, every one ſhall in a little while, behold infinitely exceeded, in the conſummation of the Goſpel.

God has hitherto declared his divine perfections by the effects which they produced. The plagues of Egypt, awfully manifeſted his power and juſtice. The daily ſhowers of manna, and water following them from the rock, beſpeak his power and goodneſs. But he now opens his mouth, to proclaim in the ears of men, his name, his nature and his will. Let us, with Iſrael, at a trembling diſtance, contemplate this great ſight, and liſten

liſten with reverence to the Almighty uttering his voice. LECT. XVII.

The poſterity of Abraham, according to the promiſe, is now become a great nation. But, What are multitudes, without government; and what government is a bleſſing, without law? Happineſs conſiſts not in having ſuch and ſuch poſſeſſions, but in being fitted to enjoy what we have. The conſtitution of other ſtates is the work of time, is the reſult of experience, arrives at maturity by degrees. Laws and reſtrictions, encouragements and reſtraints, are ſuggeſted by events. But, when the great Jehovah condeſcends to become a legiſlator, the utmoſt extent of poſſibility lying open to his view, proviſion is made from the beginning, for every caſe that can happen. The rule of his government is laid down at once; and the civil and religious conſtitution of that nation, over which he choſe to preſide, is eſtabliſhed by a wiſdom which cannot err.

It

LECT. XVII.

It was not unpleasant, as we were contemplating the scene exhibited in the preceding chapter, to listen to a wise and good man, giving advice with respect to the administration of publick justice. But we now tread upon holy ground; and listen, not to a man like ourselves, but to the only wise God. The whole taken together, unfolds an unparalleled display of mercy and majesty, of goodness and grandeur.

Forty-seven days have now elapsed, since that "night much to be remembered;" when the destroying angel walked through the midst of Egypt, and slew all the first born. And how many singular and interesting events have taken place in that short period? The Red Sea divided; the bitter waters of Marah sweetened; bread from heaven rained down; a living stream extracted from the flinty rock in Horeb; Amalek discomfited! Whether of the two shall we most admire, the greatness of the works which God performs; or the facility with

with which he brings them to paſs? What a high value are we taught to put upon time, when we ſee to what valuable purpoſes, through the bleſſing and aſſiſtance of heaven, a little time may be made ſubſervient. LECT. XVII.

Three days more are employed in making ſolemn preparation for this celeſtial viſitation. So that the Law was delivered exactly on the fiftieth day, after the celebration of the feaſt of paſſover. And, in commemoration of it, the Jewiſh feaſt of Pentecoſt was ever after obſerved; and rendered illuſtrious in the annals of the Chriſtian church, by a new diſpenſation, not of terrour, but of grace; the deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon the apoſtles of our Lord, in the miraculous gift of Tongues. Even the minute circumſtances of times and places, may have a ſignificancy, and an importance; of which we have, at preſent, no apprehenſion. And, I am fully perſuaded, when God ſhall be pleaſed to vouchſafe us clearer light, and freſh diſcoveries of his will, numberleſs inſtan-

LECT. XVII.

ces of coincidence and reſemblance, between the legal and evangelical diſpenſations, ſhall ruſh upon us; of which we can now form no conception. Why God has appointed the ſeventh day to be the weekly ſabbath; why the Law was proclaimed from mount Sinai, juſt after ſeven times ſeven days had elapſed from the going out of Egypt; why in the poſſeſſion of Canaan, the land was to be permitted to reſt every ſeventh year; why the general releaſe, or year of jubilee, was to be ſtatedly obſerved, after a conſtant revolution of ſeven times ſeven years; and, why the Holy Ghoſt was given, "when the day of Pentecoſt was fully "come;" or, after ſeven times ſeven days, from the day that "Chriſt our "Paſſover was ſacrificed for us;" are queſtions which we pretend not to reſolve. But, certain it is, theſe things have a meaning: "I know it not now, "but I ſhall know it hereafter."

Sinai, the ſcene of this ſplendid exhibition, is the higheſt eminence of a vaſt ridge

ridge of mountains; which run from Eaſt to Weſt through Arabia Petræa, as you go from the North-eaſt coaſt of the Red Sea to Paleſtine. The adjoining eminence is called Horeb, and is rendered illuſtrious, by the miracle of the water iſſuing from the rock. And, from their propinquity, and their forming part of the ſame chain of mountains, they are often put the one for the other; and the adjacent deſart country, is called indifferently, the Wilderneſs of Horeb; or the Wilderneſs of Sinai.

Moſes was firſt called up into the mount alone; and ſent back to the people with repeated meſſages, full of tenderneſs and love. Preparation was made for the tremendous appearance of the glory of the Lord, by the moſt gracious and reiterated aſſurances of favour and protection. This is the endearing language which the great God condeſcends to employ on the occaſion; "Ye have ſeen "what I did unto the Egyptians, and "how I bare you on eagles wings, and

LECT. XVII.

"brought you unto myſelf. Now, "therefore, if ye will obey my voice "indeed, and keep my covenant, then "ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto "me above all people: for all the earth "is mine. And ye ſhall be unto me "a kingdom of prieſts, and an holy "nation. Theſe are the words which "thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children "of Iſrael." The beautiful image of the eagle, and her young ones, is happy beyond expreſſion; and evidently proceeds from him, from whoſe view no part of the world of nature lies concealed. The natural hiſtory of that king of the feathered race, were this the time and the place to introduce it, would be the beſt commentary on the paſſage. But we may at leaſt ſtop to illuſtrate, by comparing it with the ſame image, dilineated by the ſame maſterly hand, with ſtill greater ſtrength of colouring, and greater force and variety of expreſſion. "For "the Lord's portion is his people; "Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. "He found him in a deſert land, and

in

"in the waſte howling wilderneſs: he led "him about, he inſtructed him, he kept "him as the apple of his eye. As "an eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, flut-"tereth over her young, ſpreadeth a-"broad her wings, taketh them, bear-"eth them on her wings; ſo the Lord "alone did lead him, and there was no "ſtrange God with him. He made him "ride on the high places of the earth, "that he might eat the increaſe of the "fields; and he made him to ſuck honey "out of the rock, and oil out of the "flinty rock*." The ſagacity and vigilance of the eagle, in providing the means of ſupport and ſafety for her callow brood; her ſtrength and fierceneſs in defending them; her tender ſympathy with their weakneſs; her anxiety to haſten on their maturity and capacity to provide for themſelves; the pains which ſhe takes to inſtruct them to fly,---as they are all fully juſtified by facts, ſo they are conveyed to us in language the moſt ſimple, plain and elegant; and raiſe us to the contemplation of an object, of all others

* Deut. xxxii. 9. &c.

LECT. XVII. others the ſublimeſt, ſweeteſt, moſt intereſting, and moſt compoſing to the ſoul. They repreſent to us, the all-comprehending view of eternal providence; the never-ſleeping eye of the watchman of Iſrael, the unfailable protection of the heavenly guardian; the more than maternal care, diligence and zeal, which Jehovah continually exerciſes over them that are his. "Happy "is that people that is in ſuch a caſe, "yea happy is that people, whoſe God "is the Lord*."

As the friendſhip between God and Abraham, the father and founder of that great nation, commenced and was confirmed, in the ſolemn ratification of a covenant, performed according to rites of God's own appointing; ſo the political exiſtence and importance of that nation, were directed to take their riſe, in the *cutting* or *dividing* a covenant, with ſimilar ſolemnities. And this was the tenour, theſe were the conditions of it. On the part

* Pſ. cxliv. 15.

part of Iſrael, in one word, obedience to the voice of God. Submiſſion in all things to the will of their beſt friend, and kindeſt benefactor; who could have nothing in view, but their happineſs. On the part of God, the promiſe of a profuſion of bleſſings, temporal, ſpiritual and everlaſting; a rank among the nations, which ſhould render them the envy and wonder of the world; an eſtabliſhment, which length of time ſhould not impair; a ſucceſſion of prophets, of prieſts, and of princes, which was to iſſue in the eternal prieſthood, and unlimited ſovereignty of one, whoſe government was to be an univerſal and everlaſting bleſſing to them, and to mankind. "Ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure "unto me above all people: for all the "earth is mine." *Segulah*, "a pecu-"liar Treaſure," ſomething exceedingly prized, and ſeduloufly preſerved, a gem of peculiar luſtre and value, which an affluent and powerful prince, culls out from among many, takes under his

own

LECT. XVII.

own particular charge, and will not entrust to the care of another.

Moses takes up this striking idea again, in that beautiful song of praise, in which, at the close of life, he recapitulates the wonderful ways of providence to that chosen family; "The Lord's portion is "his people; Jacob is the lot of his in-"heritance*." The promise which follows in the sixth verse, is wonderfully calculated to inspire ideas of dignity and importance, "Ye shall be unto me a king-"dom of priests, and an holy nation. They had just left a country where the priesthood was held in high estimation; where the persons of those who bore that sacred character, were inviolable, and their property exempted from the imposts which were laid upon that of other subjects. But the peculiar respect paid to this order of men, and the immunities which they enjoyed, served only to expose more glaringly the contrast, the degradation, and distress of the great body

* Deut. xxxii. 9.

of

of the people. Whereas here was a whole nation, deſtined of heaven to equal honours; not a king and ſubjects, but a commonwealth of kings; not one miniſtering at the altar, in the name of thouſands; one admitted within the veil, and myriads removed to an humbling, mortifying diſtance; but a kingdom of prieſts, an holy nation, majeſty and ſanctity in one.

Theſe are the words which Moſes is commanded to rehearſe in the ears of all the people. Having deſcended from the mount, he collects them accordingly by their *elders*; the men firſt in age, firſt in wiſdom, firſt in dignity and authority; and delivers to them the high meſſage, which he had in charge. Impreſſed at once with the power and grace of their heavenly king, they as one man reply, "All that the Lord hath ſpoken we will "do." Which anſwer, Moſes again reports to his dread employer. Thus, in the very preparatives for the publication of the Law, the mediation of the goſpel was clearly

LECT. XVII.

clearly taught and inculcated; and thus, throughout, we perceive, that guilty creatures can have no ſafe nor comfortable acceſs to a holy God, but by means of "a days-man to lay his hands upon "both:" and thus, the very miniſter of a fiery Law, exhibited a type of that great high-prieſt, at once "merciful and faithful;" "faithful in the things pertaining to God;" "merciful, to make reconci-"liation for the ſins of the people."

Moſes is upon this informed, that God intended on the third day, from that time, to manifeſt himſelf to all the people, as the leader and ruler of that vaſt army, and, as the employer and patron of Moſes his prophet, in a manner that ſhould leave no room to doubt, in whoſe name he ſpake, and by what authority he acted: "And the Lord ſaid un-"to Moſes, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick "cloud, that the people may hear when I "ſpeak with thee, and believe thee for "ever. And Moſes told the words of the "people unto the Lord."--"I come to thee

"in

"in a thick cloud." God already resided among Israel, and presided over them, in a pillar of fire, and a cloud. But whatever be the medium of communication between the Deity and his creatures, it is capable of being increased and improved, beyond imagination. There is a darkness grosser, and a cloud thicker, and more awfully impregnated, than any of which we have had experience. There is a voice louder, and a glory brighter than any we have heard or seen. Who can declare, who can conceive the utmost extent of the power of the Almighty? There is a splendour infinitely superiour to that of "the sun shining in his "strength." There may be an angel excelling in might: "Gabriel, who stands "in the presence of God." Know we ever so much, there is a field of discovery before us, infinite as the immensity of JEHOVAH, to employ a duration of enquiry, endless as his eternity.

A command is now issued to the people, to employ themselves that day and the

LECT. XVII. the next in ſolemn preparation for this auguſt viſit. They are directed, as an external mark of reſpect to the moſt holy God, as a token of obedience, and an indication of inward purity, to waſh their clothes, to abſtain from whatever might defile the body or the mind, and, even to deny themſelves ſuch innocent and lawful gratifications, as might have a tendency to diſturb their attention and diſtract their thoughts. When God came to give the law, he came after ſolemn warning, he gave evident ſigns of his approach, he declared to a moment, when he was to be heard and ſeen in his majeſty. But, when he ſhall come to execute the law, we are informed that he ſhall take the world by ſurprize, that men may be always ready. "Behold I will "come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt "not know what hour I will come "upon thee†." "Watch therefore: "for ye know not what hour your "Lord doth come*." "Be ye alſo ready:

† Rev. iii. 3. * Matt. xxiv. 42.

for

"for in ſuch an hour as ye think not, "the Son of man cometh‡."

When but a friend or neighbour is expected to viſit us, decency requires that our perſons, our houſes, our entertainment, be rendered as inoffenſive and as acceptable as we can make them. The anxiety which men feel, and the pains which they take, to receive and entertain their ſuperiours is too well known to need any remark. It is only when the King of kings, and the Lord of lords announces his approach, that men are incurious, unceremonious, careleſs, and indifferent.

The great Jehovah was to manifeſt himſelf firſt to the eye. "Be ready againſt "the third day; for the third day the "Lord will come down, in the ſight of "all the people, upon mount Sinai." All is hitherto attractive and encouraging. The face of God is clothed with ſmiles.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 44.

LECT. XVII. He comes "to dwell with men upon "earth." But the grace and condeſcenſion of God, while they invite to the communications of friendſhip, forbid the boldneſs and freedom of familiarity. While he makes himſelf known as a father, a protector, a guide; he permits us not to forget that he is at the ſame time, "a great God, and a great King." Therefore, a ſtrict injunction is given in the twelfth and thirteenth verſes, "And "thou ſhalt ſet bounds unto the peo-"ple round about, ſaying, Take heed "to yourſelves, that ye go not up into "the mount, or touch the border of it: "whoſoever toucheth the mount ſhall "ſurely be put to death. There ſhall "not an hand touch it, but he ſhall ſurely "be ſtoned, or ſhot through; whether "it be beaſt or man, it ſhall not live: "when the trumpet ſoundeth long, ye "ſhall come up to the mount." This laſt expreſſion, "When the trumpet "ſoundeth long, ye ſhall come up to "the mount," is evidently a caution and a threatening, not an invitation; and

and ſeems to import, "Let who dares presume to approach nearer; let him come up into the mount, if he will." At the ſound of that tremendous trumpet, they were ready to ſink into the earth with terrour, inſtead of deſiring or attempting a nearer intercourſe with the great and terrible God, who had put all nature into conſternation. LECT XVII.

As they were commanded, ſo they did. All impurity is carefully removed; and they ſee in ſolemn ſilence and earneſt expectation; in hope, mingled with fear, the gradual approach of this all-important, this eventful day.

At length, in all its pomp and importance, the third day arrives. Every creature, every element feels, and gives witneſs to, the appearance of its God. Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, the Water and the Land, Air and Fire, announce the preſence of their great Creator and ruler. I tremble as I read. What

LECT. XVII.

must it have been to see and hear? "And it came to pass on the third day "in the morning that there were thun- "ders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud "upon the mount, and the voice of the "trumpet exceeding loud; so that all "the people that was in the camp trem- "bled." Lo, the hoarse thunder is lost in the louder sound of the trumpet; and that awful sound, in its turn, sinks into silence, before the all-penetrating, all commanding accents of the voice of God himself. The thick darkness of a cloud impregnated with the terrours of divine Justice, threatens one moment to extinguish for ever, hope and joy; and that darkness, the next moment, is dispelled by the more terrible flashes of celestial fire. How poor the state of an earthly prince compared to this! "God maketh "his angels Spirits, his ministers a flame "of fire." What heart is not melted, in the midst of this wild uproar? There is not an object of astonishment we are acquainted with, but what enters into the description. Thunder, lightning, blackness

blacknefs of darknefs, tempeft, earthquake, the trumpet of God; and all thefe are but the coverings of terrour; the harbingers of majefty and might. Behold, God is in the thunder, in the lightning, in the tempeft, in the earthquake! they are mere inftruments, to do his pleafure.

LECT. XVII.

But, we are directed to one object perfectly placid and compofed in the midft of tumult and confufion: even when "the voice of the trumpet founded long "and waxed exceeding loud," Mofes poffeffed his foul in patience. "Mofes "fpake, and God anfwered him by a "voice." It is guilt that gives force to fire, that lends fury to the ftormy wind, that fhakes the earth, by firft fhaking the foul. Faith in God controls the elements; and foothes the foul to reft in communion with God; as the child falls afleep in the fond maternal bofom.

Mofes comes up at the command of him, who is King and Lord of Nature,

LECT XVII. and therefore, he has nothing to fear. The three children fall down bound in the midſt of the burning fiery furnace, but the flames have no power to kindle upon them. They conſume only the cords withwhich they are bound. They themſelves walk at liberty through the midſt of the fire; they reſt as on a bed of roſes. For behold another is in company with them, and "the form of the "fourth is like the Son of God." Daniel ſleeps ſecure in the den among lions, more compoſedly than Darius in his palace, ſurrounded by his officers and guards; he ſleeps calmly, as a father in the midſt of his children. He who fears God has nothing elſe to fear.

But what new doctrine is to be uſhered in, under all this formidable apparatus? What law, unknown, unheard of before, is to be introduced and enforced, by ceremonies ſo dreadfully auguſt and ſolemn? Juſt that which was from the beginning; that which the finger of God more ſilently and curiouſly interwove, with the very texture

texture and frame of the human ſoul. The voice of God ſays, from the heights of Sinai, none other things, than thoſe which conſcience ſpeaks to every man, from the deep receſſes of his own breaſt. It is this that gives weight, to both the law and the goſpel. They have their counterpart, in the nature and condition of man. They are of God, who knows what is in man, and what is good for man.

But, can he whoſe "preſence fills "heaven and earth," change his place? Can God be ſaid to aſcend, or deſcend? The devout eye ſees him in every creature, in every place, in every event. The pious ſoul feels and acknowledges him inceſſantly. But to rouſe ſtupidity, to reprove careleſſneſs, to convince infidelity, God muſt aſſume ſtate, clothe himſelf with thunder, involve the top of Sinai in clouds, and ſhake its foundation. As, in the compoſure of Moſes, we behold the confidence of divine friendſhip, and the ſecurity ariſing from union

LECT. XVII.

with God, ſo, in the caution which is given in the twenty-firſt verſe. "Go down, "charge the people, leſt they break "through unto the Lord to gaze, and "many of them periſh," We ſee the danger of unlicenſed curioſity, of preſumptuous boldneſs. Fire and darkneſs equally repel and intimidate, equally compoſe and encourage. All the dealings of God with man, are "line upon line, and "precept upon precept."

The ſimilitude of the legal and evangelical diſpenſations, and their difference, would neceſſarily occupy a much larger portion of your time and attention than now remains. It were better, therefore, to bring them together in one diſcourſe, calculated for the purpoſe.

I conclude the preſent lecture, with ſimply reading two or three ſhort paſſages of ſcripture, cloſely connected with, and ſerving to illuſtrate our ſubject; written at two very different periods, and in two very different ſtates of the church. The firſt,

first, is in the history of Elijah, the great restorer of the law, near six hundred years afterward. "And he arose, and did "eat and drink, and went in the strength "of that meat forty days and forty nights, "unto Horeb, the mount of God. And "he came thither unto a cave and lodg-"ed there. And behold, the word of "the Lord came to him; and he said "unto him, What doest thou here, "Elijah? And he said, I have been "very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: "for the children of Israel have forsaken "thy covenant, thrown down thine al-"tars, and slain thy prophets with the "sword; and I, even I only am left; "and they seek my life to take it away. "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon "the mount before the Lord. And be-"hold the Lord passed by, and a great "and strong wind rent the mountains, "and brake in pieces the rocks before "the Lord; but the Lord was not in "the wind: and after the wind an earth-"quake; but the Lord was not in the "earthquake: And after the earthquake

LECT XVII.

"a

LECT. XVII.

"a fire; but the Lord was not in the "fire: and after the fire, a ſtill ſmall "voice. And it was ſo, when Elijah "heard it, that he wrapped his face in "his mantle, and went out, and ſtood "in the entering in of the cave: and "behold, there came a voice unto him, "and ſaid, What doſt thou here, Elijah? "And he ſaid, I have been very jealous "for the Lord God of hoſts: becauſe "the children of Iſrael have forſaken "thy covenant, thrown down thine al-"tars, and ſlain thy prophets with the "ſword; and I even I only am left, and "they ſeek my life, to take it away‡." The ſecond is, the winding up of that wonderful compariſon and contraſt of the Law and the Goſpel, which conſtitute the great body of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, and which, the apoſtle ſums up in theſe remarkable words, ſixty-four years after the advent of Jeſus Chriſt. "For ye are not come unto the mount "that might be touched, and that burned

‡ 1 Kings, xix. 8. &c.

"with

"with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and dark-
"neſs, and tempeſt. And the ſound of
"a trumpet, and the voice of words;
"which voice, they that heard intreated
"that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to
"them any more. For they could not
"endure that which was commanded.
"And if ſo much as a beaſt touch the
"mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt
"through with a dart. And ſo terrible
"was the ſight, that Moſes ſaid, I exceed-
"ingly fear and quake. But ye are come
"unto mount Sion, and unto the city of
"the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem,
"and to an innumerable company of an-
"gels. To the general aſſembly and
"church of the firſt-born, which are
"written in heaven, and to God the
"judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt
"men made perfect. And to Jeſus the
"mediator of the new covenant, and to
"the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh
"better things than that of Abel. See
"that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh:
"for if they eſcaped not, who refuſed
"him that ſpake on earth, much more
"ſhall

LECT. XVII.

"ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away "from him that ſpeaketh from heaven: "whoſe voice then ſhook the earth: but "now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet "once more I ſhake not the earth only, "but alſo heaven. And this word, Yet "once more, ſignifieth the removing "of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as "of things that are made, that thoſe "things which cannot be ſhaken may "remain. 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 conſum-"ing fire*.

* Heb. xii. 18. &c.

LEC-

LECTURE XVIII.

JOSHUA i. 17.

ACCORDING AS WE HEARKENED UNTO MOSES IN ALL THINGS, SO WILL WE HEARKEN UNTO THEE: ONLY THE LORD THY GOD BE WITH THEE, AS HE WAS WITH MOSES.

JOHN i. 17.

FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES, BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST.

IN forming eſtimates of greatneſs, it is natural for men to conſult their ſenſes, not their reaſon. With the idea of royal Majeſty, we connect thoſe of a chair of ſtate, a numerous and ſplendid retinue, an ermine robe, a ſceptre and a crown. But wiſdom and goodneſs are the qualities which confer real dignity; and command juſt homage and reſpect. Our preconceptions of earthly magnificence, much exceed the truth; and knowledge ſpeedi-

ly

LECT XVIII. ly levels the fabrick, which imagination had raiſed. The wonders of nature, the mighty works of God, grow upon us as we contemplate them. No intimacy of acquaintance reduces their magnitude, or tarniſhes their luſtre. And, if the very frame of nature, the vaſtneſs, the variety, the harmony and the ſplendour of the viſible creation be calculated to fill us with aſtoniſhment and delight; how muſt the plan of providence, the work of redemption, the great myſtery of godlineſs, excel in glory!

In the diſcoveries which it has pleaſed God, at ſundry times, and in divers manners to make of himſelf to mankind, he has, at one time, addreſſed himſelf directly to the underſtanding; at another, made his way to the heart and conſcience, through the channel of ſenſe. The Law was given in every circumſtance of external pomp; was accompanied with every thing that could dazzle the eye, fill the ear, and rouſe the imagination. The kingdom of God, in the goſpel of his Son,

" came

"came not with obſervation." The great author of the diſpenſation of grace, according as it was predicted concerning him, "did not ſtrive, nor cry, nor "cauſe his voice to be heard in the "ſtreets." He had, in the eyes of an undiſcerning world, "no form nor com-"lineſs, no beauty why he ſhould be "deſired." And therefore, "he was "deſpiſed and rejected of men." But we are taught to think very differently of his ſecond appearance. "He ſhall come "in the clouds of heaven, with power "and great glory." In his Father's "glory, and all his holy angels." "With the voice of the Archangel, and "the trump of God."

The manner of delivering the Law, correſponded with its nature. It was clothed with thunder. It was ſurrounded with the blackneſs of darkneſs. It emitted flaming fire. It denounced death. The ſpirit of the goſpel, in like manner, breathed in the mode of its publication. The doctrine of peace and reconciliation

LECT. XVIII. was delivered to men, in the tendereſt accents of human friendſhip. And temporal mercies and deliverances, prepared the way for "ſpiritual and heavenly "bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus."

We are now to bring theſe two diſpenſations together, and to compare the one with the other; that we may diſcover and admire that uniformity of deſign, which they jointly aim at promoting; the mutual luſtre which they ſhed upon, and the mutual aid which they lend to each other.

By "the Law," we underſtand the whole of that ſcheme of the divine providence, which related to the poſterity of Abraham; the promiſes which were made to them, the ordinances preſcribed, the character which they bare, the events which befel them; from the day in which that Patriarch left his kindred and country, till the day, when the whole was ſwallowed up and loſt in the perſon, doctrines, ordinances, life, ſufferings and death

death of him, who was held up from the beginning, as the great, leading, commanding object in the eternal eye; the accomplishment of the promises, the substance of the types and shadows, the "end of the Law, for righteousness, to "every one that believeth."

LECT. XVIII.

Moses and Christ frequently speak of their mutual relation and resemblance. "I will raise them up," says God by Moses, "a prophet from among their "brethren, like unto thee, and will put "my words in his mouth, and he shall "speak unto them all that I shall com-"mand him. And it shall come to pass, "that whosoever will not hearken unto "my words, which he shall speak in "my name, I will require it of him."* "Search the scriptures," says Christ, "for in them ye think ye have eternal "life: and they are they which tes-"tify of me. For, had ye believed "Moses, ye would have believed me;

* Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

LECT. XVIII. "for he wrote of me. But if ye be-
"lieve not his writings, how ſhall ye
"believe my words† ?"

The perſons, characters, and offices of the two legiſlators, therefore, naturally fall to be firſt conſidered, in tracing the reſemblance of the two covenants, which were eſtabliſhed with mankind, through their mediation.

Of the birth of Moſes, and ſalvation to Iſrael by him, there ſeems to have been a general expectation, in his own nation, and an apprehenſion of ſuch an event as general, in the minds of the Egyptians. Hence the bloody decree of Pharaoh, to deſtroy from the womb all the male children of the Hebrews; and hence, on the other hand, that eagerneſs to ſave a child, who, from the moment of its birth, exhibited unequivocal ſigns of his future greatneſs and uſefulneſs.---When Chriſt came into the

† John v. 39, &c.

world,

world, multitudes were "looking for the "Consolation of Israel." The prophecies concerning, the promises of the Messiah, were evidently hastening to fulfil themselves. The Jews expected their king: Herod dreaded a rival. The person of the promised Saviour was pointed out, by signs in heaven, and signs on earth, which it was impossible to misunderstand. An extraordinary star, describes an unknown path through the air to the place of his birth. A multitude of the heavenly host proclaim the joyful event to the shepherds. It was revealed unto Simeon, by the Holy Ghost, "That he should not "see death, before he had seen the "Lord's Christ*." Conducted of the Spirit, he came into the temple at the moment Christ was presented there, according to the Law. He recognizes the promised of the Lord; and closes his eyes in peace. Anna the prophetess, instructed by the same spirit, gives a similar testimony, and speaks of "the holy

* Luke ii. 26.

LECT. XVIII. "child, to all them that looked for re-
"demption in Jeruſalem*."

The circumſtances of extreme danger, which attended the birth of Moſes and of Chriſt, and the wonderful means of their preſervation and deliverance, conſtitute a ſtriking mark of reſemblance between them. Behold the long-looked-for deliverer of the Jewiſh church and nation, ready to periſh by the hand of Pharaoh: and the great king and head of the Chriſtian world, threatened by the murdering dagger of the Tetrarch of Galilee; while the earth was watered with the blood of their infant brethren. Moſes is ſaved from deſtruction by the daughter of the tyrant who ſought his life: He finds an aſylum and a ſchool, in the houſe which he was deſtined to plague and to humble. And Jeſus of Nazareth finds ſhelter in Egypt from the fury and jealouſy of Herod.

* Luke ii. 38.

The

The perſonal beauty and accompliſhments of the Iſraelitiſh Law-giver, were probably intended to typify, in an inferiour degree, the perſonal glory and excellency of him, concerning whom the prophet thus writes, "Thou art fairer "than the children of men; grace is "poured into thy lips: therefore God "hath bleſſed thee for ever§."

The wretched ſtate of Iſrael, when Moſes was born; and of the world, when Chriſt came to ſave it, are a melancholy and affecting counterpart to each other. The former ſubjected to the arbitrary authority of a ſanguinary tyrant; the latter, in dreadful captivity to the prince of the power of the air, that "murderer from the begin-"ning:" "that ſpirit, which ruleth in "the children of diſobedience."

Their mental qualities, preſent a lovely and an inſtructive ſimilitude. "Now

§ Pſalm xlv. 2.

LECT. XVIII. "the man Moſes was very meek, above "all the men which were upon the "face of the earth.*" "Take my "yoke upon you, and learn of me, for "I am meek and lowly in heart, and "ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls†." Compaſſion for his afflicted brethren, early diſcovered the temper, and marked the character of Moſes, the man of God. Sympathy with the miſerable, and that ſympathy effecting ſeaſonable relief for them, marked the paths of the Son of God, through a world of wretchedneſs. "I have compaſſion on the mul-"titude, becauſe they continue now "with me three days, and have no-"thing to eat: and I will not ſend "them away faſting, leſt they faint "by the way§." "When he ſaw the "multitudes, he was moved with com-"paſſion on them, becauſe they faint-"ed, and were ſcattered abroad as ſheep "having no ſhepherd‡." Over the grave of Lazarus, "Jeſus wept." "When

* Num. xii. 3. † Mat. xi. 29. § xv. 32. ‡ ix. 36.

"he

" he was come near, he beheld the city, " and wept over it. Saying, if thou " hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this " thy day, the things which belong un- " to thy peace! but now they are hid " from thine eyes§."

The offices which Moſes and Chriſt were called of Providence to execute, preſent us with points of likeneſs which it is impoſſible not to ſee, and equally impoſſible to miſtake. " And there aroſe " not a prophet ſince in Iſrael like " unto Moſes, whom the Lord knew " face to face: in all the ſigns and " wonders which the Lord ſent him to " do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh " and to all his ſervants, and to all his " land: and in all that mighty hand, and " in all that great terrour which Moſes " ſhewed in the ſight of all Iſrael.*" " No man hath ſeen God at any time; " the only begotten Son, which is in the " boſom of the Father, he hath declar-

§ Luke xix. 41, 42. * Deut. xxxiv. 10, &c.

LECT. XVIII.

"ed him*." Moſes was King in Jeſhurun, and conducted the thouſands of Iſrael through many difficulties and dangers, to their deſtined habitation: Jeſus, God's "anointed King over his holy hill "of Zion," brings his "many" ſpiritual "ſons unto glory."

To conſtitute one deliverer for Iſrael, Moſes and Aaron muſt unite their talents, combine their force, conjoin their offices: the prophet muſt co-operate with the prieſt; two diſtinct perſons carry on one deſign; but, in the Saviour of the world, all talents, all virtues, all offices meet and centre: the prophetic inſpiration of Moſes, Aaron's pleaſantneſs and grace of ſpeech;—the regal dignity of the one, the ſacerdotal purity of the other. In order to put Iſrael in poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, Joſhua muſt ſucceed to Moſes, and happily finiſh what he has ſo ſucceſsfully begun. But the great Captain of Salvation needs no coadjutor, can have no ſucceſſor: "he gives grace and glory;"

* John i. 18.

leads

leads his redeemed through the wilder- LECT. XVIII.
neſs; introduces them into Canaan, main-
tains them in quiet and everlaſting poſ-
ſeſſion.

Other lines of reſemblance will appear, as we proſecute the hiſtory, and ſhall not therefore be anticipated. But, we muſt not diſmiſs the ſubject, without pointing out wherein the likeneſs fails, and how much the type falls ſhort of the object which it repreſents.

The wonders performed by Moſes in Egypt, were wrought by a power delegated to, and conferred upon him, for the purpoſe. The miracles of Chriſt were produced by a power original and inherent. Moſes, though the meekeſt of all men, was betrayed into raſhneſs, loſt temper, and "ſpake unadviſedly with "his lips." But behold a ſpirit which was never ruffled, a tongue in which guile was never found; lips that never offended; a mind which no inſult could diſturb, no unkindneſs provoke; nor

even

LECT. XVIII.

even the horrid pangs of an unmerited death rouſe to reſentment. "Holy brethren, "partakers of the heavenly calling, con- "ſider the Apoſtle and high Prieſt of our "profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus; who was faith- "ful to him that appointed him, as alſo "Moſes was faithful in all his houſe. "For this man was counted worthy of "more glory than Moſes, inaſmuch as "he who hath builded the houſe hath "more honour than the houſe. For "every houſe is builded by ſome man; "but he that built all things is God. "And Moſes verily was faithful in all "his houſe as a ſervant, for a teſti- "mony of thoſe things which were to "be ſpoken after; but Chriſt as a Son "over his own houſe; whoſe houſe are "we, if we hold faſt the confidence, "and the rejoicing of hope firm unto "the end‡."

Moſes died and was buried; Jeſus "died and was buried, and roſe again."

‡ Heb. iii. 1, &c.

Moſes

Moſes received the Law; Chriſt gave it. Moſes and Elias attend the Saviour on mount Tabor, as his miniſtring ſervants; Jeſus receives their attendance and homage, as their Lord. LECT. XVIII.

Having ſpoken of the reſemblance between the authors of the two diſpenſations, we proceed, as was propoſed, to ſpeak in the ſame view, of the two diſpenſations themſelves.

And Firſt. They reſt on one and the ſame authority; are dictated by the ſame unerring wiſdom; and are directed to the ſame great and glorious end. Indeed, one of the great proofs that both, are of God, is the conformity of both to the nature and condition of man. The precepts of the Law are not novel conſtitutions, which had no exiſtence till the days of Moſes; neither are the conſolations of the Goſpel, new diſcoveries of grace, unheard of till the four thouſandth year of the world. Sinai thundered and lightened in Adam's conſcience

the

LECT. XVIII.

the moment he tasted the forbidden tree; and drove him to seek refuge "from the "presence of the Lord God, amidst the "trees of the garden." The terrours of the Law raged in Cain's guilty breast, long before there was any record written on brass or stone. And the promises of pardon and salvation are coeval with the conviction of the first offender, and the denunciation of his punishment. The tongue which pronounced on man the doom of death, proclaims the glad tidings of life and recovery.

I know that the Law is of God, for I have that within me which acknowledges and approves its rectitude and excellency; and, even when it condemns me, I am constrained to call it "holy, just, "and good." I know that the Gospel is of God, for I feel that within me which welcomes its approach, discerns its suitableness, rejoices in its fulness, rests upon its truth. It is of God, for it descends to the level of my guilt and misery,

ſery, correſponds with my hopes, ſuits my neceſſities. LECT. XVIII.

Our bleſſed Lord, took an early opportunity of explaining himſelf on this ſubject. An abſurd idea prevailed, that the kingdom of the Meſſiah, was to be a total reverſing of the Moſaic diſpenſation. An abſurdity, into which ſome chriſtians have inadvertently given, for want of making a plain and neceſſary diſtinction, between thoſe particulars of the law, which are in their own nature eternal and unchangeable, like the nature of that God, who is its author; thoſe, which being typical and prophetical, ceaſed of courſe, when the predicted event arrived, and the type, having fulfilled its deſign, was loſt in the thing typified; and thoſe, which being temporary and tranſitory, ceaſed with the occaſion of them. Of the firſt ſort, are the precepts of the decalogue, or the ten commandments: which, under every conſtitution that affects ſuch a being as man, muſt be immutable and everlaſting. Of them it is, that

LECT. XVIII.

that Chrift faid, "Think not that I am "come to deftroy the law or the pro- "phets: I am not come to deftroy, but "to fulfill. For verily I fay unto you, "Till heaven and earth pafs, one jot or "one tittle fhall in no wife pafs from "the law, till all be fulfilled†." Of the fecond clafs, are the laws of the daily facrifice, the great annual feafts, the levitical priefthood, and the like. They pointed out Chrift the Lord, they led to him, they were loft in him. And in the third rank, we place the law of circumcifion, the political œconomy of the jewifh nation, all that related to the poffeffion of Canaan; and which ceafed of courfe, with the diffolution of their government, and the lofs of their national importance. Thefe obfervations being attended to, and kept in mind, will prevent the confufion arifing from the ambiguous acceptation of the word "law," as expreffing the Old Teftament difpenfation.

* Mat. v. 17, 18.

The

The law, then, and the gospel, the two tables of stone delivered to Moses, and the "grace and truth which came by "Jesus Christ," coincide, secondly, in this, that they both point out with equal clearness and force, the necessity of a Saviour. Every word pronounced by the voice of God from Sinai, is, in truth, a sentence of condemnation. While it enjoins future obedience, it fixes past guilt. While it says, "thou shalt not "make unto thee any graven image, or "the likeness of any thing that is in "heaven above, or in the earth beneath," it accuses of idolatry. While it recommends the observance of the sabbath, it charges home the violation of it; and so of the rest of the precepts of the decalogue.

The law therefore, carried the gospel in its bosom, as the new-changed moon exhibits a great body of obscurity, embraced by a small semicircle of light; but which is to be irradiated by degrees, till the whole becomes one great globe of light

LECT. XVIII. light and glory; and Moſes performs the part of "a ſchoolmaſter to bring us to "Chriſt."

To hear of a conſtitution by which I might have lived, after my life is forfeited, is only to embitter my miſery. It is like hearing of a cordial, after a man has ſwallowed poiſon. Now, it could never be the deſign of the gracious lawgiver to inſult human miſery, by holding out a ſyſtem which could avail the guilty nothing. While then, the divine juſtice lays down the law in all its ſtrictneſs, purity and extent, ſaying "I am the Lord "who will by no means clear the guilty;" "Curſed is every one who continueth not "in all things which are written in the "book of the law to do them;*" the goodneſs which condeſcends to give a law at all, the wiſdom which explains it, the patience that forbears to puniſh its tranſgreſſion, all plainly and diſtinctly proclaim the neceſſity and the exiſtence of

* Gal. iii. 10.

an

an atonement, and lead to "the bringing "in of a better hope." LECT. XVIII.

Thirdly. The ſpirit of both diſpenſations is a ſpirit of love. God enforces upon Iſrael, obedience to the law from Sinai, by the conſideration of his being the Lord, which "brought them up out "of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe "of bondage:" "who had borne them "on eagles wings, and brought them to "himſelf." And, "love" on the part of man, "is the fulfilling of the law." "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with "all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and "with all thy mind. This is the firſt and "great commandment. And the ſecond "is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy "neighbour as thyſelf. On theſe two "commandments hang all the law and the "prophets.*" The goſpel, in like manner, has its ſource in love, the love of God; and its great aim and end, is to produce love to God. "God ſo loved the world,

* Matt. xxii. &c.

LECT. XVIII. "that he gave his only begotten Son, "that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould "not periſh, but have everlaſting life‡." "And we love him becauſe he firſt loved "us. "The love of Chriſt conſtraineth "us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one "died for all, then were all dead: and "that he died for all, that they which "live, ſhould not henceforth live unto "themſelves, but unto him which died "for them, and roſe again†." And, "by this ſhall all men know that ye are "my diſciples, if ye have love one to "another§." "He that ſays he loves "God, and hateth his brother, is a liar. "For he that loveth not his brother whom "he hath ſeen, how can he love God "whom he hath not ſeen||?" And when both ſhall have produced their full effect "perfect love ſhall caſt out fear," the voice of God ſhall be unaccompanied with thunder and lightning, cloud and tempeſt. The ſtorm is in the mind of

‡ John iii. 16. † 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. § John xiii. 35. || 1 John iv. 20.

the

the guilty creature. The wrath of fire, is not in God, but in fallen man; in "the carnal mind, which is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the "law of God, neither indeed can be*." When that is extinguished, all is at peace. The aim and labour of the gospel is not to reconcile God to man; but to reconcile men to God: for "God is love; and "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in "God, and God in him‡."

Fourthly. Both the legal and evangelical dispensations equally discover to us our distance from God. The one, by enumerating and declaring our offences; the other, by enumerating and declaring the tender mercies of our God. The law treats us as alienated friends, whom it is needful to convince, reprove and humble. The gospel considers us as friends restored, no "longer strangers and foreigners, but "fellow citizens of the saints, and of the "houshold of God." "Once darkness,

* Rom. viii. 35. ‡ 2 John iv. 16.

LECT. XVIII. "but now light in the Lord: once afar off, "but made nigh by the blood of Chriſt." The law ſhews us how far we have deviated from the path of duty and happineſs; the goſpel conducts us back through our wanderings, unravels the intricacies and errours of our dark ſteps, and replaces us in our father's houſe. Moſes informs us that we are wrong, "like ſheep going "aſtray;" Jeſus is "the way, the truth, "and the life," and takes us under the care of "the ſhepherd and biſhop of "ſouls." Moſes points out, the dreadful depth into which we have fallen; the dreadful diſtance from heaven to hell; Chriſt reveals the glorious heighth to which we are raiſed; the glorious diſtance from hell to heaven. Moſes tells me what I ought to be and to do; Chriſt makes me ſuch as he would have me to be. "And "you hath he quickened who were dead "in treſpaſſes and ſins, wherein in time "paſt ye walked, according to the courſe "of this world, according to the prince of "the power of the air, the ſpirit that "now worketh in the children of diſobe-

"dience:

"dience: among whom alſo we all had "our converſation in times paſt, in the "luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires "of the fleſh, and of the mind; and "were by nature the children of wrath, "even as others. 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, (by grace ye are ſaved) "And hath raiſed us up together, and "made us ſit together in heavenly places "in Chriſt Jeſus*."

But, the law was delivered to the world, in a very different manner from the publication of the Goſpel;— in fire that burned, in tempeſt that roared, a cloud that darkened, in words that threatened. It awed men into diſtance; it inſpired terrour. But the Goſpel comes in light that conſumes not, in glory that dazzles not, in language that threatens not. The Law ſays, "Take heed to your-

* Eph. ii. 1. &c.

LECT. XVIII.

"ſelves, that ye go not up into the "mount, or touch the border of it: "whoſoever toucheth the mount ſhall "ſurely be put to death. There ſhall "not an hand touch it, but he ſhall "ſurely be ſtoned, or ſhot through; "whether it be beaſt or man, it ſhall "not live; when the trumpet ſoundeth "long, they ſhall come up to the mount. "And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Go "down, charge the people, leſt they "break through unto the Lord to "gaze, and many of them periſh‡." The Goſpel ſays, "Look unto me, and "be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth." "Come unto me, all ye that labour, "and are heavy laden, and I will give "you reſt.*" "He that cometh to me, "I will in no wiſe caſt out†." But, to the impenitent and unbelieving, the Goſpel ſpeaks the ſame terrour which the Law did from Sinai; nay, wears a ſtill more frowning aſpect, "Indignation

‡ Exod. xix. 12, &c. * Mat. xi. 28. † John vi. 37.

"and

"and wrath; tribulation and anguish "upon every soul of man that doeth "evil, of the Jew first, and also of "the Gentile.*" "How shall we e-"scape if we neglect so great salvation; "which at the first began to be spok-"en by the Lord, and was confirm-"ed unto us by them that heard him‡." "He that despised Moses' law, died "without mercy, under two or three "witnesses: of how much sorer punish-"ment, suppose ye, shall he be thought "worthy, who hath trodden under foot "the Son of God, and hath counted "the blood of the covenant, where-"with he was sanctified, an unholy "thing, and hath done despite to the "Spirit of grace†." And to them that believe, the Law speaks in the mildest, gentlest language of the Gospel; for "there is therefore now no condem-"nation to them which are in Christ "Jesus, who walk not after the flesh,

* Rom. ii. 8, 9. ‡Heb. ii. 3. † x. 28, 29.

"but

LECT. XVIII. "but after the Spirit*." "And the "Lord paſſed by before him, and pro- "claimed, The Lord, the Lord God, "merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, "and abundant in goodneſs and truth, "keeping mercy for thouſands, for- "giving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and "ſin.‡" "And ſhewing mercy unto "thouſands of them that love me, and "keep my commandments†." I know not whether the whole bible contains an expreſſion of goodneſs more ſingular and ſtriking than theſe words which iſſued from the mountain that burned with fire. Our fears are alarmed at the mention of the great and dreadful name— "the Lord God, a jealous God, viſiting "the iniquity of the fathers upon the "children." But juſtice has its limits. It may be ſtretched out to the third or fourth generation of offenders. Yet the "Lord will not ſtrive continually, nei- "ther will he keep his anger for ever." But grace knows no bounds. When

* Rom. viii. 1. ‡ Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. † xx. 6.

mercy

mercy is to be extended, it looks forward and forward, from a third and a fourth, to thousands of generations of them that love God. In what promise of the New Testament is the love of God preached more sweetly, than in this precept of the Old?

Both dispensations then have their mildness; both their terrour. Their mildness from the grace of the Creator; their terrour from the guilt of the creature. And if the proclamation of the Law, were thus dreadful; if the alarm of judgment to come, shake the foundation of the everlasting hills; if Sinai tremble, and the rocks melt before the Lord, coming as a protector and a friend—What must the sessions be; the great day of doom, the awful hour of execution, when the judge shall come, "in flaming fire, taking "vengeance on them that know not God, "and that obey not the gospel of our "Lord Jesus Christ*." "When the

* 2 Thess. i. 8.

"heavens,

LECT. XVIII.

"heavens, being on fire, ſhall be diſ-
"ſolved, and the elements ſhall melt
"with fervent heat*." "Conſider this
"ye that forget God, leſt He tear you
"in pieces, and there be none to de-
"liver†."

"Now, of the things which we have
"ſpoken; this is the ſum: We have
"ſuch an high prieſt, who is ſet on
"the right-hand of the throne of the
"Majeſty in the heavens; a miniſ-
"ter of the ſanctuary, and of the true
"tabernacle; which the Lord hath
"pitched, and not man. For every
"high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts
"and ſacrifices: wherefore it is of ne-
"ceſſity that this man have ſomewhat
"to offer. But now hath he obtained
"a more excellent miniſtry, by how
"much alſo he is the mediator of a bet-
"ter covenant, which was eſtabliſhed
"upon better promiſes. For this is the
"covenant that I will make with the

* 2 Pet. iii. 12. † Pſal. l. 22.

"houſe

" houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith
" the Lord; I will put my laws in
" their minds, and write them in their
" hearts; and I will be to them a God,
" and they ſhall be to me a people.
" For I will be merciful to their un-
" righteouſneſs, and their ſins and their
" iniquities I will remember no more. In
" that he ſaith, A new covenant, he
" hath made the firſt old. Now that
" which decayeth and waxeth old, is
" ready to vaniſh away*." — And all
" this is of God, who hath made us
" able miniſters of the New Teſta-
" ment, not of the letter, but of the
" ſpirit: for the letter killeth, but the
" ſpirit giveth life. But if the miniſ-
" tration of death, written and engrav-
" en in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the
" children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly
" behold the face of Moſes, for the glory
" of his countenance, which glory was
" to be done away; how, ſhall not
" the miniſtration of the Spirit be

* Heb. viii. 1, &c.

" rather

LECT. XVIII.

"rather glorious? For if the miniſtration "of condemnation be glory, much more "doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs "exceed in glory. For even that which "was made glorious, had no glory in this "reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that ex-"celleth. For if that which is done away "was glorious, much more that which "remaineth is glorious*."

We are aſſembled this night, my brethren, the ſubjects of the Law; the ſtudents of the Goſpel; the expectants of Chriſt's ſecond appearance. "See then, that ye reſiſt not him that "ſpeaketh from heaven." Ye are happily ſet free from the law of ceremonies; happily ſubjected to the law of morality; and "not without law "unto Chriſt." "Stand faſt therefore "in that liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath "made you free." Enjoy, and improve what you have; affect not more than a wiſe providence permits. Look forward to that day, when you ſhall join

* 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c.

an

an innumerable company of angels, Yourſelves like the angels of God in heaven; ſhall aſſociate with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, yourſelves perfect as they are; ſhall add your voices to the celeſtial choir, in ſinging "the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb;" ſhall ſee the face of God without dying; and hear his voice without quaking for fear. "Now, unto him that loved us, and "waſhed us from our ſins in his "own blood, and hath made us kings "and prieſts unto God and his Father; "to him be glory and dominion for "ever and ever. Amen."

END OF VOLUME THIRD.