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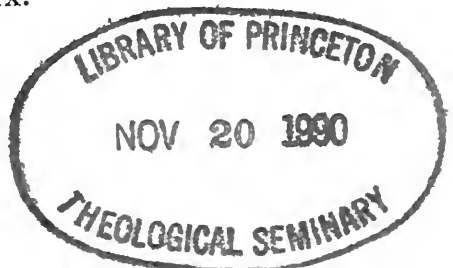
1829

THE
SCOTTISH
COMMUNION SERVICE ;
WITH
THE PUBLIC SERVICES
FOR
THE FAST DAY, SATURDAY, AND MONDAY,
BEFORE AND AFTER
COMMUNION.

BY THE REV. A. G. CARSTAIRS,
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TO

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ONE OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE HONOURABLE
EAST INDIA COMPANY,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A MARK

OF THE AUTHOR'S AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM,

AND HEARTFELT GRATITUDE.

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PREFACE.

WHETHER the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be considered as an act of obedience to the last request of the blessed Jesus,—or as a token of our grateful remembrance, our ardent affection, for him who hath done and suffered so much for us,—or as a communion we are permitted to hold with him in glory, and with all his faithful followers on earth, and in heaven,—or as an ordinance sealing to us all the blessings and promises of his gospel, tending to renew the heart and the life, and giving us a foretaste of those pure and eternal joys that await us, as his disciples, beyond death and the grave;—it is assuredly not only the most solemn and impressive, but also the most affecting and the most soothing,—the most animating and the most joyful service, in which mortal man can be engaged.

The Church of Scotland has appointed no particular times or seasons for the dispensation of this

holy ordinance, nor deemed its very frequent recurrence calculated to produce more deep and lasting impressions upon the heart.

In most parishes it is dispensed only once, and in very few oftener than twice a-year;—always in public, on the Lord's day, and at the time most suitable to the convenience of each separate parish.

It is intimated from the pulpit some weeks previous to its dispensation, and the intimation is accompanied with a short address to the people, regarding the nature of the ordinance—the weighty reasons which ought to lead them to join in its celebration—and the conduct and feelings that ought to characterize those who propose to engage in such a service. Those young people who intend to communicate for the first time are requested to wait upon the clergyman, for the purpose of undergoing a private examination, and receiving spiritual advice, before being admitted to communion.

For such a service, it is true, every Christian ought to be at all times prepared,—every day of his life ought to be a day of preparation for holding communion with his God and his Saviour: But, alas! while we are in the world, its cares and concerns will break in upon the every-day medi-

tations of the most sincerely devout,—and we may be convinced of the wisdom of appointing seasons, when, all worldly occupations being thrown aside, the mind may, without distraction, examine itself in the presence of its Maker.

The Thursday immediately preceding the Communion Sabbath, is accordingly held as a solemn fast, on which there is public worship; and all ordinary business is suspended. The afternoon of Saturday is also set apart for public worship; and upon these days, after divine service, tokens of admission are distributed to intending communicants, by the minister and elders of the parish.

The parish churches in Scotland are generally so constructed, as to admit of a table of considerable length being placed in front of the pulpit on sacramental occasions; and the communicants receive the sacrament seated at this table. After the more ordinary service of the Lord's day is performed, the sacramental elements are placed by the elders upon the communion table. The minister then reads from Scripture his warrant for dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and in an address, (commonly called Fencing the Tables), he warns his hearers of the danger of partaking in it unworthily, and describes the qualifi-

cations of those who ought, and of those who ought not, to “eat of that bread and drink of that cup,” now placed before them. He then descends from the pulpit, and places himself at the head of the table, where, after offering up prayer and thanksgiving to God, he delivers a short address to those who are to communicate; and, repeating the words of the institution, he breaks the bread, and presents it to those of them seated nearest him, by whom it is passed to the rest in succession. The cup is presented and passed in the same manner; the elders attending upon the communicants, and receiving the elements at the foot of the table. The act of communion is commonly performed in solemn silence; after which the clergyman again shortly addresses those who have communicated; and, while some verses of a Psalm are sung, they depart from the table, at which other intending communicants place themselves. All the tables, except the first, are generally served by the ministers from neighbouring parishes, invited to assist upon the occasion.

After all who wished to partake of the Holy Sacrament have in this manner communicated, the solemn service is concluded by another address from the pulpit, and by prayer and praise to God.

The forenoon of the following day is generally set apart for public worship and thanksgiving.

In giving this account of the manner in which this Sacrament is dispensed in the Church of Scotland, for the information of those who are unacquainted with her forms, the Author feels he has to apologize for what, to those who are familiar with these forms, may appear an unnecessarily minute description. He had once an idea of prefixing Instructions preparatory to the Sacrament; but so much has been ably written upon this subject by members of our own and other churches, that he considers it unnecessary to extend, to greater size, this volume, which he has been, for some years past, intending to publish in its present small form, as a specimen of the public services connected with the Communion in our Church. He has only to add, that the deep religious feelings of his countrymen are manifested by the general propriety and solemnity of their deportment upon such occasions; and that perhaps the most striking, and the most pleasing view of their national character is exhibited, when all ranks and conditions are humbly mingled together in the performance of this most solemn service of the sanctuary.

That pure and undefiled religion may long flourish and prevail amongst them, and that their Communion Sabbaths may be a delight—holy, honourable, and acceptable to the Lord—is the Author's earnest wish and prayer.

ANSTRUTHER-WESTER,

17th October 1829.

FAST DAY SERVICE.

THE
SCOTTISH
COMMUNION SERVICE.

FAST DAY—FORENOON.

PSALM cvi. 1—5.

GIVE praise and thanks unto the Lord,
For bountiful is he :
His tender mercy doth endure
Unto eternity.
God's mighty works who can express,
Or show forth all his praise ?
Blessed are they that judgment keep,
And justly do always.
Remember me, Lord, with that love
Which thou to thine dost bear ;
With thy salvation, O my God,
To visit me draw near :

That I thy chosen's good may see,
And in their joy rejoice;
And may, with thine inheritance,
Triumph with cheerful voice.

We, with our fathers, sinned have,
And of iniquity
Too long we have the workers been;
We have done wickedly.

PRAYER.

O LORD, thou art great, and greatly to be feared! Thou dwellest on high, and thy kingdom ruleth over all. By thy word, this world was made; by thy command, it was established; by thy protecting care, it is sustained. The heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament showeth forth thy handywork. Though to us clouds and darkness are round about thee, yet thou coverest thyself with light, as with a garment: though our mortal eyes cannot behold thee, yet thou fillest the universe with thy presence; and on thy unseen arm all nature depends. To whom, O Lord, can we go but unto thee! Upon whom can we depend, but upon thee alone! Vain would be our trust in the gods whom the heathen worship: they are

vanity, and shall perish with those that made them. —Vain would be our confidence in men, or in the sons of princes ; for their breath departs, and they return to the dust whence they were taken.—Vain would be our dependence upon any of the objects that surround us ; for, like ourselves, they are only the works of thy hands, and, like ourselves, they shall pass away. But, amidst all the revolutions of nature, and the decay of worlds, thou remainest, without variableness or shadow of turning, the same to-day, yesterday, and forever. We, who have our foundation in the dust, and dwell amidst the changes and vicissitudes of time, would eagerly draw near unto thee, the God of eternity ; we would lay hold on the Rock of Ages, and place all our hope and all our confidence upon the unchangeable Jehovah. Yet, alas ! O Lord, when we reflect upon thy perfection and our own frailty,—upon thy spotless holiness and our own pollution,—we feel our unworthiness to come into thy presence. Thou madest us upright, but we have found out many evil inventions : Thou madest us holy ; but the gold has become dim, the fine gold has been changed : Thou madest us wise ; but we have been wise to do evil : Thou madest us to serve thee ; but we have obeyed unrighteousness :

Thou madest us to enjoy thy presence; but we have wandered upon the mountains of vanity, far from thee, and our father's house: Thou madest us immortal; but, by reason of iniquity, death reigneth over us. Alas! O Lord, when we consider our ways, and endeavour to number our shortcomings and transgressions, we shrink from the accusations of our own consciences: But thou art greater than our consciences, and knowest all things; and how shall we lift up our eyes to the place where thine honour dwelleth! Would thousands of burnt-offerings, or ten thousands of rivers of oil render us pure in thy sight? Or would our first-born, laid upon thy altars, atone for the sin of our souls?—Blessed be thy great and holy name, thou hast not left us to a hopeless despair, and fearful looking for of judgment. When sacrifice thou wouldst not receive; when all that we, or angels had to offer, would have been an insufficient ransom; thou laidest our help upon One that was mighty to save: Thou sparedst not the Son of thy love, but sentest him, as a merciful High-priest, to enter for us into the holy place, that, by the sacrifice of himself, he might remove the sentence of condemnation that had been passed against us. We would adore thine infinite goodness, that,

through the merits of this sacrifice, thou hast attached a value to our sincere repentance; that, through the merits of this sacrifice, thou hast given a merit to our imperfect but earnest endeavours to serve thee; that, through the merits of this sacrifice, thou hast given us confidence to call upon thee on earth, and the blessed hope of dwelling with thee in glory, when time shall be no more.

Enable us, O Lord, to live as becometh the objects of such unbounded mercy, and the children of such exalted hopes. Walking as the redeemed of the Lord, may we serve thee with that perfect love which casteth out fear. May we come unto thee as children to a father, able, and willing, and ready to help us; and, amidst the trials, and sorrows, and apprehensions of this our earthly pilgrimage, may we cast all our cares upon thee, who hast cared for us, and hast crowned us with loving-kindness, and with tender mercies.

Encouraged by the blessed assurance, that, through Jesus, he that worketh righteousness shall be accepted; that our services, imperfect as they are, and incapable of affording us any claim to thy favour, receive, through his merits, a value in thy sight, and the promise of an eternal reward in the heavens; may we give all diligence to make our

calling and election sure, by adding to our faith, and to our firm reliance upon him, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; that these things being in us, and abounding, we may be found neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Assured that thou art, in Jesus, reconciling a guilty world unto thyself; not imputing unto men their trespasses, but, for his sake, extending pardon to the penitent, and calling upon men everywhere to repent, that their sins may be blotted out from the book of thy remembrance; may we, receiving the merciful offer with gratitude and joy, think upon our ways, turn our feet to thy testimonies, and lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. Enable us, O Lord, with all humility, and candour, and earnestness, to search our hearts and our ways before thee. May we no longer be at rest in our iniquities, giving way to delusion, and saying Peace, peace, where there can be no peace; but awaken our consciences, O Lord, that they may point to us how often we have rebelled against thee, grieved thee by our transgressions, and wearied thee by our iniquities. May we bring the whole of our conduct into comparison, not

with what we hear and see in the world around us, but with what we read in thy holy word, which is quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Enable every one of us, O Lord, to discover the plague of his own heart, the passion that rules, and the sin that most easily besets him: and may this day of humiliation be such a fast as thou hast chosen; may it be to all of us a day, not only of mourning over our transgressions, but of turning away from them for ever.

We are weak in ourselves, but do thou, O Lord, who hast graciously promised to make perfect thy strength in our weakness, aid us by thy Holy Spirit to subdue every unruly passion, to root out every corrupt affection, and to fulfil every pious and virtuous resolution. Do thou pour out upon us a spirit of grace, and supplication, and repentance. Casting our sins at the foot of the cross of Jesus, who is able and willing to forgive them, may we henceforth be enabled, as his disciples, to walk in newness of life; taking his yoke upon us, and learning of him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled. May we be found welcome

attendants upon his ordinances on earth; and, persevering in faith and in holiness to the end, may we, having finished our course, be found amongst the happy number of those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, as a preparation for dwelling amidst the brightness of thy glory, and serving thee day and night in thy temple above.

We thank thee, O Lord, for all thy temporal mercies toward us. We bless thee, that in mercy thou hast appointed the place and fixed the bounds of our habitation. Thou hast not made the wilderness our home, nor the barren land our dwelling: Thou hast not mingled us among the heathen, to learn their works and serve their idols,—to walk in darkness—aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise,—without thee, and without hope in the world; but thou hast caused us to dwell in a land of light and valley of vision; and, amidst the peace, and comforts, and security of civilized life, hast made us to rejoice in thee the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation,—having thy word as a light to our feet, thy law as a guide to our hearts, and the blessed gospel of thy son Jesus Christ as the cherished treasure of our immortal

souls. We bless thee for the near prospect thou art giving us of solemnly testifying our faith in that gospel, and our love toward our once crucified, but now highly exalted Redeemer, by showing forth his death, according to his last request. We earnestly entreat thee, O Lord, who searchest and knowest our hearts, to illumine what is dark in us—to pardon what is evil—to strengthen what is good—and to render us worthy of “doing this in remembrance of him.” We bless thee for this opportunity of serving thee in thy house of prayer. Do thou mercifully pardon those who find no pleasure in treading thy courts; may they yet joyfully be led with the multitude who keep holy days. Be graciously present with all who are necessarily detained from thus publicly waiting upon thee: May they find, to their joyful experience, that thou art not confined to temples erected by the hands of men. Aid us in speaking and in hearing from thy holy word; and accept of us, for the sake of Jesus, our strength and Redeemer.—Amen.

SERMON.

JEREMIAH, viii. 20.—*The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
and we are not saved.*

IN the beginning of the seventh chapter of this book, we find a powerful exhortation to repentance, given, at the command of God, by the prophet to his countrymen: “ Thus sayeth the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.—Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings,—if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour,—if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt,—then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.” But, alas! his words were to them as water spilt upon the ground. With un-availing sorrow he had to witness, in his own day, their utter disregard to the affectionate heavenly

warning; and, carried by the spirit of prophecy unto future times, he had the ingratitude, the obstinate and increasing depravity of this abandoned people placed before him. He saw accumulated, as in one heap, the sad series of their iniquities, and denounced the wrath of God against their impenitence; he viewed them, after despising all the enticements of divine mercy, plunged into that ruin—that helpless misery, which their crimes so amply merited. His heart sickened at the awful picture of what awaited his deluded countrymen. “When I would comfort myself against sorrow,” said he, “my heart is faint within me.” Placing himself for a moment in their stead, he adopted the language of despair so natural to their situation, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

Let us consider these words as descriptive and prophetic of the appalling fate of God’s ancient chosen people,—and as containing a solemn and impressive warning to all mankind, of the danger of delaying repentance.

I. The expression of the prophet is figurative. The kingdom of Israel appears to the eye of his imagination as a tender shrub planted by the hand

of God in the midst of the desert—protected by his peculiar care, nourished by the sun's benignant influence, and watered by the dews of heaven, till it stood in full luxuriance the mightiest tree of the forest; yet, after all the culture bestowed, after the sunshine of summer is ended, and harvest is past, the time when its fruit ought to have repaid the care that reared it to perfection, it stands a barren and unprofitable symbol of ingratitude, ready to be cut down as a worthless cumberer of the ground.

Israel is beautifully described by the Psalmist under the same similitude: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it; thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land: the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars: she sent her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? the boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it: it is burnt with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance."

In the word of God we learn how well the history of the Jews accords with this description. The descendants of Abraham, weak and inconsiderable, were bent beneath a galling yoke of slavery in the land of Egypt. To their savage taskmasters mercy was unknown; the horrors of slavery were not mitigated even by the artless affection of infant innocence; their helpless children, doomed to death, were mercilessly torn from their agonized bosoms, and parental tears and groans were made the sport of a barbarous people. From the overwhelming power of the king of Egypt, no mortal aid could work their deliverance; but God himself led them out, with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm: he divided the waves of the ocean before them, and made a path through the waste and howling wilderness; he poured water from the rock, and fed them with bread from heaven; by his visible presence he conducted them, through their weary pilgrimage, to that land which he had promised to their fathers; he cast out the heathen, and planted them there; he himself condescended to be their lawgiver and their king: every enemy was humbled before them; they were raised to a high rank amongst the nations of the earth; they were dreaded in war,

admired in peace, and courted as a rock of defence in the day of danger.

But it was not by prosperity and power alone, that as a nation they were distinguished: The Almighty chose them as a peculiar people, and styled himself the God of Israel: he chose them as a nation in which his worship was to be preserved in the midst of a world overshadowed by the gloom of superstition and idolatry. From amid the blackness of darkness, and the awful thunders of Mount Sinai, they received a revelation from on high, showing what was good, and what the Lord required of them. The ark of the covenant remained in the tabernacle of Jacob, and the candle of the Lord shone on the hill of Zion, as a cheering beacon to a benighted world, directing their view to that place, from whence a brighter ray was to beam forth to lighten every land. God was the guardian and the glory of his people Israel—sending prophets, inspired by his Spirit, to instruct them in his ways, to reprove their vices, and encourage and strengthen their virtue by his gracious promises; employing all the events of his providence, and often the supernatural agency of his Almighty arm, to guide them in the way of his commandments; blessing them with peace, and prosperity,

and happiness, while they served him with a perfect heart and a willing mind;—and when they rebelled against him, chastening them only as a father chasteneth his children; giving them up to their enemies, only till they were taught to remember that the God of Israel was the only true God; sending them as captives among a strange people, only till, weeping by the rivers of Babylon, their hearts yearned again to behold Jerusalem, and to sing the song of the Lord in their native land. Thus were they led by their heavenly Father, till, in the fulness of time, HE, who had been promised to Abraham, and whom their prophets had hailed as the Redeemer of Israel and the desire of all nations, descended to be the glory of their temple:—He, to whom was given, by the Ancient of Days, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him, condescended to be the shepherd of the flock of Israel: He, to the glories of whose reign prophecy pointed for thousands of years, was found amongst them in fashion as a man and a brother, that he might lead and guide them to all truth, and be the end and perfection of their law. Certainly God hath not dealt so in mercy and loving-kindness with any people. As

St Paul expresses it, “ theirs was the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God; theirs were the patriarchs, theirs were the promises, and theirs, according to the flesh, was Christ, who is over all.”

This view of their history is only an illustration of their ingratitude. Time would fail me to enumerate the many instances of that ingratitude, from the period when they corrupted themselves in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, “ Make us gods to go before us,” to that hour which you are preparing to commemorate—that awful hour, when the sun was veiled in darkness, and the earth shaken to its centre, by the consummation of it upon Mount Calvary.

You learn the ingratitude of that highly favoured people from the lamentations of their prophets. “ My well-beloved,” saith Isaiah, “ hath a vineyard in a fruitful hill; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vines, and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge betwixt me and my vineyard;—what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked

that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"—"The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: And he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."—"Why is this people of Jerusalem," said Jeremiah, "slidden back with a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spoke not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?' Every one turned to his course as the horse rusheth to the battle: yea, the stork in heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."—"Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob! what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?"—"I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; why, then, art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Alas! how amply did they merit the description given of them by these prophets, and many ages after by Jesus himself, when he exclaimed, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou

that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee ! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye *would not!*” And, again, when journeying to Jerusalem for the last time, he came near and beheld the ancient city of David arrayed in all its splendour, defended by its towers, adorned by its palaces, and its lofty mount Zion crowned with the glorious temple of God,—regardless of what he himself was there to suffer, and sadly meditating on the near and awful desolation which the iniquities, the hardened ingratitude, of its inhabitants was preparing for it, with heartfelt pity he wept over it, “ saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid from thine eyes : for the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” The end of their probation was at hand. Soon did that deluded people, who had forgotten and abused every mercy, persecuted and slain

every prophet, rejected every call to repentance, and advanced with rapid strides in the path of iniquity,—soon did they, wilfully hardening their hearts, fill up the measure of that iniquity, by imbruing their hands in the blood of their blessed Messiah, exulting in the deed, and crying with enthusiasm, “ His blood be upon us and our children !” Then, at last, was the door of mercy shut, and no place left for repentance. Then did the Almighty withdraw the light of his countenance from the house of Jacob, and send affliction, such as had not been from the beginning of the creation. The period foreseen by the prophet had arrived. Their harvest was past,—their summer was ended,—and they were not saved. They are at this day scattered as sheep without a shepherd : “ The sceptre is departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from Israel ;” their temple is level with the dust ; the city of David is trodden down of the Gentiles ;—and yet far distant may be the day when “ God shall visit and redeem his people,” and lead them back to Mount Zion, rejoicing in that light and salvation which their fathers rejected with scorn.

II. But it is not in the nation of the Jews alone, that we are led to contemplate the ingratitude of man to his Maker. The whole human race may indeed be called the vineyard of the Lord, and the children of Adam his pleasant plant; and what could have been done more to his vineyard, that he hath not done in it? He formed man after his own image, holy, upright, and pure; he made him to dwell in his presence amidst the delights of Paradise; and, even when fallen and sinful, he did not forsake him, nor suffer his posterity to wander in despair: he remembered mercy; he doomed none to be the slaves and victims of iniquity; he was not willing that any should perish. While, from the beginning of time, he warned them that virtue would be rewarded by his love, and that sin alone would debar them forever from his presence, from life, and from happiness; he placed good and evil before them, and said, "Choose ye whom ye will serve:" he left them freedom of action, and gave them reason and conscience to direct them in their choice. To one favoured portion of the human race he gave a *direct* revelation of his will; and upon the hearts of all men he implanted a law, that those, who had no written law, might be a law unto them-

selves. In mercy he appointed the place, and fixed the bounds of their habitation; and by the ordinary course of his providence, as well as by the warnings of conscience, taught them that misery was the attendant on vice, and happiness the companion of virtue; and, in the fulness of time, he sent his own Son into the world, “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” that, to a messenger clothed in the power and splendour of divinity, all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, might listen with reverence, and be led, by his pure and holy laws, in the paths of righteousness and peace.

But as men, with hearts wounded by the remembrance of past iniquities, and deeply conscious of their inability to offer any compensation to offended omnipotence, without hope, and without an aim, considering their eternal doom as already written, must have sunk under a load of despair into a state of inaction, and sickened at the race that Jesus set before them; therefore this exalted Messenger came also to proclaim peace and forgiveness to the sinner, whatever his transgressions had been, who should by repentance lay aside his iniquities, and return to his God. He sealed our pardon with his blood; he died,

that he might deliver us from sin ; he rose again, that he might lead us unto righteousness ; and he promises the powerful aid of his Holy Spirit, that we may walk with confidence and delight in the path of new obedience. This blessed assurance of assistance and forgiveness, through a Redeemer, was the last and best gift of God to erring mortals ; it removed the gloom of despair, and opened wide the gate of heaven to all who chose to enter, by repentance for the past and a patient continuance in well-doing for the future, the *only* way that, through the merits of our Saviour, leads to glory, honour, and immortality. “ What, then, could have been done more to his vineyard, that he hath not done in it ? Wherefore, when he looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ? He looked for judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteousness, but behold a cry ! ” Sin still continues to mar the order and harmony at first established in the creation of God. Instead of scenes of peace, and love, and purity ; we there behold wrath slaying its thousands, and intemperance its ten thousands ; we behold the meek and the humble trampled in the dust by the proud and powerful ; we behold the helpless groaning under the yoke of the triumphant oppressor ; we behold

the unoffending pursued by the hatred and calumny of the envious; we behold the unsuspecting a prey to the cunning and deceitful; and we behold the injured and oppressed calling for justice in vain. In short, we behold this earth, after all that hath been done for those who dwell therein, still the habitation of cruelty, and, by reason of iniquity, “the whole creation still groaning and travailing in pain.” Well may we mourn over the general depravity of our race—it is a scene to make angels weep,—but, alas! how unprofitable are our reflections and lamentations, if they impel not every individual “to repent him of his evil, saying, what have I done!” How many are there, who weep and groan over the *universal corruption* of humanity, while they hold fast their *own iniquity*, and will not let it go, but roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongues! Christians, while you mourn over this depravity of the human race, turn your thoughts inward—let every individual examine his *own* heart, and discover by what share of that universal depravity it is stained and disfigured; for, most assuredly, every man shall bear his own burden.

Sin is progressive. It grows not up in one night, like the gourd that shaded the prophet Jonah; but, like a loathsome weed springing from

seed unnoticed in the earth, it is for a while of lowly growth, but imperceptibly it extends its root and its branches, gradually withering the fairer productions around,—and, if unobserved, or disregarded by the husbandman, spreading far and wide, it will gather strength to blast the hopes of harvest. Look not, then, on its progress as one unconcerned in the consequences; rest not satisfied with the general exclamation, that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” but eagerly examine what progress your own heart has actually made. The progress of the wicked is well described by the Psalmist, “He walketh in the counsel of the ungodly,—he standeth in the way of sinners,—he sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Consider at which of these stages *you* have arrived.

Have you entered upon the business of life, with a heart stored with religious and virtuous principles, and a conscience shrinking from the appearance of evil? But, loosened from that restraint, which parental care and affection imposed upon you, have you, in your intercourse with the world, unfortunately fallen in the way of those, who have not the fear of God continually before their eyes,—who have made some advances in the paths of vice,—who at times have unguard-

edly given way to their passions,—and deliberate, as it were, whether they should serve them or their Maker? And have you begun to walk in the counsel of these?—to be less anxious to shun the appearance of evil, and to feel less abhorrence at the path of iniquity? Pause, my young friends, at the very entrance of the road that leadeth to destruction. Ponder on the counsels you have received from those who loved you as their own souls: perhaps their own experience made them feel how necessary their counsels were. Listen to the voice of conscience; it is the voice of God your heavenly Father. Retain the modest blush of innocence and worth; it will form the brightest jewel in your heavenly crown.

But have you already made a greater progress in the path of iniquity? Have you begun to feel little pleasure in the way of virtue, and the service of God? Do you avoid those who speak to you of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come? Do you feel an inclination to stand in the way of sinners—in the way of those who have wholly devoted themselves to the service of iniquity? Without as yet being able entirely to disregard the warnings of conscience, and the threatenings of the gospel, do you admit them only as unwelcome visitors,

—as untimely interrupters of your ill-founded joy? Do you say of them in your heart, as Ahab said of Micaiah the son of Imlah, “I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me but evil?” and, like Felix, do you send them away, till a more convenient season?—Reflect, then, upon the dangerous length you have gone; think upon your ways, and turn your feet again unto the testimonies of the Lord. The door of his mercy yet stands open,—he is still calling and entreating you to enter and partake of his loving-kindness. These warnings of conscience—these threatenings of his word, against which you wish to shut your ear, and harden your heart—are his gracious messengers, saying, “Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?” Listen at last to their friendly voice; they will direct you to those rivers of pleasure that flow not through the land of iniquity, and to that peace of mind which cannot dwell under the tents of sin.

But, alas! have you arrived at a yet greater degree of depravity? Have you already succeeded in banishing reflection? Have you put conscience to silence, and rejected and despised the gracious word of God? Have you placed yourself in the seat of the scornful? Do you now delight in the low and childish wit levelled

against that religion, which, in happier days, supported and rejoiced your heart? Can you applaud that contemptible buffoonery, by which its most solemn ordinances are attempted to be brought into ridicule? And, devoting to your impious revelry that sacred day which God hath set apart for himself, do you drown every rational feeling in intemperance, and join in the loud and senseless laugh of defiance against death—and judgment—and eternity? Upon what a frightful precipice do you then stand! “If they believe not Moses and the prophets,” said Jesus of the infidels of his time; “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one should rise from the dead.” Difficult, indeed, will be your return to the way of virtue, and religion, and peace! But, *even yet*, the awful sentence may not have gone forth, that you “shall die in your iniquities;” and, if one ray of light, however feeble, still remains unextinguished in your bosom, cherish it as a heavenly flame—rekindle it, (God hath promised, and will assuredly grant you his assistance to do so), rekindle it, and walk by its light, before the night of total darkness cometh, wherein no man can work. Would you carry your madness and your folly even to the

grave? or, hoping that, on a *deathbed*, you will make your peace with God, will you still go on to sin, that his mercy may the more abound? That resolution is, of itself, a sufficient proof that your repentance will not proceed from a godly sorrow. Would you take courage from the example of the penitent thief upon the cross? You are nowhere assured that he repented *there*. Perhaps his own heart smote him for his wickedness, before he was condemned by human laws. Perhaps, in the confinement of a loathsome dungeon, he had considered his ways, and returned to his God, before he was led forth to Mount Calvary. From *his* example, would you take courage to delay your repentance? *One* of the two thieves crucified along with our Saviour, did indeed expire with the blessed assurance of being with his Lord in Paradise—but, oh! forget not that the *other*, while the cold dews of death were gathering on his countenance, while every member was writhing with pain, and his lips quivering with agony, spent his last feeble breath in uttering curses and blasphemies against the Son of God!—In such a scene, can you find any encouragement for the presumption, that your deathbed will be the scene of sincere and acceptable repentance?—

Your deathbed may be a scene of incapacity, and madness—it may be a scene of the deepest despair—the hour may then arrive, when you shall be forced in agony to exclaim, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!” You stifled the still small voice of conscience; but it may then return, and speak to you in awful thunder. You throw aside the word of God, as a burdensome taskmaster, but it may then be deeply impressed upon your memory, and (like Jesus to the woman of Samaria) it may point out to you “all the things that ever you did;”—that in them you may read your own condemnation. In such a scene you may call upon your Saviour, but he declares in his gospel that he never knew you;—you may turn to your friends, but find them all miserable comforters;—you may have beside you the minister of religion, but how can he speak peace where there is no peace? He may pray for you—he may weep for you—but he can do no more!

Should you be rescued from such a scene upon earth, by a sudden and unexpected dissolution; what, alas! will this avail, if it awaits you in that place “where the worm dieth not,”—where the horrors of anticipation are exchanged, only for the inexpressibly more appalling horrors of rea-

lity—where there is no hope—and from whence there is no return!

How, then, and by what perversion of spirit do thousands, fully aware of the awful fate that awaits the wilful, and hardened, and obstinate offender, refuse to cast off their sins by repentance—to “seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near?” It is merely because, with all they witness of the misery occasioned by iniquity, and all they hear of the dreadful threatenings of Omnipotence against the workers thereof, they will not or *dare not* examine their own hearts to mark its progress there—because they will not, or *dare not*, allow their minds to contemplate that hell of horror and despair, which is the sure and certain wages of iniquity.

They exclaim, “there is a lion in the way!”—As the traveller, who, in the midst of a trackless wilderness, wanders on delighted with the varied scenery, and heedless of the danger around, till he unexpectedly finds his progress arrested by the appalling roar of that monster of the desert, and beholding him opposed on the path, in all his fierceness and his strength, staring upon his devoted prey, instantly loses all the courage and reflection necessary for his escape, and in mute

and breathless horror shuts his eyes to his inevitable and merciless fate,—so it is with many of the workers of iniquity. They proceed on the flowery path, which they have chosen, disregarding the warnings of conscience;—its still small voice is put to silence, amidst the ever new amusements, the ever varying concerns, the ever enticing pleasures of this earthly scene;—they advance step by step in the giddy career of vice, adding crime to crime, till the mass of their iniquities becomes so frightful, that they have neither the courage to reckon them, nor the strength to combat them, nor the resolution to lay hold on the only hope of escape from the terrors of the Lord set in array against them. Trembling at last on the brink of the grave, they vainly endeavour to avert their reflections from the unutterable woe beyond it,—that they may rush blindfold on destruction.

To avoid this fearful consummation, how many encouraging offers, and enticing promises, and earnest expostulations, and affectionate entreaties, are made to sinners in the holy word of God! “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways,

for why will you die?"—"The Lord waiteth to be gracious, he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live."—"He is in Christ Jesus reconciling a guilty world unto himself; not imputing unto men their trespasses."—"Come unto me," said that exalted Messenger, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—"Him that cometh unto me, I will in no ways cast out."—"We pray you," say his holy apostles, "we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—"Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

The light of nature tells you, that repentance is the only atonement you can offer for your past offences; but it cannot assure you that, at the bar of strict and impartial justice, your repentance would be an atonement *sufficient to cancel* the punishment due to your crimes. The gospel *alone* gives the assurance, that, united with faith in Christ Jesus, it will have the blessed effect of blotting them out forever; of restoring you to the likeness and the favour of God, and making you meet to be partakers in the inheritance of the saints in light. Oh, reject no longer its gracious

offers; walk no more in the paths that lead to grief and despair; but turn your feet unto the testimonies of the Lord; and, casting your sins at the foot of the cross of that Jesus who hath promised to forgive them, henceforth walk as his disciples in newness of life. Let the Spirit of God, working henceforth with your spirit, change your corrupt affections. Thus shall every faculty of your soul rejoice in the consciousness of renewed strength.—Your will, that was enslaved by furious passions, shall no longer groan under their shameful tyranny, but exult in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made it free. Your understanding, that was blinded by prejudice, wrested by temptation, and intoxicated by false pleasure, throwing off its disgraceful trammels, shall rejoice in the full experience of its powers in the light of the Lord. To you light shall indeed arise out of darkness, and joy out of despair.

With all your affections placed upon your God and your Redeemer, with all your desires fixed upon heaven and its eternal delights, you will be prepared to sit down as acceptable guests at the table of the Lord upon earth, and to join that assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, who serve him day

and night, amidst the eternal delights and glories of his temple on high.

PRAYER.

WE again draw near unto thee, O Lord, as children to a father, able, and ready, and willing to help us. Bring home thy word to our conscience; write thy law upon our inward parts; and teach us to bring into comparison with it, all the actions of our lives, the words of our mouths, and the thoughts of our hearts; lest, measuring ourselves by ourselves, and walking in the sight of our eyes, and judging our ways by our own partial feelings, we should fall, by little and little, until we arrive at that state of hardihood in sin, and security in iniquity, and rebellion against thee, which leadeth only to a fearful looking-for of judgment, and of wrath against the day of wrath. Oh! let not any of us, amidst the horrors of a deathbed, turn ourselves to the right hand and to the left for comfort, without being able to find it. Let none of us leave this earthly scene with the language of despair upon our dying lips, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!" but enable all of us, O Lord, to seek thee while thou

mayst be found. May we eagerly examine our own hearts, and, marking every step of our progress in the path that leadeth to destruction, may we, with fear and trembling, make haste to turn our feet again unto thy testimonies;—imploring, through the merits of our Redeemer, pardon for the past, and strength for the future; that we may henceforth walk in the way of thy commandments, rejoicing in the light of thy reconciled countenance, and enjoying the blessedness of those who walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful; but whose delight is in thy laws, and who do meditate upon thy law day and night. Having lived the life of the righteous, may our deathbed be like his—a scene of peace, and of hope, leading to an eternity of joy unspeakable and full of glory!

We pray, O Lord, for a continuance of all our temporal mercies. May thy favour rest upon the lands of our nativity, Great Britain and Ireland, with all their colonies and dependencies. We remember with gratitude and praise, the civil and religious privileges which thou hast conferred upon our fathers, and upon us; and we would earnestly beseech thee to hand them down unimpaired to

our latest posterity. Do thou still rejoice over us for good. May our conduct be that of a people highly favoured of thee the Lord; and may we find, to our happy experience, that righteousness exalteth a nation. Abundantly bless our gracious sovereign;—spare him long, as the father and the friend of a loyal and a loving people; and, when thou hast served the purposes for which thou hast exalted him to reign over us, may he exchange an earthly for a heavenly crown. Bless all the members of the royal family;—may they be patterns of all that is great and good; that when earthly honours pass away, they may enjoy unfading glory in thy kingdom above. Counsel our king's counsellors, and teach his senators wisdom; that they may be enabled to watch over the interests of the nation, and to promote the comfort, the virtue, and the happiness of thy people. Endow the judges of our land with integrity and honour, that the poor as well as the rich,—the humble and obscure as well as the elevated and the powerful, may look up to them with confidence, as the guardians of their rights. Awed by no greatness,—swayed by no favour,—blinded by no prejudice,—may they impartially dispense justice betwixt man and man, being a terror to evil doers, and a

praise and protection to them that do well. Endow all in authority over us with the right spirit of their station; that we, under them, may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. Bless the churches of Christ planted in our land. We more particularly pray for the church established in that portion of it, where our lot is cast. May thy peace be within the walls of our Zion; guard her from the attacks of infidelity, the inroads of superstition, and the workings of a zeal without knowledge. May she have Christian purity for a defence; may she have Christian charity for her chief ornament—extending her good will to those who conscientiously differ, her forbearance to those who oppose themselves, and her kind regard and fellowship to all, of every denomination, who are of the household of faith. Do thou mercifully increase that household.—Bless, in as far as conducive to thy glory, and the good of mankind, all the human means employed to extend the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom; and may many who now sit in darkness be brought to dwell in the light of the Lord.

Bless this parish and congregation: May those amongst us who are clothed in civil authority, be upright and exemplary; may the rich be kind

and condescending; may the poor be industrious, and content with the lot assigned to them by thee. Prosper all our worldly concerns and interests, and enable us, O Lord, to render them subservient to those concerns which are spiritual, and those interests which are eternal. May every house be a house of God, and may the united praises of every family ascend unto thee, their heavenly Father.

We pray for our friends:—May we long be blessed in the society of those who are near, and in the affectionate remembrance of those who are afar off;—though mountains, and deserts, and oceans lie betwixt us, may our hearts remain tenderly united. If it be thy holy will, happily restore them to our sight and society upon earth; and may our days and theirs be spent in such a manner, as to lead us to a blessed and eternal union in heaven. We pray for our enemies, that thou wouldst turn their hearts toward us, and inspire us with feelings of forbearance and forgiveness toward them. We pray for the young, that thou wouldst lead them through the slippery paths of youth; for the aged, that thou wouldst support them under the woes and infirmities of age; for the sick and afflicted, that thou wouldst comfort

them, and sanctify all their afflictions; for the dying, that thou wouldst prepare them for their great and last change. Enable all of us constantly to bear in mind, that here we have no continuing city; and to direct all our desires and labours to the attainment of a richer inheritance, even an heavenly. Enable us to sing thy praises with devotion—pardon the imperfection of our services—dismiss us with thy blessing—be with us through the interval of public worship, and bring us again in peace and in comfort to thy house of prayer.—All that we ask is for Christ's sake.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xl. 7.

BRING forth the fairest robe for him,
 The joyful father said;
 To him each mark of grace be shewn,
 And every honour paid.

A day of feasting I ordain;
 Let mirth and song abound:
 My son was dead, and lives again!
 Was lost, and now is found!

Thus joy abounds in Paradise
 Among the hosts of heaven,
 Soon as the sinner quits his sins,
 Repents, and is forgiven.

BLESSING.

MAY grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for evermore.—Amen.

FAST DAY—AFTERNOON.

PSALM cxlv. 8—14. *Second Version.*

THE Lord our God is gracious,
Compassionate is he also ;
In mercy he is plenteous,
But unto wrath and anger slow.

Good unto all men is the Lord :
O'er all his works his mercy is.
Thy works all praise to thee afford :
Thy saints, O Lord, thy name shall bless.

The glory of thy kingdom show
Shall they, and of thy power tell :
That so men's sons his deeds may know,
His kingdom's grace that doth excel.

Thy kingdom hath none end at all,
It doth through ages all remain.
The Lord upholdeth all that fall,
The cast down raiseth up again.

PRAYER.

O LORD, thou dwellest in light that is inaccessible, and full of glory, veiling thy perfections from mortal eye. We cannot by searching find out God; we cannot find out thee, the Almighty, to perfection. We go forward, but thou art not there; backward, but we cannot perceive thee; on the left hand, where thou dost work, but we cannot behold thee; thou hidest thyself on the right hand, that we cannot see thee: yet we would draw near unto thee, believing that thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek thee. We would lift up our hands and our hearts unto thee, the Former of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, the God of our life, and the length of our days;—for whom have we in heaven but thee? there is none upon earth whom we can desire beside thee. We would earnestly entreat thee, O God, to pour out thy Holy Spirit upon us, to enlighten our understandings, and purify our hearts, that we may be enabled to seek after thee, and know, and love, and serve thee better than in time past we have done. With shame and with

sorrow we confess before thee, that we have often laboured for that knowledge which profiteth not, and those possessions which enrich not, and those pleasures which satisfy not; while we inquired not after thee the Lord, our Maker, in whom all fulness dwells, from whom our every blessing flows, and upon whom our every hope depends. Thou art near unto every one of us; yet, alas! O Lord, our hearts have been far from thee, and, loving the creature more than the Creator, our hopes, and desires, and affections, have been riveted upon the things of this earth, while thou wert not in all our thoughts. Thou art good unto all, thy tender mercies are over all thy works, and thy delights have been with the children of men; but, alas! O Lord, the remembrance of thy loving-kindness has often been as much excluded from our hearts, as the brightness of thy glory is veiled from our mortal eyes; and, while offering thee the tribute of a heartless adoration, we have, with a deep and awful ingratitude, been saying, by our conduct, that we would not have thee, the Lord, to reign over us. It is of thy mercy, O Lord, that we are not consumed; it is because thy compassions fail not! Though the heavens are not clean in thy sight, and thou chargest even thine

angels with folly;—yet in pity, and long-suffering patience, thou hast borne with a race in rebellion against thee, clothed in pollution, and laden with iniquity. Instead of exerting thy power to punish, thou hast employed thy goodness to convert;—graciously declaring to them thy unwillingness that any should perish,—saying unto them, in the language of affectionate entreaty, “ Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?”—and showing them the path of life, with every encouragement and assistance to walk therein. And, while they were rejecting thy merciful offers, setting at nought thy counsel, and despising thy reproof, thou sentest a Messenger from on high, even the Son of thy love,—not arrayed in the majesty and terrors of Heaven, to wipe away by their sudden destruction the foul stain attached to thy creation,—but clothed in their own nature, that, as an elder brother, touched with a feeling for their infirmities, he might be to them a harbinger of peace and of hope; to reveal thy counsels of love concerning them; to conduct them out of the mazes of iniquity and despair, in which they had been wandering; to reconcile them to thee their heavenly Father; and to seal their reconciliation by his precious blood upon the cross—giving himself a

sacrifice for sin, that all the ends of the earth might look unto him and be saved—that the weary and heavy laden might find peace with God, and rest to their souls.

O Lord, enable us, that guilty yet much favoured race, to cast away from us the weapons of our rebellion. May we come unto thee, with tears of contrition, acknowledging that we are not worthy to be called thy children: adoring thine infinite mercy, may we eagerly accept of thy offer of pardon, and reconciliation, and acceptance through a Saviour; and, laying hold on the hope set before us in the gospel, may we walk as the redeemed of the Lord, giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Considering ourselves no longer as our own, but as bought with a price, even with the precious blood of thy son Jesus Christ, forbid, O God, that we should ever count that blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and, walking unworthy of our high vocation, crucify the Lord afresh by our iniquities: But may we be his disciples in practice, as well as in profession; adorning the doctrine of our Saviour by lives and conversations becoming his gospel: receiving him in faith and in love, may we abide in him, and he in us; and may we experience him to be made of

God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and complete redemption. May we be guided by his Spirit, and directed by his example, unto all holiness, and purity, and love, and patience, and humility. May all those graces and virtues which adorned his character be the leading features in ours; and may our light so shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify thee, our heavenly Father. May we enjoy the reward promised to those who turn many unto righteousness; and, after finishing our course, having kept the faith, may we receive that best of all applauses, “ Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joys of your Lord.”

We thank thee, O Lord, for thy goodness to us through the former part of this day. Bless us, as we are again assembled to worship thee in thy house of prayer, and assist us in speaking and hearing from thy holy word. May we so speak, and so hear, as it becometh the oracles of the living God to be spoken and to be heard. Our waiting eyes are toward thee, and all that we ask is for Christ's sake.—Amen.

SERMON.

MATTHEW, xi. 28.—*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

IN reflecting upon this affectionate invitation of our Saviour, our minds will be employed in a manner most suitable to the occasion of our meeting together at this time—on a day of preparation for solemnly showing forth his love to us, and testifying our gratitude to him.

In speaking from these words, let us, in the *first* place, consider, What is meant by coming unto Christ.

While our Saviour was upon the earth, we find that the mighty works performed by him excited much admiration and wonder in the minds of his countrymen. The fame of them went through all the land of Judea, and, wherever he appeared, he was attended by a vast concourse of people. Every one seemed eager to follow in the train of this astonishing personage, who was, in many respects, so different from any other that they had seen or heard of upon earth. They left their

occupations, their homes, and families, in order to accompany him into inhospitable deserts, where no refreshment could be procured, and no bed of rest could be spread. For the sake of following Jesus, they seemed to have forgotten for a while every dictate of self-interest, every desire for comfort; and would at times have fallen victims to their zeal of accompanying him, had he not been moved with pity, and wrought a miracle for their relief. All this seemed to denote an irresistible desire to come unto him—a determined resolution of becoming his followers, and an unshaken zeal for his service. But, alas! amongst those vast multitudes, thus seemingly inspired with a general and ardent zeal to be the followers of Jesus, how few sincere disciples did he find! how few who were eager to listen to the heavenly instructions he delivered—to divest their minds of prejudice, that they might hear the truth with gladness—and to take up their cross and follow him through good report, and through bad report! By far the greater part were guided merely by a vain and foolish curiosity to behold the miraculous works of which they had heard so much; but upon which, when actually displayed before them, they only gazed with a stupid wonder, and with

hearts totally unimpressed with a sense of the important mission, the exalted nature, and the high authority of the person who was capable of performing them. Some might be led to follow him, by the expectation of deriving some temporal advantage from the exertion of that power with which they beheld him invested; while others were impelled to follow, and to *watch* his every word and action, by the most deadly hatred, and deeply rooted malice—eager to find an occasion of accusing and condemning him who went about only doing good, and in whom no appearance of evil was to be found.

In these latter days, the gospel of Christ is widely extended over the world—the name of Jesus is known and adored in almost every land—and countless thousands are baptized in his name, and profess to be his disciples. The invitation of our Saviour seems to have been eagerly embraced, and his tidings of salvation received with gladness; for most of the nations upon earth have apparently come unto Christ. But it would be proper for all professing Christians to examine their hearts, in order to discover whether they are come to Christ in sincerity and truth—or are only impelled to profess themselves his disciples, by motives no way

superior to those which animated by far the greater part of the multitude who followed him while he sojourned upon earth; for “they are not *all Israel* who are *of Israel*,” and there are many who confess Jesus before men, and call him “Lord, Lord,” who, at the judgment of the great day, shall with fear and trembling hear this awful sentence, “Depart from me, I never knew ye.”

What, then, is meant by coming to Christ?—Can we be said to come to Christ, if we merely believe in his existence, his miracles, and exalted character?—if our reason only assents to the truth of his history, while our hearts remain callous to all those feelings and sentiments which that history is calculated to inspire? Faith without works is unprofitable;—it is dead, saith the apostle: Such a faith will only heighten our condemnation; the devils *thus* believe, and they believe only to tremble in despair. Can we be said to come unto Christ, by paying a scrupulous attention to the outward ordinances of his religion? All outward ceremonies that influence not the heart and conduct are vain, they are sinful; “For the kingdom of God,” says St Paul, consisteth not in “meat and drink,” in outward ceremonies and festivals, but in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Do we prove that we are come to Christ, by adhering strictly to the doctrines of any particular church? Let us examine, whether this strict adherence to one sect of Christians be not combined with contempt and hatred for all others;—whether it be not the fruit of that pride and arrogance which is hateful in the sight of God, and is the source of contention and misery among men;—whether it be not a breach of that Christian charity, which judges as favourably as possible of every man's sentiments and practice, and ought to induce Christians, of all denominations, to love one another, in obedience to the command of their Lord. Do we prove that we are come to Christ, or do we prove our desire to come to him, by our eagerly running for instruction from one teacher of his religion to another, crying, “Lo! Christ is here, and lo he is there,”—without being satisfied with the purity of the doctrine of any? Let us examine our hearts, lest this mighty show of zeal for purity of doctrine should be merely the craving of a disordered mind—an inordinate thirst for novelty, like that of the men of Athens, whom the apostle describes as being wholly concerned about telling and hearing some new thing. This love of novelty, so far from being the proof of a desire of

coming to Christ, is one of the greatest bars to our ever arriving at the truth as it is in Jesus!

To come to Christ, does not certainly mean merely our believing his history—our being baptized in his name—our being admitted into his church—our hearing his gospel preached—our sitting at his table—our relying or depending upon his merits or satisfaction for salvation, whether we do or do not obey his commandments by leading a virtuous and holy life: No; to come unto Christ is to believe in him as the Messiah, the Son of the living God; to whom was given all power in heaven and in earth; by whom this world was made—by whom it will be judged—and who descended to earth to reveal to us the will of his and our heavenly Father, to die that he might deliver us from sin, and to rise again that he might bring us unto righteousness. To come unto Christ, is to entertain this belief concerning him, not as a *speculative opinion*, but as an *active principle*;—it is to have this faith, and to build upon it a superstructure of holiness, without which no man can see God;—it is to receive Jesus not only as our mediator and intercessor with God for the pardon of our past sins, but also as our guide and our conductor in the path of new obedience;—it is to be directed, in

all that we do, by his precepts and his example, that we may rely upon his merits and his assistance;—it is to walk in his footsteps;—it is (as he tells us in the words following our text), to take his yoke upon us, and to *learn* of him.

In this manner are mankind invited to come unto Christ; and so many, so various, so powerful and convincing are the proofs of his divine mission given to the world, that whoever has received this invitation or call, by having the gospel put into his hands, and does not believe and embrace it as the direction and guide of his life, is declared to have forfeited all his hopes of eternal happiness, by thus rejecting with unreasonable obstinacy the record which God hath given of his own Son: “He that believeth on the Son shall have everlasting life, but he that believeth not shall not see life.” Assuredly, if we believe not, it is not for want of evidence; it is not because we cannot believe, but because we will not. It is on account of the irresistibly convincing evidence afforded us, that *faith* is always mentioned in scripture as a moral virtue, and is made the condition of our salvation, because it must be the spring of every other moral virtue in the Christian life.

But if, by refusing to come to Christ, and to be his disciples in sincerity, after his gospel, with all the evidences of its truth, has been placed before us, we run willingly and obstinately upon everlasting destruction; on the other hand, by coming unto him, as he is freely offered to us, and invites us in the gospel,—by believing in him as our Mediator, our Saviour, and our Judge,—by listening to him, and obeying him as our heavenly and infallible instructor,—by following him as a pure and spotless pattern of every virtue,—we will assuredly reap an exceeding great and glorious reward—a reward suitable to the goodness and mercy of God, and the wants and necessities of men. The happiness of the sincere followers of Jesus is, in our text, expressed by him as a blessed *rest*, to which he affectionately invites all who labour and are heavy laden.

Let us now, in the *second* place, turn our attention to some of those descriptions of people whom our Saviour here invites to come unto him.

He calls upon those who are weary and heavy laden with *ignorance, superstition, and error*, to come unto him, that he may give them rest.

Before our Saviour's appearance, a deep and awful darkness shrouded the whole earth. The

minds of men were bewildered in doubt, and their hearts weighed down with apprehension. Imperfectly acquainted with the nature of God their Maker, they knew not how to come before him, nor with what service he would be well pleased. His works, indeed, proclaimed his almighty power; but over his goodness and mercy hung a deep veil. Imagination painted him as a Being who ruled over his creatures with a rod of iron—who was to be approached only with terror—and made propitious only by the shedding of blood. All the knowledge which the light of nature could impart concerning him led only to doubt, and perplexity, and error, plunging the mind of man into a deeper and more melancholy distraction; and mortals were forced to exclaim in despair, “Can we by searching find out God?” They were no less ignorant of the nature and destiny of their own soul: its duration was despaired of; it was supposed to perish with the body—to go down to the grave, and return no more. The grave was contemplated as a silent mansion of eternal forgetfulness, over which the voice of nature exclaimed without hope, “Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?—shall these dry bones live?” And, even though daring to indulge a hope of immor-

tality, what could be the pleasure of contemplating the scene beyond the grave? the place appointed them by a Being whom they knew not as a God of mercy? a land unknown—surrounded with clouds and darkness—and from which no traveller had ever returned? All that was most interesting to the human race was the subject of painful and anxious conjecture; and men asked one another eagerly, but in vain, “who would show them what was good.” The whole creation lay under darkness and the shadow of death, when our Saviour descended to earth, and gave this joyful invitation to the sons of men, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And how well calculated were his instructions to give rest to minds heavy laden with apprehension, and weary with conjecture! He plainly revealed to them the nature of God, and taught them to repose upon him as a God of love, as the affectionate Father of the universe, whose delights are with the children of men; whose ear is ever open to their cry, whose almighty arm is stretched out to protect them, and who, in the most striking manner, manifested his tender mercy by sending his own Son to instruct, to comfort, and to save them.

His gospel reveals to man his own nature, and the lot assigned him; it teaches him that this is only a small portion of his existence; drawing aside the veil of futurity, it points to an everlasting day, that shall dawn upon the night of death; it opens to us, beyond the grave, the prospect of a country from whence there is no departure—where the virtuous shall be crowned with glory, and dwell amidst the delights of eternity.

How delightful is such a rest from conjecture, and doubt, and despair, with regard to all that is most deeply interesting to a rational being!—Let those who, living in a land of light, have rejected that light, and chosen to wander in darkness with the infidel, make haste to come unto Christ, that they may thus find rest. Let those who, calling themselves Christians, choose to follow the traditions of gloomy and superstitious men, rather than the plain instructions of the gospel, at last come unto Christ, that they may thus find rest. Let it be our earnest wish and prayer, that the gospel may soon be known over the whole earth; that the weary and heavy laden in every land may thus find rest to their souls.

Jesus calls upon those who labour and are heavy laden with *iniquity*, to come unto him, and he will

give them rest. Iniquity may, to the youth of inexperience, seem sweet and alluring, the path of vice may appear broad and flowery, and all its ways, ways of pleasantness and delight: He may envy those who dwell in the tents of sin, where every restraint is banished, every darling passion indulged, every wish seems gratified;—where every heart appears to beat with rapture, and every face to wear the smile of joy;—where the gloom of discontent and the sighs of sorrow seem unknown: In this charming abode, and with these delightful companions, he may naturally form a wish to dwell. But upon a nearer inspection he finds, that it is only in appearance that vice is so delightful, and that under this outward appearance are concealed pain, and anxiety, and grief, and despair. He finds dissipation leading, through paths of gaiety, to disease, and poverty, and infamy, and self-reproach. He finds the visionary splendour of ill-gotten gain bestowing no heartfelt satisfaction upon the possessor. He finds, that though deceit, imposing upon the world, may cause that respect, due only to worth, to be lavished upon the hypocrite, it affords no joy to his soul in secret—that he dwells in anxious insecurity a slave to apprehension. He finds that, in the midst of its triumphs, “pride bringeth con-

tion,” disappointment and mortification. He finds that envy and hatred, though they may leave the smile of seeming contentment and kindness on the countenance, incessantly gnaw and torment the bosoms in which they dwell;—that every ungoverned passion, from its very nature, leads not only to crime, but as certainly to misery—if not to outward and visible affliction, to that inward bitterness of the heart inflicted by a wounded conscience. Awful indeed is the gloom that surrounds the worker of iniquity! He cannot for a moment enjoy any solid happiness,—“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Agitated by the tumult of his passions—tormented with the recollection of his crimes—incessantly pursued by remorse—dismayed by the terrors of eternity, his mind is like the troubled ocean when it cannot rest: Amidst all his pretended delights he is forced with bitterness to acknowledge, that the ways of vice are ways of wretchedness, that all her paths are woe. Come unto Jesus, ye who are thus weary and heavy laden with iniquity; he will restore tranquillity and joy to your troubled minds: In his gospel ye will find a deliverance from all your evils;—in embracing and obeying it, you will experience the pure delights of virtue, that peace of God which passeth

understanding. O how blessed an exchange for the false and deceitful pleasures that lie scattered in the paths of iniquity! The gospel will indeed give you rest; for it gives the assurance of pardon for your past offences, if truly repented of, and forsaken; and, without this assurance, who, among weak and erring mortals, could have any hope toward God? It tells you, that there remains for penitent sinners no condemnation,—that Jesus reconcileth unto God all who, by faith and repentance, come to their Heavenly Father through him. Assured of being the children and heirs of God, assured of reigning for ever with your Saviour in the abodes of bliss and glory, you will obtain *rest*: —“The fruit of righteousness which is peace, and the effect of righteousness which is quietness and assurance for ever.”

Jesus calls upon those who labour and are heavy laden under *affliction* to come unto him, that he may give them rest.

There are many to whom affliction renders life a weary burden; for “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards;” and the inhumanity of man to his fellow-mortal adds many sorrows to the natural ills of human life.

In your intercourse with the world, then, have

you suffered from the treachery of the hypocrite? Have you been made the ruined victim of his mean and artful duplicity? Have you been crushed beneath the iron yoke of the oppressor, and forced to bend to that pride, which increases for ever its demands upon your humility and forbearance? Deprived of your rights, have you in vain claimed that impartial justice, which you have seen awarded to others in your situation, and which is the birthright of all men? Have you been compelled to bear the censures of that conceit and arrogance, which plumes itself upon the severity of its judgment of your every motive, and word, and action? Have you been wounded by ingratitude where it was least expected,—by the freezing look of indifference on that countenance which you never beheld without affection,—or by unkindness or hatred in that heart, whose joy it was your utmost wish and endeavour to promote? Has your character been injured by the breath of that slander, before which, like the blast of winter, the fairest flower falls down withered and unseemly? and, guileless, unsuspecting, and unoffending, have you been unjustly exposed to the inconveniencies of a blotted reputation?—Ye injured, oppressed, and degraded mortals, come unto

Christ, and he will give you rest. He will be your refuge from the violence of the wicked: He will be to you “as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” His gospel will enable you to possess your souls in patience. It reveals to you a God, to the purposes of whose mercy even the wrath of men is subservient, and will be made to promote your happiness; and that, farther than permitted by him, their malice and their cruelty cannot extend. His gospel points to a heaven, where the hypocrite shall not be found—where the voice of the oppressor shall not be heard—where neither pride nor arrogance shall trample on the meek and lowly in heart—where ingratitude and injustice are terms unknown—and into which the tongue of calumny shall never be able to dart its envenomed arrows from the regions of hell.

Bowed down by the natural ills of life, you can only find rest by coming to Christ.

Have you been doomed sadly to experience the uncertainty of fortune,—to exchange the comforts of affluence for the hardships of poverty,—the gratifications of power for the galling yoke of dependence,—and the caresses and flatteries of the world for its indifference or its scorn? It is the

gospel of Christ alone that can raise your mind above the vicissitudes of fortune, by pointing to a richer inheritance—an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. When laid upon the bed of sickness and tormented,—in the evening wishing to God it were morning, and in the morning wishing to God it were evening,—it is his gospel alone that can give you comfort: it tells you that, after a few weary days and nights, you shall find rest; and that from the stillness of the grave you shall be ushered into a region where disease and sickness are unknown,—where the bloom of youth shall never decay. Called to weep by the deathbed, or the grave of those whom you most tenderly loved, then, though surrounded on every side by the kindness and sympathy of your fellow-mortals, yet what will their sympathy, their condolence, and their tears, avail you? and where shall you find rest—where *can* you find rest and consolation to your distracted mind, but in the gospel of Christ, which gives you the blessed assurance, that those you loved are not lost to you forever,—which discloses to your view, beyond the grave, a land of rest in which they dwell,—where you shall again be united,—where, with them, you shall be led by the Lamb

to fountains of living water, and where God himself shall wipe away every tear.

Come unto Jesus, then, all ye sons and daughters of affliction, and he will give you rest. Compared to the rest to be found through him, how trifling is the comfort which this world, with all its enjoyments, can give to the body that is racked with pain,—to the heart that is pining with sorrow !

PRAYER.

FOLLOW with thy rich and effectual blessing, O Lord, the religious services in which we have this day been engaged, and the instructions that have now been delivered from thy holy word.

Do thou seal instruction, and teach us to profit thereby.

We bless thee that thou hast made us capable of contemplating the greatness of thy works, the wisdom of thy law, and the wonders of thy redeeming love. We confess, with shame and confusion of face, that we have often perverted the faculties which thou hast conferred upon us. We lament that, with the glorious spectacle of thy creation

before us, we should ever have admired its grandeur and its beauty, without having thy greatness and thy glory thereby imprinted upon our hearts;—that, enjoying its comforts and its pleasures, we should have ever forgotten the beneficent hand that profusely spreads them around us; and that, loving the creature, we should ever have been unmindful, or utterly regardless of thee the Creator. We lament that, with thy law and testimony revealed to us in thy word, we should ever have listened to that holy word with indifference and apathy, as to the sound of a reed shaken by the wind;—that we should neither have been awed by its threatenings, nor allured by its promises, to follow the directions of infinite Wisdom, to our peace here, and eternal happiness hereafter. We lament that, with the gracious offer of pardon and reconciliation made to us in the gospel, we should have ever turned a deaf ear to its glad tidings, shut our hearts against its entrance, and neglected the great salvation freely offered to our acceptance, through the merits of him who gave himself as a propitiation for our sins;—that we should ever have counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and the Cross of our Saviour a stumbling-block and a rock of offence;—that we

should ever have hated the light, and loved darkness, our deeds being evil, and our inclinations leading us to walk in the counsel of the ungodly,—to stand in the way of sinners, or to sit in the seat of the scornful.

O Lord, open our eyes to the frightful danger of having entered upon the path that leadeth, step by step, to fruitless remorse and hopeless despair. Awaken our consciences, that they may tell us how far we have proceeded on such a path, and how little peace, and comfort, and hope, we have found; and enable us, O Lord, however limited our progress may have been, to stop short, and to retrace our steps, and to turn our feet unto thy testimonies, and to lay hold on that Jesus who is able to save, and who calleth upon us, weary and heavy laden, to come unto him that he may give us rest. If we have hitherto been walking in darkness, with our minds clouded by superstition, distracted with doubts, and weighed down with apprehensions, may we come unto him, in faith, that the light of his gospel may shine into our hearts, and his Holy Spirit lead us unto that truth which shall make us free. If we have hitherto been wandering in the deceitful paths of iniquity—seeking rest and finding none—a prey to anxiety,

and remorse, and despair, may we come unto him, mourning over our transgressions, that through his merits they may be blotted out for ever, and that peace and hope may henceforth dwell in our hearts. If we have hitherto been without consolation under the afflictions of life, seeking comfort in vain from all within and all around us, may we come unto him, as unto an elder brother who is touched with a feeling for all our sorrows, and pains, and infirmities—who loved us, and who died for us, that he might bring us to blissful mansions beyond the grave, where all afflictions shall be forgotten, and all tears shall be wiped away. May we come unto him, not with a barren and speculative faith, but may we come with a firm resolution of listening to his instructions, of obeying his commands, and of walking in his footsteps. May we come unto him, not with empty professions of love and remembrance at his table, but may we come prepared to take up our cross and follow him, delighting to take his yoke upon us, and to learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart, that we may find rest to our souls.

We again offer up our prayers for all our brethren of mankind. Shed abroad, we beseech thee, as thy best blessing, the light of the gospel

over all the nations, and families of this earth. We again pray for the peace and prosperity of our native land; for the long life and happiness of our beloved Sovereign; for the integrity and usefulness of all judges and magistrates under him and over us. Grant thy guidance and protection to our national church. Graciously continue to bestow thy spiritual and temporal blessings upon this corner of thy vineyard, and render us thankful for all thy benefits. Bless and protect our friends, wherever their lot may be cast; reward our benefactors; forgive our enemies, and enable us to forgive them. May the sick and afflicted find sweet comfort in thy consolations. May the young remember thee, their Creator, and may the hoary head be found in the way of righteousness. May the dying be prepared for death, and the living for the duties of life.

Enable us now to sing thy praise with devotion in our hearts. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Conduct us in safety to our places of abode. Enable us to spend the remainder of this day in thy fear, and in searching our hearts and ways before thee. All that we ask is in the name, and through the merits, of Christ Jesus our Lord.—
Amen.

PARAPHRASE xxxiv. 5—7.

COME then to me, all ye that groan,
With guilt and fear opprest ;
Resign to me the willing heart,
And I will give you rest.

Take up my yoke, and learn of me
The meek and lowly mind ;
And thus your weary troubled souls
Repose and peace shall find.

For light and gentle is my yoke ;
The burden I impose
Shall ease the heart, which groaned before
Beneath a load of woes.

BLESSING.

MAY the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the blessed Spirit, remain with you all, now, and for ever.—Amen.

SATURDAY SERVICE.

SATURDAY.

PSALM lxx. 1.

PRAISE waits for thee in Sion, Lord ;
To thee vows paid shall be :
O thou that hearer art of prayer,
All flesh shall come to thee.
Iniquities, I must confess,
Prevail against me do :
But as for our transgressions,
Them purge away shalt thou.

Bless'd is the man whom thou dost choose,
And mak'st approach to thee,
That he within thy courts, O Lord,
May still a dweller be :
We surely shall be satisfied
With thy abundant grace,
And with the goodness of thy house,
Even of thy holy place.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, Thou dwellest in light that is inaccessible and full of glory. Heaven, yea the heaven of heavens, is thy throne. Thousands of glorious spirits surround thee, who serve thee day and night in thy temple, and cease not to celebrate thy praise: Yet, from amidst the delights of eternity, thou lookest down in mercy upon this abode of sin and sorrow and death. Thou condescendest to dwell with those who are of a broken and contrite heart: Thou hast graciously promised to be the hope of thy people in all ages; therefore do we come into thy house of prayer in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will we worship toward thy holy place. We will extol thee, O our God! we will bless thy name for ever and ever.

The throne of thine omnipotence is veiled from mortal eye; but thy works proclaim thy perfections: their line is gone through all the earth—their words to the end of the world. We behold a display of thy power in the grandeur and immensity of the universe;—in the heavens which thou hast made, in the moon and stars which

thou hast ordained, in the earth which thou hast founded and hung upon nothing.

One generation of men proclaims thy perfections to another—our fathers have told us of thy wondrous works in the days of old, and we can declare thy faithfulness unto our children. One year proclaims thy perfections to another—since the beginning of time, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, have not failed. One day proclaims thy perfections to another—day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night teacheth knowledge concerning thee. Yet only a part of thy ways are before us. How little a portion is heard of God! The thunder of thy power—the greatness of thine excellency, who, O Lord, can understand! For there is none like unto thee, rich in mercy, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!

It becomes us, thy rational and intelligent offspring, to adore and praise thee for thy goodness, and for thy wonderful works towards us, the children of men. Thou didst call our first parent into existence by the word of thy power; by thine inspiration thou didst endow him with understanding: thou didst form him after thine own image, and, amidst the delights of paradise, madest him

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to dwell in thy presence. And when, by sin, he had forfeited that abode of bliss, and entailed upon his posterity this portion of pain, and grief, and mortality, thou didst not leave us to wander in despair. Thou didst reveal thyself in mercy by thy prophets of old, and, in these latter days, hast manifested thyself, in the gospel of the blessed Jesus, as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and slow to anger, abundant in goodness and in truth. Thou hast called us out of darkness into thy marvellous light, and made us meet for being partakers in the inheritance of the saints; having translated us into the kingdom of thine own Son; through whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins; whom thou sentest to humble himself, and become obedient to sufferings, and ignominy, and death—that he might bless and save us—that he might preach good tidings to the meek—that he might bind up the broken-hearted—that he might proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound—that he might rescue us from the slavery of sin—ransom us from the power of the grave—and, after death, lead us to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Well does it become us to bless thee, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to thine abundant mercy, hast begotten us again into a lively hope, by the resurrection of thy Son from the dead. Alas! O Lord, our hearts tell us that we have been unprofitable and ungrateful servants unto thee. Thou hast nourished and brought us up as children, and we have rebelled against thee our heavenly Father. Thou hast redeemed us from destruction, and we have lightly esteemed thee, the rock of our salvation. When we would do good, evil is often present with us; and wert thou strict to mark iniquity, or rigorous to punish transgression, who, O Lord, of the sons of men, could stand before thee?—But, blessed be thy holy name, there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared, and plenteous redemption, that thou mayst be sought after. Have mercy upon us, then, O God, according to thy loving-kindness. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions, be merciful to our unrighteousness, and remember our iniquities no more. And forbid, O Lord, that a sense of thine infinite goodness should ever encourage us to continue in sin, that thy grace may the more abound; rather let the riches of thy

goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, lead us to repentance. May we henceforth consider it good for us to draw near unto thee. May we be dying daily more and more unto sin, and living unto godliness. May we love thy law that is perfect, converting the soul, and thy testimony that is sure, making wise the simple. May we obey thy statutes that are right, rejoicing the heart, and thy commandment that is pure, enlightening the eyes. May we live in thy fear, and mark thy judgments which are true and righteous altogether. Let thy word be hid in our hearts; let it be as a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths, to guide and direct us in the way of thy commandments. May we follow in all things that Jesus, who came to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: Proposing solemnly to confess him before men, and to devote ourselves to his service, may we be animated by the spirit of his gospel—by that wisdom which is from above, that is pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Deeply grateful for the aid of sacraments and ordinances, which cheer, and support, and strengthen us on this our earthly pilgrimage, may we improve them to our

spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; that we may derive from them a well-grounded hope of glory, in those eternal mansions prepared by Jesus for his faithful followers—where every blemish, and every tear, shall be wiped away—in which perfection, harmony and happiness, ever dwell.

We thank thee for bringing us again into thy house of prayer. Enable us to render thee the devotion of our hearts. Assist us in speaking and hearing from thy word: May we do so with reverence and attention; and may the word spoken be profitable unto the soul, being mixed with faith in those who hear it. All that we ask is for Christ's sake.—Amen.

SERMON.

ROMANS xiv. 17.—*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

By the kingdom of God, the apostle here means that state of knowledge, and virtue, and reconciliation, and happiness, into which the Almighty, by means of the gospel of his Son Jesus

Christ, was pleased to call upon, and encourage his erring and disobedient children to return to him ;—even that blessed state which was forfeited by their first parents in the garden of Eden, and which, through the instructions, and example, and assistance, and mediation of a Saviour, is in some degree restored to his faithful followers on this earth, and shall be fully and perfectly restored to them in heaven ;—that state which the prophets, in their predictions, described as a dominion that shall not pass away, a kingdom that shall not be destroyed, a kingdom in which there was to be nothing to hurt or offend ;—that state of which John the Baptist spake, when he called upon men to repent, “ because the kingdom of heaven was at hand ; ”—that state, the commencement of which the aged and devout Simeon thus hailed with joy, while he held in his arms the heavenly but as yet infant Messenger, by whose ministry it was to be established, and by whose sufferings and death it was to be for ever sealed ; “ Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ; ”—that state, which many kings and wise men and prophets wished to see—which the angels of heaven, deeply interested in the fate of

their fallen and degraded brethren of mankind, earnestly desired to look into.

This kingdom of heaven—this state of light, and truth, and salvation, procured to us through the ministry and the merits of a Redeemer, “is not,” says the apostle, “meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

In speaking further upon these words, let us consider, in the *first* place, in what the apostle declares the kingdom of God *not to consist*: “It is not,” says he, “meat and drink.”

We find, from numberless passages of Scripture, that the Jews, however much they neglected the weightier matters, the moral precepts, of their law, were ever minutely attentive to its ceremonial observances. To the rule of righteousness which they had received for the guide of their lives, the Almighty had added these observances, to distinguish them from the nations around, and mark them as his peculiar people; and, vain of their distinction as a nation, they allowed not one jot or one tittle of these marks of that distinction to fall into disuse. We find even those amongst them who had been converted to the religion of Jesus, still eager to retain them as a part of that re-

ligion, and wishing to impose them upon all who embraced it, as essential to salvation, saying, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved;" and urging the apostles "to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Amongst other external observances, the distinction of meats into clean and unclean, enjoined in their ancient law, was still scrupulously adhered to by them, and zealously pressed upon those also of the Gentiles who had been added to the church. This, like all other zeal that is not according to knowledge, seems to have given rise to much dissension and uneasiness amongst Christians, in the days of the apostle; and, in the chapter before us, we find him endeavouring to allay that dissension, and calm that uneasiness amongst his followers, by rooting out from their hearts that superstitious regard entertained by one party, and that unnecessary aversion manifested by the other, for things that were neither good nor evil in their own nature, and of no importance whatever, as connected with that pure and spiritual religion which they in common professed. "Him that is weak in the faith," says he, "receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations; for one believeth that he may eat all things, another that is

weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, as foolish; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth," as profane; for God hath received both into his church—without regard to these matters of indifference, concerning which they happen to have formed different opinions. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"—"One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike: he that regardeth (or observeth) the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;" because he has been taught to believe that the Almighty will be pleased with such an observance:—"he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it;" because he thinks that no such service is required. "He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks for what he receives; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not;"—that is, in compliance with what he conceives to be the will of God, he eateth not of certain meats; but he "giveth God thanks," as well as the other, for the blessings of providence. "I know," says the Apostle, "and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean:" he would wound

his conscience, he would consider himself as sinning against God, were he to partake of it. “ Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more,” nor set one another at nought on account of these things, “ but let us judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother’s way :”—let not the converted Jew look upon the converted Heathen as unworthy of the name of Christian, because he does not conceive it necessary to abstain from meats that were forbidden, as unclean, in the law of Moses; and, on the other hand, let not the converted Heathen refuse to consider the converted Jew as a brother, because, while he believes in Christ, he still cannot help venerating and observing the statutes and ordinances of his forefathers. These are matters of little importance, for “ the kingdom of God is not meat and drink.”

The dispute betwixt converted Jews and converted Heathens ceased with the men of that generation; but the words of the apostle are addressed to us also. Whoever judges and condemns his brother for a slight difference in external forms of religion, is reminded, that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; that it consists not in outward ceremonies and observances; that professing

Christians may vary these, according to their particular feelings, or the prejudices of their education, or the circumstances in which they are placed, while their religion remains *essentially* the same—*equally acceptable* to the God of heaven.

Amongst some professing Christians, even to this day, there is a scrupulous regard for days and seasons, in which certain meats are to be abstained from. This is a remnant of that ancient *harmless* superstition, which the apostle speaks of in this chapter, as being an insufficient ground for dissension or offence amongst Christians; and had the church of Rome had nothing, in her doctrines, more dangerous to vital religion than this, we need not have abjured her faith and rejected her communion. And how trifling, in the eyes of that God who searcheth the heart, must appear the most of those things, that have given rise to the innumerable sects into which the Christian world is in our day divided!—such as forms of church government; rules of discipline; modes of worship. It is right that, with regard to these things, every man should, according to the advice of the apostle, “be fully persuaded in his own mind,” and choose what he imagines best calculated for promoting the growth of religion in his

heart ; but he has no right to be offended at his brother, or to condemn his brother, or to count him an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise, because, with an equal wish to obtain perfection in Christ Jesus, he may think it necessary to differ in his choice. The dissension and hatred that has often arisen from such slight causes, is a melancholy proof of the littleness of the human mind—of the small progress genuine religion has made in the hearts of many—and that we are still too apt to imagine the kingdom of God to be meat and drink.

Those who place too great a reliance upon the outward *forms* of religion, and imagine, whatever their general conduct may be, that, by joining in its ordinances with regularity, decency, and solemnity, they render an acceptable service to their Maker—these are here reminded by the apostle, that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ;—that praising God with the lips is not religion, unless it nourishes a love to him in the heart ;—that prayer to God is not religion, unless it impresses upon our minds a deep sense of our continual dependence upon him ;—that assembling with our brethren to worship is not religion, unless our mutual love is thereby strengthened and

purified;—that joining in the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not religion, unless what we there see, and taste, and handle, of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of our Saviour, recalls to our remembrance all that he has done and suffered for us, and excite our love and obedience to him, who first loved us, and died for us, that we might live;—that, in short, all external forms of religion are appointed merely as the means of promoting genuine religion in the heart; and that he who, having substituted the means for the end, imagines that he has done all that is required of him, and that he has thereby acquired the favour of heaven, and a title to be ranked as a subject of the kingdom of God, miserably deceives himself, and widely mistakes the nature of that spiritual kingdom, which “is not meat and drink.”

In the *second* place.—Let us consider in what the kingdom of God is said by the apostle to consist: “It is,” says he, “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

The kingdom of God consists in *righteousness*. This is a most comprehensive term: From the various ways in which it is used in scripture, it may there be said to include the whole duty of

man;—piety toward God; justice, mercy, and purity, with regard to our brethren and ourselves; in short, a strict regard to the whole of that divine law, which our Saviour declares he came not to destroy but to ratify—to fulfil: That law, of which he declares, that whosoever should break one of the least of the commandments, and teach men to do so, should be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Into that kingdom above we are assured that there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth; and surely no one can *truly* belong to the kingdom of God on earth, who is not preparing himself for entering into his kingdom in heaven, by the practice of those virtues which are essentially necessary for the enjoyment of its unfading honours and eternal delights. In other words, no one can be truly a Christian without *righteousness*, in the practice of which that pure and holy religion essentially consists. It is the service which the Lord (in the full and clear revelation of his will by his own Son) requireth of us, and without which we cannot be disciples of Jesus.

But men have ever been anxious to please God by other services than the practice of righteousness. Some substitute external forms of religion for righteousness; but, as I formerly said, these

are only means appointed by God for promoting a love of righteousness in the heart; and if we thus take the means for the end, the shadow for the substance, we have a form of godliness without its power, which, so far from gaining us the approbation of heaven, will only procure for us the greater condemnation. Some substitute a barren and speculative faith for the practice of righteousness; and, assured of their own infallibility, judge all who differ from them in opinion as unworthy of the kingdom of heaven. Faith is, indeed, essentially necessary for salvation; but they forget the declaration of the apostle, that faith without works is dead;—they forget, that the devils thus believe, and believe only to tremble in despair. Some substitute the imputed righteousness of Christ for the practice of righteousness, and assure themselves of salvation through his merits, while they refuse to obey his laws. Of a truth, it is only through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith in him, that the most perfect of the sons of men can appear, without dismay, before the tribunal of God; for he can look on us only in the face of his Anointed. But does this remove the necessity of our continually striving to purify ourselves, as our Father

in heaven is pure? Does it not, in every way, heighten our obligation to walk in the footsteps of him who hath ransomed us by his own blood? For in what part of the New Testament does our Saviour appear as the encourager and protector of vice? telling men, that instead of anxiously striving to reform their own hearts and conduct, they may trust to his merits, as a screen to hide the want of every virtuous principle in themselves? His language is uniformly the reverse of this: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law;” to relieve you from the necessity of obeying the commands of the Lord your God;—these are only more fully explained and enforced in my gospel, and “one jot, or one tittle of them, shall not pass away.”—“Except *your righteousness* exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” It is “not every one that calleth me Lord, Lord,”—not every one who confesses me to be the Messiah, and indolently and presumptuously relies upon me,—“that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who doth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

The kingdom of God, says the apostle, is *peace*. At the birth of Jesus, a heavenly host proclaimed

peace on earth;" and before he suffered for us upon the cross, he thus addressed his disconsolate disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And what can be more calculated to ensure the *peace of society*, than the religion of Christ Jesus? Its laws are in opposition to all that interrupts the harmony of mankind. It condemns that dictatorial power which men are apt to assume over other people's consciences, and which has been the ground of much hatred and persecution;—teaching us, on the other hand, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, nor seek to be lords over God's heritage. It condemns that restless, factious disposition, which, even without having the wrongs of tyranny and oppression to excuse it, has so often raised the flame of civil discord;—telling us, on the other hand, to be subject to the powers that be; to give tribute to whom tribute is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. It condemns that violation of justice and truth, which is always attended by the destruction of peace betwixt man and man;—and teaches us, on the other hand, upon every occasion, to do to others as we would have them to do to us. It condemns that malignant and unforgiving

temper of mind, which breathes nothing but discord, animosity, and strife, subversive of every thing that tends to peace;—it exhorts us, on the contrary, to put on that charity, which suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil; which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but covereth a multitude of sins. It commands us to lay aside that envy, which grieves at the prosperity and happiness of another, and is the parent of strife, and confusion, and every evil work; and to banish from our lips that calumny and slander, which, like the blast of winter, withereth before it all that is fair and excellent around.

By universal obedience to the laws of Christ, the world would be converted into that scene so beautifully pictured by the prophet Isaiah:—“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them;—the cow and the bear shall feed—their young ones shall lie down together;—the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den;—they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.” This fancied harmlessness and concord amongst the cruel and ravenous

beasts of the field, would only be an emblem of the concord and harmony that would prevail amongst the children of men, were the lawless passions of their hearts brought under subjection to the dominion of their Redeemer.

The kingdom of God—the religion of Jesus, likewise gives *peace of mind*. The mind, unenlightened by the gospel of Christ, can only be the abode of doubt, and perplexity, and anxious apprehension. What calmness can dwell in the breast of him, to whom the Almighty is a God unknown; —a Being, who may be wholly uninterested about the fate of his creatures; a Being, who may be clothed in power unmixed with mercy, relentless, and delighting to punish? But what repose and peace does it inspire to find, in the gospel, God revealed to us *as he is*—a God of love, whose tender mercies are over all his works; and to have a visible demonstration of his love toward us the children of men, in all that was done and suffered for our sake, by him who was declared to be the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person! What calmness can he feel, who looks upon this life as the only portion of man; who lives only to see the grave closed (as he thinks for ever) over those who were dearest to his heart; and to

anticipate the time, when he too shall lie down in forgetfulness, and become as if he had never been? Can his heart be at ease, and rejoice in the blessings of this fleeting scene? Can it repose with delight in that friendship and affection, so soon and for ever to be buried in the dust? Or can he bask, with unmingled pleasure, in those sunbeams of prosperity, so suddenly to be shrouded in endless night? No!—Though it may sometimes have been the language of the lips, “ Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die,” it could never be the language of the heart; for the prospect of annihilation is sufficient to wither every hope of the most sanguine, to blast every joy of the most thoughtless, and unnerve every resolve of the most firm and undaunted heart. But this appalling prospect is removed by the gospel of Christ, which, drawing aside the veil of futurity, announces immortality to man, and points to a heaven, where, united with all he loved on earth, he may enjoy pleasure pure and unmixed, as well as eternal. How can his mind enjoy peace, who is wandering on in the path of iniquity, seeking rest and finding none,—in quest of pleasure in the way that leads only to wretchedness and despair,—a prey to the trouble inflicted by the furious pas-

sions of his own heart—to the anguish inflicted by a wounded conscience; and finding, to his sad experience, that the wicked are like the troubled ocean, when it cannot rest? But, in embracing the gospel of Christ, he is taught to despise and to loathe all that formerly bound him in the chains of iniquity, and exposed him to its terrors and its torments;—in obeying the pure and holy laws of Jesus, he experiences that peace of God which passeth understanding—that peace bequeathed by his blessed Saviour, which the world cannot give, and which the world cannot take away. If, indeed, his former iniquities were to be brought into judgment against him, all this peace would be banished; for, deeply sensible that all the virtues of his future days could be no equivalent for these, at the bar of strict and impartial justice, he must still look forward with dismay and horror to the judgment of the great day. But he is told in the gospel, that sins which are repented of, and forsaken, shall be blotted out for ever,—that God is in Christ reconciling a guilty world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses,—and that, having cast off his sins by repentance, he shall be accepted through the merits of his Redeemer, and, holding on his Christian course

without wavering, persevering in virtue and holiness, shall arrive at the heavenly Zion, where there are pleasures for evermore. Assuredly, well might our Saviour say to his disciples, "In me ye shall have peace;"—well might he call upon "all who labour and are heavy laden to come unto him, that they may find rest to their souls."

The kingdom of God," says the apostle, consists in "joy in the Holy Ghost." It would be of little avail to have (as we have in the gospel of Christ) an unerring rule of righteousness; and of little avail, that this rule would assuredly lead us to peace here, and endless happiness hereafter, if we are unable to obey its conditions. And contemplating, on the one hand, the strictness and purity of the precepts of the gospel, and on the other, the weakness and frailty of man, it is a natural exclamation, "who is sufficient for these things!" If our first parents, encouraged by the *possession* of heavenly bliss, could not preserve their innocence; how shall *we* be able, supported and encouraged only by the distant prospect of happiness to come?—If, with no example to lead them astray, they could not preserve their innocence; how shall *we*, surrounded by numberless examples in a corrupt world, continually inviting us to be conform-

ed to its ways?—If in them, pure from the hands of their Maker, human nature was unable to withstand the strength of the first temptation; can *we* for a moment imagine, that it is, in ourselves, able to struggle against many temptations?—No, my brethren; the history of all the generations that have gone before us—all that we see around us—all that we feel within us—proves that we have no ground for forming so high an estimate of our nature, or placing such confidence in our strength. Ought we not rather to adopt the language of St Paul, who thus speaks in the name of the human race:—“When I would do good, evil is present with me: I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.” This, we fear, is what every descendant of Adam, more or less, experiences. Then how delightful is it to know, and to be assured in the gospel, that the Christian is not left to contend alone in the arduous warfare, which he is called upon to wage against the enemies of his salvation, but that, if his endeavours are sincere, and unwearied, to work out his own salvation, God will work in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure;—that his Spirit will be ever present, to guide him in every difficulty,—to

support him under every trial,—to encourage him under every danger,—to uphold him under every temptation,—to perfect strength in his weakness, and bring him off more than a conqueror. “I will not leave you comfortless,” said our Saviour, when taking leave of his affectionate followers, “for I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, that he may abide with you for ever.” Conscious of such aid and direction, what has the Christian to fear from all the enemies that can assail him?—He may rejoice in assured confidence of victory; for greater is he that is with him, than all that *can* be against him: “The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary; he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.”—Relying upon this strength, promised and secured to him by his Redeemer, his own fears, and irresolution, and weakness, are done away, and, filled with joy, he exclaims with the holy apostle of old, “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.” Let none, however, trusting to this gracious promise, slacken his own exertions, and, like the careless servant, bury his talent in the earth; for having abused the gift of God—the

natural powers bestowed upon him by the Almighty—how can he hope for greater? Is it not said by our Saviour, “From him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.” Neither let such a one “mistake the fervours of a heated imagination for the motion of the Holy Spirit, and mere human passions for divine impulses;” but let every one, who wishes indeed to have joy in the Holy Ghost, earnestly and constantly study to render himself a fit habitation for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; and then he may rejoice in the certainty, that, though the days of miracles have ceased, and he cannot behold the Spirit of God visibly descending upon him, as it did upon the apostles,—yet its still small voice will direct him in peace and safety through all the intricate mazes of this earthly scene, and conduct him to a land of rest beyond the grave—where sin and sorrow are unknown, and where his joy shall be full, in the presence of his God, for evermore.

Let me conclude by exhorting one and all of you, my brethren, to study the nature of that religion, in which you mean so soon to testify, in the most solemn manner, your belief and your hope. If you find it not to be *meat and drink*—not to consist in outward services; beware of joining in

the Holy Sacrament of the Supper with the lips only, while your hearts are far from God, and altogether occupied with the world. If you find it to consist in *righteousness*; then be careful to approach the altar of God with clean hands and a pure heart. If you find it to consist in *peace*; then let your hearts be united in brotherly love at the table of your Lord. If you find it to consist in *joy in the Holy Ghost*; then strive to put away all filthiness of the flesh and spirit—that the Spirit of God may testify with your spirits, that ye are indeed his children.

Ye young, who mean to devote yourselves to his service,—pray that this Spirit may guide you through the slippery paths of youth, and retain you in the way of righteousness and peace. Ye middle aged,—pray that this Holy Spirit may aid you in preserving your integrity in the midst of the business, and cares, and pleasures, and afflictions of this life. Ye aged,—pray that it may conduct you in peace through the remainder of your pilgrimage, and bestow its consolations, when this world, and all that is therein, is passing away from your view.—May God, in heaven his dwelling-place, hear and answer your requests, and accept of your services, through the merits of him of whom you are to testify your grateful remembrance.—Amen.

PRAYER.

WE again draw near unto thee, O Lord, with love, and gratitude, and confidence,—remembering thy mercies, and showing forth thy loving-kindness. We bless thee for the rank thou hast assigned us in thy creation. All the other inhabitants of this lower world derive their life, and the happiness consistent with their natures, from the infinite goodness of an unknown Benefactor; but to man thou hast given wisdom to know thee, and understanding to render thee a reasonable service. We thank thee, that to the rational powers which thou hast given us, thou hast added the revelation of thy divine will;—that thou hast spoken to our fathers by the prophets of old; and hast, in these latter days, clearly manifested thyself to us in the gospel of Christ Jesus;—that the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;—and that we were permitted to behold the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

While we adore thine infinite goodness, displayed in sending the Son of thy love, clothed in our nature, to reclaim and to save us by his instruc-

tions, and his sufferings, and his death, we earnestly pray, that we may be enabled to form just and rational conceptions of the glad tidings brought to us by this highly exalted Messenger. Forbid, O Lord, that we, in our weakness, should ever imagine his gospel to consist in external rites and ceremonies; that we should ever look upon these, not as the means, but the end; or attach a value to them, calculated to give rise to animosity and strife. May we embrace the gospel, not as a *form*, but as the *power* of godliness:—May we receive it as a pure and spiritual guide; as a rule of righteousness, to regulate every action of our lives, every thought and affection of our hearts—teaching us to love thee our God with all our heart, and mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves;—teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world, that we may be thy workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Allowing ourselves to be thus purified and sanctified by its influence, may we experience it to be indeed the gospel of peace;—leading us to live in peace and harmony with all our brethren of mankind; blessing us with peace of conscience; giving us, through a well-grounded

hope in thy mercy, that peace of thine which passeth understanding; and inspiring us with that joy in the Holy Ghost—with that assurance of aid and direction from on high—which will animate and encourage us, amidst all the cares, and sorrows, and temptations of this our mortal state, to hold on our Christian course without wavering, till we reach that blessed abode, where no temptations shall assail, no cares perplex, and no afflictions grieve us.

Hasten the happy period, O Lord, when the whole earth shall be enlightened by the rays of the Sun of righteousness;—when countless thousands, from every region and from every clime, Jews and Gentiles, civilized and barbarian, bond and free, shall be united in love and brotherly communion, as the happy subjects of that kingdom of thine, which consisteth in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Abundantly bless the churches of Christ in our land. Do thou reform whatever may be faulty in the church established amongst us, and upbuild and strengthen whatever may tend to thy glory, and her good. May pure and undefiled religion more and more flourish and prevail.

Dwell in this congregation: Bless us in all our

temporal concerns; and enable us ever to look to the things that are seen and are temporal, so as not to lose sight of those things that are unseen and eternal. With grateful hearts we thank thee for the means of grace; for all the opportunities afforded us of promoting our spiritual and eternal interests; that thou art giving us line upon line, and precept upon precept, that our hearts may be purified through the preaching of the gospel, and our souls refreshed by its solemn ordinances. We bless thee for the near prospect of a communion Sabbath. Aid and assist us, O Lord, in preparing ourselves for its solemn duties; and do thou mercifully pardon every one that prepareth his heart thus to seek thee, the God of his fathers, though he be not purified according to the purification of the sanctuary. Restrain those who would join in the celebration of that ordinance, only to be seen of men—to obtain the name of disciples of Jesus, while by their works they deny him: Oh, let them not add to their manifold offences, the daring hypocrisy of approaching thee with lying lips, thereby rendering themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Comfort and strengthen those who are of a fearful heart; who tremble at thy word; who, though animated with

the most ardent love, and most sincere desire of pleasing thee, yet, reflecting upon their weakness and short-comings, deem themselves unworthy of appearing before thee, at the table of their Lord. Show thyself to them as a God of mercy, reconciled through the merits of Jesus;—weary and heavy laden, may they come unto him, and find rest to their souls. Confirm thy young servants in their pious resolution of thus devoting themselves to thee; give them courage to vow unto the Lord, and strength to fulfil their vows:—having chosen thy law as the guide of their youth, may they not depart from it in old age, but find it their sweetest consolation, when their flesh and their hearts begin to faint and fail. Forbid that any of us, who have often heretofore surrounded the table of the Lord, should now approach it with less interest and veneration—less fervent prayers and wishes—less determined resolutions—and less lively hopes, than when, in the morning of life, we first seated ourselves there, in company with many who taste no more with us of the fruit of the vine here below, but with whom it is our anxious desire to drink it new in thy kingdom above. Be with those who, from sickness or other unavoidable circumstances, may to-morrow be prevented

from joining in the service of the sanctuary: May they know, to their happy experience, that thou art, in every place, and under every circumstance, to be found of them who seek thee in sincerity and truth.

We again pray, O Lord, for the prosperity of our country; for the comfort and happiness of our gracious Sovereign; for all in authority under him and over us, that they may be endowed with the right spirit of their station. We entreat thy favour and protection to our friends, and thy forgiveness to our enemies. Do thou mercifully heal the sick, comfort the afflicted, prepare the dying for death, and teach all of us wisely to consider our latter end. Be with us in singing thy praises. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Enable us to spend the remainder of this day in thy fear, and in thy service. Protect us through the silent watches of the night. Make us to rejoice in a new day of the Son of Man; and bring us to thy house of prayer, with hearts devoted to thee. Hear and answer, O Lord, these our humble supplications, and accept of us for the sake of Christ Jesus.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xliii.

YOU now must hear my voice no more,
My Father calls me home ;
But soon from heaven the Holy Ghost,
Your Comforter, shall come.
That heavenly Teacher, sent from God,
Shall your whole soul inspire ;
Your minds shall fill with sacred truth,
Your hearts with sacred fire.

Peace is the gift I leave with you ;
My peace to you bequeath ;
Peace that shall comfort you through life,
And cheer your souls in death.
I give not as the world bestows,
With promise false and vain ;
Nor cares, nor fears, shall wound the heart
In which my words remain.

BLESSING.

MAY grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for evermore.—Amen.

SABBATH SERVICE.

SABBATH—FORENOON.

PSALM xciv. 1—6.

O COME, let us sing to the Lord !

Come, let us every one

A joyful noise make to the Rock

Of our salvation.

Let us before his presence come,

With praise and thankful voice ;

Let us sing psalms to him with grace,

And make a joyful noise.

For God, a great God, and great King,

Above all gods he is ;

Depths of the earth are in his hand,

The strength of hills is his.

To him the spacious sea belongs,

For he the same did make ;

The dry land also from his hands

Its form at first did take.

O come, and let us worship him,

Let us bow down withal,

And on our knees before the Lord,

Our Maker, let us fall.

PRAYER.

O LORD, it is with the deepest humility that we would present ourselves before thee in thy house of prayer. It is with heartfelt reverence and awe that we would draw near unto thee with the voice of praise and of thanksgiving; for who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord! who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto our God! The heavens are thine,—the earth also is thine,—the world and the fulness thereof, for thou hast created it. Strong is thy hand—high is thy right hand! We may speak much of thee, and yet come short—we may praise thee with all our might, yet wilt thou far exceed; for terrible and marvellous is thy power, and great art thou above all thy works. Who, O Lord, of the sons of men hath seen thee at any time, that he might tell us of thee? and who is able to magnify thee as thou art? Our mortal eyes cannot behold thee,—our limited faculties cannot comprehend all thy greatness and thy glory; but, blessed be thy holy name, thou hast not left us to wander in distressful ignorance of thee, our Creator and our God. Even at the time when, by the disobedience of

our first parents, the gates of Paradise were closed against us, thou gavest an assurance that thy mercy was not gone for ever; and, in every age, thou hast been revealing thyself to a guilty race, as the Lord God merciful and gracious, not willing that any should perish.

Our fathers of old rejoiced in the prospect of a Messiah, who was to heal the diseases of his people. Believing that their Redeemer lived, and that he would stand in the latter day upon the earth, they resigned their bodies to the dust, with the pleasing hope that in their flesh they would still see God. And this hope, which gladdened the hearts of thy servants of old, thy mercy hath made sure to us. In the fulness of time thou sentest thine own well-beloved Son, to proclaim peace on earth, and good-will to the children of men—to reconcile us unto thee our heavenly Father—to teach us thy will—to lead us in the way of thy commandments—to place immortality before us—and to give his own life a ransom for many. Herein, indeed, was love manifested! Well does it become us to join our feeble voices to those of angels and archangels, who cease not, day nor night, to celebrate thy praise! Well does

it become us to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night !

But, alas ! O Lord, when we speak of the love and the gratitude which we owe to thee, our own hearts must condemn us. We must be conscious to ourselves, that we have not behaved as became the children of so many mercies. Even in our most solemn services, while we have been drawing near unto thee with our lips, our hearts have sometimes been far from thee. We have had a form of godliness without the power thereof ; and in the tenor of our lives and conversation in the world, it has often been too manifest that we have forgotten to love thee, the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. Our hearts have been estranged from thee by the allurements of this world ; and our feet have been wandering on the dark mountains of vanity, in quest of pleasure, where it can never be found—in the forbidden, but deceitfully enticing paths of iniquity. Redeemed as we are, and bought with a price—even with the precious blood of the Son of God—we have counted that blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have been guilty of crucifying the Lord afresh by our iniquities.

Deal not with us, O Lord, according to our iniquities, nor reward us according to our transgressions; for if thou wert strict to mark, or rigorous to punish, who could stand before thee? Look not upon us as we are in ourselves, but look upon us in the face of thine Anointed: For his sake, we entreat thee, O Lord, to be merciful to our unrighteousness, and to hide thy face from our sins. Endow us, O Lord, with a spirit of repentance. Leave us not, we beseech thee, to the foolish counsels of our own hearts. Set restraints upon our thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over our hearts. Let not our consciences be seared, so as to spare our follies, and pass by our sins, and say Peace, peace, while there is no peace,—lest our forgetfulness of thee should increase, and our sins should abound to our destruction, and we should fall before our spiritual adversaries, and give the enemies of our salvation reason to triumph over us; but, deeply impressed with a sense of thine infinite goodness, and our own ingratitude—of thy spotless holiness, and our own impurity—of thine impartial justice, and our own unworthiness—may we be induced to lay hold on one that is able, and mighty, and willing to save; and, allowing ourselves to be guided by his pre-

cepts and by his spirit, may we make haste to turn our feet unto thy testimonies. No longer conformed to a world lying in wickedness, may we be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of thee our God; that our rejoicing may be this, even the approving testimony of our own consciences, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we endeavour to have our conversation in the world as becometh the followers of Jesus; and that when we look forward to that eternity, which is hourly and rapidly approaching, our hearts may be animated and supported by that hope, which maketh not ashamed, but which is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast.

With grateful hearts we thank thee, O Lord, for all thy temporal mercies toward us. From youth to age thy hand has ever been felt supporting us—enabling us to walk without fear through this valley of the shadow of death. We thank thee, that, in mercy, thou hast appointed our habitation in a land enlightened by the rays of the Sun of righteousness;—that the glad tidings of salvation have reached our ears;—that, amidst all the vicissitudes of life, our hearts are supported by

the rich and precious consolations of the gospel, and our souls delighted and strengthened by its solemn ordinances dispensed amongst us. We thank thee, that thou hast this day brought us in peace, and in comfort, to thy house of prayer, with the joyful prospect of devoting ourselves to thee, at the table of a crucified Redeemer. Fit and prepare our hearts, O Lord, for that solemn service. Forbid that any should this day place themselves at the table of the Lord, whose conduct agrees not with their professions. Forbid that any should thus solemnly confess Jesus before men, while, by their works, they deny him—living as heathens in a Christian land: But may all who draw near unto thee in this ordinance, draw near with their hearts, and not with their lips only;—may all who thus profess to be the disciples of Jesus show, by their lives and conversations, that they are his disciples indeed.

Be merciful to such as care for none of these things; who despise thy ordinances, and live without thee, and without hope in the world. Convince them of their error ere it be too late for repentance:—May they yet find it good for them to draw near unto God: May they yet be led to look with love, and with gratitude, upon him

whom they have pierced, and to choose him as their only portion.

Be present with those, O Lord, who are detained from waiting upon thee in this house of prayer; who are confined to beds of languishing, and have wearisome days and nights appointed them. May they yet rejoice when it is said to them, on other occasions of this kind, "Go ye up unto the house of your God." But should it seem meet unto thee, that no future opportunity be granted them of thus holding communion with their Saviour and their brethren on earth, may they be fitted and prepared for holding a more blessed and perfect communion with the spirits of the just, with their Saviour, and with their God, amidst the glories of thy kingdom above.

Be with us, O Lord, as we are now to be employed in speaking and in hearing from thy holy word. May we speak what we believe, unawed by the opinions or the prejudices of men; and may the word spoken be profitable. All our hope is in thee; and all that we ask is for Christ's sake.—
Amen.

SERMON.

LUKE xxii. 33.—*And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.*

THE chapter, of which these words form a part, details the particulars of the last interesting and affecting interview betwixt our Saviour and the disciples whom he loved:—A tender parting scene, which he wished to be kept in remembrance by his followers in every age, and which we, in a far distant age and country, have this day assembled to commemorate.

Jesus, touched with a fellow-feeling for human infirmity—with a tender brotherly concern for his faithful disciples, under that sorrow with which his sufferings and his death were soon to fill their affectionate hearts—had gradually been preparing them for the distressing events they were to witness. He occasionally threw out obscure hints concerning what was ere long to take place; but although these, no doubt, gave them a passing presentiment of coming evil, yet they were unwilling to understand, and slow of heart to believe, the

whole of what his words implied: And when he more explicitly revealed the sufferings he was to undergo, and the death he was to die at Jerusalem, gladly would they have doubted the evidence of their own senses; for they could not conceive, that he “who spake as never man spake,” would have thus, by his language, pierced their hearts with sorrow, had there been no reason for him thus to express himself; and, on the other hand, they could not conceive, that so kind and generous a master would leave, a prey to grief and persecution, those who loved him, and had forsaken all for his sake. They had seen all nature under his controul;—the winds and the waves obeying him,—the dead hearing his voice,—and even the hosts of heaven obedient to his call;—well, therefore, might they conceive, that there was no power over which he was not able to triumph,—no malice which he was not able to defeat. Most natural was it for them to say, “Be it far from thee, Lord! this shall not be unto thee!” But, reflecting upon his veracity—that he was the oracle of truth, from whose lips no word had ever proceeded in vain—their reason must gradually, however unwillingly, have been convinced of the certainty of the coming affliction.

The hour of its approach was now near at hand; and if any lingering doubts, or pleasing hopes, still remained, they were completely annihilated by his solemn, impressive, and affectionate words at this last interview: “With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Their love could no longer whisper a belief that the calamity was to be averted, or the painful separation delayed; it could only inspire them with a wish to suffer and to die with him they loved. The same affection which led the warm-hearted Peter, on a former occasion, to exclaim, “Be it far from thee, Lord! this shall not be unto thee!” now leads him, with noble self-devotion, to say, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.”

And can we wonder, my brethren, that so ardent an affection had been raised in the breasts of those, who had been his constant followers through his earthly pilgrimage,—who had marked his unspotted life, listened to his pure and holy instructions, and witnessed his heavenly power, employed alone in deeds of mercy? No:—The

wonder is, and will be to the end of time,—that amongst *them* could be found one so base as to betray such heavenly excellence!—that amongst *them* could be found one, who, for a single moment, yielding to the infirmity of nature, could deny his Lord!—And how is the wonder heightened when we are told, that *that one* was the very apostle who uttered the words of the text? In him, indeed, it was only a momentary feeling of weakness, a stain which was quickly washed away by his bitter tears of repentance. His love to his Master remained unimpaired, and was nobly proved by his after conduct. He, indeed, showed that it was no empty boast—no vain flattering profession—when he said that he was “ready to go with him both into prison and to death.”

In speaking further from these words, let us consider, in the *first* place, Upon what grounds a similar attachment to our Saviour ought to be founded in our bosoms also; and, *secondly*, How we are to manifest that attachment.

I. Let us consider, then, upon what should be founded in us, the same devoted attachment to our Saviour that his disciples felt,—an affection that would make us ready to suffer and die with him.

Such an affection may well be founded on admiration of his character. We naturally admire what is great and good in human character. Those who, by their wisdom, their courage, their benevolence, their patience, and their righteousness, have widely diffused blessings amongst the human race, added dignity to the name of man, and shown in their lives what human nature ought to be, naturally call forth our admiration. We cannot withhold from them our regard while they live, nor our tender regret when to us they are no more. But compare them all with Jesus of Nazareth, and they shrink into insignificance. —We do indeed admire and love the legislator, whose wisdom blesses his country with peace, prosperity, and happiness;—but what lawgiver can for a moment be likened unto him, whose laws, were they universally obeyed, would convert this world into a scene, in which there would be nothing to hurt or to offend, where injustice and oppression would be unknown, and war and discord rage no more? We admire and love the patriot, who willingly submits to every hardship and sacrifice for the good of his native land; but whom can you liken unto him, who,—in order to raise from the most degrading slavery

and rescue from the greatest evils, that race by which he was rejected and despised,—descended from the regions of bliss and of glory, to humble himself, and become a prey to contempt and derision, to endure calumny and oppression through life, and to suffer upon the cross a painful and ignominious death? We admire and love the philosopher, whose talents have enlightened the world, and whose researches have largely contributed to the improvement and comfort of society:—we admire and love the physician, whose skill has been the means of alleviating the pressure of disease to thousands, and of restoring the smile of joy to many a woe-worn countenance:—But can the wisdom of the one, or the skill of the other, be compared to the knowledge contained in the gospel of Christ? What do we find, in the writings of the wisest on earth, so well calculated to enlighten the darkened understanding—to improve the condition of man—to remove so many of the afflictions of human life—to soften and to sooth its natural and necessary evils? And where is the physician among men, at whose word sickness and disease disappear, and even the grave gives up its prey? The wisdom which man, through many ages, has accumulated, must indeed bow before

“that wisdom which was from above.” We admire and love the benevolent, the merciful, the patient amongst our brethren; and deservedly are they admired and loved:—But can any benevolence, or mercy, or resignation, that has ever been exhibited in man, be likened to his, who “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself”—who bore such a load of humiliation, and sorrow, and pain, in order to procure blessings for his cruel and barbarous enemies—who endured all their ingratitude, oppression, and cruelty, without a murmur—going about among them doing good while on earth; and, when their deadly malice had nailed him to the cross, praying his heavenly Father to forgive them? There was indeed in his resignation, in his benevolence, and in all his other virtues, a dignity and splendour that had never before been witnessed upon this earthly scene.

If, then, our hearts are formed for admiring what is great or good in human nature, and for loving what we admire, what must be our admiration, what must be our love towards him, who so far surpassed in excellence all that we have seen or heard of among the sons of men? It must be an admiration which no distance of time can diminish—a love stronger than death—ardent as that which

made the holy apostle exclaim, “ Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death !”

Gratitude may surely be a foundation for such an affection.

Gratitude is one of the strongest and best feelings implanted in the human breast: it is the parent of affection. And can any earthly benefactors move it in an equal degree with Jesus of Nazareth? Examine the favours they have conferred, and which you have embalmed in your memory. You have heard of the kindness and anxiety with which your parents have watched over your tender infancy; you bear in mind the care with which they reared you to manhood—shielded you from danger—guarded you from temptation—endeavoured to provide for your comfort through life—and still more anxiously endeavoured, by their instructions, to provide for your happiness through eternity: As long as they live, you find them watching over you with parental affection—rejoicing in your Christian progress—relieving you in want—comforting you in sickness—soothing you in trouble: And can you ever cease to be grateful? can you ever cease to love them? No:—It is your delightful task to administer to the comfort of their declining years,

—to sooth the woes, and brighten the gloom of their old age: you lament their departure, and only with your latest breath vanishes your tender regard for their memory. But Jesus loved you with more than even a parent's love. It was love to you that made him descend to this valley of tears—to be a man of suffering and of sorrow—to bear with resignation, hardships, ignominy, and pain, as the means of acquiring for you blessings far superior to any that an earthly parent can bestow.

You are inspired with gratitude and love to him who by his skill hath raised you from the bed of sickness, and to the friend who soothed you by his kindness through many a tedious day and wearisome night:—But where is the physician who, like Jesus, has been able to heal the diseases of your soul? He alone hath instructed you by his precepts, and promised you the aid of his Holy Spirit to purify it from every evil, and to restore it to the image of God.—Where is the friend, that like him hath soothed you on the bed of sickness?—Who, amongst your brethren of mankind, could have been able, without the aid of his gospel, to rouse your drooping spirits by directing your view to brighter regions, where

there is neither disease nor death, but fulness of joy at the right hand of God for evermore? A victim, perhaps, to oppression, and a prey to poverty, your heart has been filled with gratitude and love to him who arrested the arm of the oppressor, who heard your cry, relieved your wants, and restored you to comfort and independence:—But who, like Jesus, hath been able to fortify your heart against oppression, by imparting divine strength to your weakness?—who, like him, hath been able to raise you superior to all the cares and vicissitudes of this world, by giving you the assurance of a richer inheritance, even “an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that passeth not away?” Trifling, indeed, are the benefits conferred by earthly friends, compared to those conferred by this heavenly Friend; and, while their kindness kindles the flame of gratitude and love in your bosoms, what must be your feelings toward him, who hath done so many and so great things for you,—who for your sake became poor, that ye might be invested with the riches of eternity,—who died, that he might open to you the gate of heaven! Well may your love and gratitude lead you to feel, like the apostle, that with him you could have suffered imprisonment and death.

Your confidence in him as your Saviour may well be the foundation of such an affection.

You confide in his power. Does the power of the great amongst your brethren inspire you with confidence in them? Blessed with their favour and protection, do you fear no evil? Alas! how subject are their power and riches to decay! Those in whom you trust may soon experience the vicissitudes of fortune, and exchange the charms of wealth and power for the galling yoke of poverty and dependence. But, independently of the changes of fortune, the uncertainty of human life must render feeble your trust in earthly power. The benefactor on whom you rely, may suddenly be laid low in that narrow house, where all are equally weak and helpless—where the ear that listened to your request is shut for ever, and the eye that beamed on you with kindness shall see you no more. Vain, indeed, is your confidence even in the most powerful of the sons of men, in whom there is no stay. But on the power of Jesus you may securely rely,—on that power, to which all nature was obedient,—which could triumph over death, and conquer the grave!—*Who, or what*, O Christian, can blast your hopes of protection in him “who ever liveth, and is able to

save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him?"

You confide in his veracity. How often does the favour of men prove deceitful. Their professions and promises may have elated your heart with hope, and their insincerity made it feel the pain and mortification of disappointment. Alas! how many of the human race have been doomed to mourn in bitterness the wounds of deceit, inflicted by those whom they loved, whom they had served, and upon whose gratitude, and affection, and honour, they had implicitly relied! Such scenes tend to weaken our confidence in men;—but we can rest assured, that our Saviour will never deceive us. Will not the Son and Messenger of the Most High perform whatsoever he hath promised? And although he had not borne this lofty title, well might we have confided in his veracity, for, in his life and in his death, he displayed every virtue that can adorn humanity, unobscured by any of its failings; and can we for a moment imagine, that *deceit*—a vice reckoned so mean and odious among men—could ever dwell in the bosom of him, who proved by every word and action of his life, that he was holy, harmless, and undefiled?

You confide in his love. It is natural for you to place your confidence in those who love you. Amongst men, however, we have seen the strongest attachments broken—the most ardent love die away; and you may find the smile of affection unexpectedly exchanged for the frown of hatred, or the freezing look of indifference. But far superior is your Saviour's love to that which any fellow-mortal can feel for you. I surely need not dwell upon the proofs of that love, which you have this day assembled to commemorate:—The oftener you peruse the history of his life, of the sorrows he endured, and the death he suffered for your sake, the more will you *feel* that his love can never wax cold—that it is an affection upon which you can securely rely, amid all the vicissitudes of life, at the hour of death, and through the endless ages of eternity.

The power, the veracity of your Saviour, and the love that he bears to you, are indeed calculated to produce in your hearts an *unlimited confidence*—a confidence that may well be the source of an affection, ardent as that which made the holy apostle exclaim, “ Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death !”

II. How, my brethren, are we to manifest, towards our heavenly Friend, the affection thus founded upon our admiration of what is so pre-eminently great and good,—upon our gratitude to what is so pre-eminently generous and affectionate,—upon our confidence in what is so pre-eminently powerful, and faithful, and true?

We cannot, like his disciples of old, be his companions in affliction, or have a share in his sorrows: We cannot see him led to judgment, derided, condemned, and crucified: We have no opportunity of going with him “into prison and to death;” for he is no longer a man of sorrows, subject to pain and poverty—to the injustice, oppression, and cruelty of the wicked—to the shame and agony of the cross; he now dwells amidst the delights of eternity, arrayed in that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

But, my brethren, we may still manifest the ar-
dency of our affection, by suffering for his sake.

Many of his faithful followers, in the early ages of the church, nobly testified their affection by braving, for his sake, all the terrors of persecution—all the torments that human cruelty could inflict. They indeed followed him “into prison and to death,” rejoicing to lay down their lives in

testimony of their love.—The powers of the earth are no longer in league against the followers of Christ. We have not now to encounter the gloom of a dungeon, or the agonies of the cross, for confessing him before men. Yet we live in an age in which there are still enemies to his gospel; and our profession may expose us to their hatred and their scorn. But let not their ridicule, however severe,—let not their calumnies, however unjust and piercing to the soul,—let not their malice, however painfully experienced by us, shake our resolution, or impair our love and veneration for him on whose account we are doomed to suffer. Slight are such trials compared with those of the first Christians; but, cherishing such feelings as theirs, let us like them glory in his cross, in whatever manner we are doomed to bear it; let us rejoice in being called upon to suffer for his sake. When men revile us, and persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us, falsely, for his sake, let us rejoice and be exceeding glad.

You may manifest your affection to your Saviour by suffering after his example.

A prey to disease,—many wearisome days and nights appointed you,—debarred from every wonted pleasure, and laid upon beds of languishing,

from which no human skill can raise you—upon which no human sympathy is able to sooth you,—evince your love to your Saviour by enduring, like him, the chastisement of your heavenly Father. He was made perfect, as an example to us, through suffering; and under the severest suffering his language was, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” Blessed may you reckon disease, if you thus endure it. Health may never again reanimate your countenance; pain, and weakness, and death, may now be your only portion on earth; but “there remaineth a rest for the people of God;” and the light afflictions that last but for a moment, “shall work out for you a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.”

Plunged into the vale of poverty—doomed to bear the discomforts of want, and the neglect and scorn of a vain unfeeling world, which in the day of your prosperity flattered and caressed you—you may evince your love to Jesus, by bearing the hardships of your condition like him, who, though Lord of nature, condescended to be a wandering outcast among the sons of men, friendless and forsaken, not having where to lay his head! If like him you suffer, poverty will bring a blessing that wealth cannot purchase, that earthly power

cannot confer ; a title to the treasures of eternity—to an abode of bliss—to a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Wounded by ingratitude ;—hated or injured by those whom you cherished by your bounty, promoted by your interest, or soothed by your sympathy ;—neglected by the children whom you watched over with a parent's anxiety, whom you instructed with a parent's care, and whom you loved as your own soul ;—endure ingratitude, and forgive the ungrateful, like him who “ was wounded in the house of his friends ;” who was despised and rejected, reviled, and scourged and crucified by the race that he came to bless and to save. If you thus prove your affection by imitating his glorious example, the wounds inflicted by ingratitude will be healed,—you will gain a heavenly friend who will never forsake you, and the unkindness of earthly friends shall be remembered no more.

Have you fallen into the snares of the unprincipled hypocrite ? Does he assume the garb of integrity and honour, that he may gain your confidence only to make you the prey of his mean and selfish cunning ? Have terms of regard and friendship flowed from his lips, to deceive you and the world, while his dark and malignant heart was

eagerly plotting your ruin? Thus did the infamous Judas betray his Lord, saying, "Hail, Master!" and kissing him, only that his ruffian associates might secure their innocent victim.—Endeavour to submit to the triumph of artful villany, like him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. If you thus prove your love to him, you shall be blessed, on earth, with a peace of conscience which the hypocrite can never feel, and in heaven, with an eternity of delight which the hypocrite shall never enjoy. Under all that you suffer from deceit, let your heart be supported by the assurance, that "the triumph of the wicked is short—the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment."

Are you bent down under a load of injustice and oppression,—and is your enemy proud and powerful? Unrestrained by principle, and unmoved by pity, does he employ all the power with which he is invested—all the specious art and duplicity with which he is endowed—to injure your fortune, destroy your comfort, and crush you under the iron yoke of his tyranny; while, amidst the cautious and the selfish around you, you find few to plead the cause of the oppressed?—Endeavour to suffer like your Saviour, when he was condemned, and scourged, and crucified, by a savage,

unprincipled, and lawless power. Even in this life there may be a way to escape—a path, enlightened by sunshine, to conduct you out of the darkness with which you are surrounded; and you may leave to your vain and unfeeling oppressor, only the heart-gnawing mortification of disappointed malice. But should he be able to persecute you even to the death, blessed indeed will be your deathbed when compared with his,—and in the grave the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Over the grave of his poor and oppressed victim, the most vain and powerful oppressor feels himself humbled,—he finds that he can do no more,—his power cannot make the dead to tremble, nor can his voice disturb the ashes of the tomb. Your wrongs are written in the book of life; and you shall ascend to that mansion which is prepared for you by Him after whose example you have suffered;—you shall for ever dwell with him in that blessed land where injustice is unknown, and where the voice of the oppressor shall never be heard.

Reflecting upon the resignation of your Saviour, do ye, my brethren, under the most cruel injuries, the most distressing afflictions, the most heart-rending bereavements, endeavour to copy the ex-

ample of him, whose language, under greater grief than you can ever suffer, was this, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Thus prove the strength of your affection to him; that it is such as would induce you, had you an opportunity, to go with him “into prison and to death.”

Although the text has led us to consider more particularly, how we are to prove our affection to our Saviour by suffering for his sake, and after his example; yet this is not the only way by which it is incumbent upon us to prove the strength of that affection; for in *doing* as well as in *suffering* he was an example which, as faithful and affectionate disciples, we should earnestly endeavour to imitate. Contemplating, then, his holiness and purity, let us be anxious to purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect our holiness in the fear of the Lord. Contemplating his humility, let us not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; but let us learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart. Contemplating his unbounded benevolence, let us be tender-hearted and “kindly affectionate” to our brethren,—let us be friends to the friendless, and as fathers to the fatherless—let us be as a rock

of defence to the oppressed, and let the blessing of them that were ready to perish come upon us.

To conclude, Let us evince the strength of our affection to our Saviour, by paying a due regard to the outward institutions of his religion. While many forget to assemble themselves together in his name, and live as if there were no God, and no Saviour in the universe; let us consider it, not only as our duty, but as our highest privilege, to assemble at stated times in his house of prayer, there to strengthen the religious and virtuous impressions that are apt to be enfeebled and forgotten amidst the cares, the business, and the pleasures of the world. Let us, with unfeigned joy, join at times in the more solemn acts of worship. Let it be our delight (as it is this day our intention) to sit down at the table of the Lord, there to bear in mind his sufferings and death;—there to contemplate the wondrous love of our heavenly Friend and Benefactor;—there to renew our vows of obedience to his laws, and strengthen our resolution to walk in his footsteps. And, returning to the world, let our whole conduct in that world bear witness, that our love to him is ardent and sincere, even like that which induced

the holy apostle to exclaim, “ Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death !”

PRAYER.

“ OUR Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.—Amen.”

PARAPHRASE xxvi. 1—3. *

HO! ye that thirst, approach the spring
 Where living waters flow ;
 Free to that sacred fountain all
 Without a price may go.
 How long to streams of false delight
 Will ye in crowds repair ?
 How long your strength and substance waste
 On trifles, light as air ?

* While this Paraphrase is sung by the congregation, the Elders place the bread and wine upon the table.

My stores afford those rich supplies
 That health and pleasure give :
 Incline your ear, and come to me ;
 The soul that hears shall live.

ADDRESS FROM THE PULPIT BEFORE COMMUNION.*

CHRISTIANS,—While we dwell on earth, we ought to have our desires, our hopes and affections, fixed on heaven,—to be preparing for an entrance into that blessed region, and fitting ourselves for its enjoyments.

Our inducements are many and powerful, whether, on the one hand, we think of the shortness of life—its vanity, its empty enjoyments, its distressing cares, its irremediable afflictions; or, on the other, of the eternity of heaven—its transcendent glory, its pure and unclouded joys, its blessed society. With the prospect of such a dwelling-place before us, no wonder that our desires and affections stretch beyond this passing scene; and that we eagerly lay hold on every event, every ordinance of religion, that can tend to bring our heavenly country near—to place it

* Called in our Church, “ *The fencing of the Table.*”

directly before the eye of our mind, that we may meditate upon its attractions, and have a foretaste of its joys. Such an ordinance is this in which we propose to be engaged, and such an event was that, of which it was meant to serve as a memorial to all generations—even the death of the Lord Jesus, by which he purchased for all his faithful disciples an entrance into life eternal.

In order to convince you that this ordinance is not of man's appointment, we may read in your hearing the words of the apostle Paul, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xith chapter, 23d verse. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body

and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (or judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

In this passage, and others in the gospel, we are told that our blessed Lord himself, when he was about to be delivered into the hands of his enemies, to be reviled, and scourged, and crucified, requested of his followers, that, as a tribute of affection, they should, by this ordinance, keep alive the remembrance of that love which led him, for their sake, to encounter the greatest indignities and torments that human cruelty could inflict.

None but his disciples were requested by Jesus thus to remember him; and the apostle declares, that he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; that he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. It is necessary, therefore, to place a fence around the table of the Lord. In doing so, let me direct your attention to the commandments of the Lord your God, recorded in the Book of Exodus, chapter 20th.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in

heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter; thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For, in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

“Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

“Thou shalt not kill.

“ Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“ Thou shalt not steal.

“ Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

“ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

The rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law are now abolished, but *these* commandments remain as binding upon us, as upon the followers of Moses; for our Saviour hath said, that “ one jot or one tittle of them shall not pass away.”

Do any of you continue to live in the habitual violation of these laws, without forming a resolution of repentance? Do you hold fast your iniquity, and refuse to let it go, having no fear of God before your eyes?—Then, in the name and authority of Jesus, we debar you from this ordinance; for, “ what fellowship hath light with darkness? what concord hath Christ with Belial?”

Is your faith in Jesus only a speculative opinion, influencing not your heart and your conduct? Is it a faith without works, unprofitable and dead? While you call Jesus Lord, Lord, have you no desire to obey his precepts and follow his exam-

ple? Have you no wish to learn of him to be holy, harmless, and undefiled?—Then you ought surely to hold yourselves debarred from his table: Why would you sit down there as friends, and only work out for yourselves a greater condemnation?

Yet we would not, my brethren, through an excess of zeal, represent this ordinance as Mount Sinai, not to be approached by mortal men, all of whom, alas! have sinned and come short of the glory of God.—On the contrary, we would call upon all who feel “weary and heavy laden” under iniquity, to come unto Christ, that they may find rest.—We invite to his table all of you, whatever your past conduct may have been, who are deeply humbled under a sense of your guilt, and sincerely resolved to cast off your sins by repentance. Then, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”—We invite to this table all whose faith in Jesus is sincere, and fruitful in good works; all who faithfully endeavour to walk in the footsteps of their Redeemer, and to overcome the world with its affections. Let such read, for their encouragement, the words of their blessed Master, recorded in the 5th chapter of St

Matthew's Gospel at the 3d verse: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Ye Christians, who here read your own character,—or that character which, through divine aid, you are constantly and earnestly striving to attain,—approach with confidence and joy: this bread will be to you the bread of life; this cup, the cup of salvation; and your devotions will ascend in grateful memorial before the throne of the Most High.

 PARAPHRASE XXXV. 1—4.*

'TWAS on that night, when doom'd to know
 The eager rage of every foe—
 That night in which he was betray'd,
 The Saviour of the world took bread :
 And, after thanks and glory given
 To Him that rules in earth and heaven,
 That symbol of his flesh he broke,
 And thus to all his followers spoke :—

“ My broken body thus I give
 For you, for all ; take, eat, and live ;
 And oft the sacred rite renew,
 That brings my wondrous love to view.”
 Then in his hands the cup he raised,
 And God anew he thank'd and praised ;
 While kindness in his bosom glow'd,
 And from his lips salvation flow'd.

WE read, my brethren, that the Lord Jesus,
 when met with his disciples to eat the passover for
 the last time, took bread, and that before he
 brake it he gave thanks :—Let us, after his example,

* While this is sung, the clergyman descends from the pulpit,
 and places himself at the head of the Communion Table.

and in his name, give thanks to our heavenly Father.

CONSECRATION PRAYER.

O LORD, thou hast been the God of our fathers, in whom through many generations they have trusted;—we also put our hope and confidence in thee, for thy goodness endureth for ever. We thank thee for our existence—thou at first formedst us out of the dust of the earth, and didst breathe into our nostrils the breath of life. We thank thee that thou hast endowed us with reason, and hast fashioned us after the image of our Creator;—that thou hast made us capable of tasting the refined pleasures of religion and virtue, and taught us to raise our minds from the study of thy works to the contemplation of thy divine perfections. We thank thee for the inestimable gift of thine own Son, whom, in infinite mercy, thou sentest to enlighten, to instruct, to comfort, and to save us:—We thank thee for all that he did, and taught, and suffered, while he sojourned on earth; and for his gracious promise before he returned unto thee, that he would not leave us comfortless. We thank thee that his gospel is handed down to us

in these latter days, to enlighten us by its precepts, and encourage us by its hopes; and that his spirit is ever with us, to nourish our languishing virtue, to give strength to our weakness, and repose to our troubled hearts. We thank thee that thou hast brought us to this scene of harmony and peace—even to the table of our crucified Redeemer—that with delight and gratitude we may commemorate his dying love.

Be with us, O Lord, we humbly entreat thee, in the celebration of this ordinance. O thou who dwellest on high! bend thy heavens and come down;—graciously accept of this tribute of our gratitude to him who died for us that we might live. May the great Master of the feast be present; may he be made known to us in the breaking of bread. May we sit down under his shadow with great delight, and find his fruit sweet unto our taste.

Over these symbols of his death, we solemnly devote ourselves to his service—we solemnly vow to renounce the pleasures of sin, to overcome the world with its affections, and to be the followers of Jesus, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled—to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him, through good report, and through bad

report, unallured by the temptations of the world, unawed by its frowns.

Assist us, O Lord, in the performance of these vows. Let not our former transgressions be brought into remembrance, for they are more than sufficient to condemn us. For the sake of him who suffered and died for us, be pleased, O God, to accept of our repentance. Aid our virtuous resolutions;—enable us to put them in practice. May we henceforth take upon us the yoke of our Saviour which is easy, and his burden which is light. May we henceforth learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart, that we may find rest to our souls. Henceforth may the same mind be in us which was also in him; and may we find, to our happy experience, that this has indeed been to us the house of God—this the gate of heaven.

Accept of us, O Lord, and of our imperfect services, for the sake of him whom thou hearest always, even Jesus Christ, our strength and our Redeemer.—Amen.

ADDRESSES TO COMMUNICANTS AT THE TABLES,
BEFORE AND AFTER DISTRIBUTING THE
SACRAMENTAL ELEMENTS.

FIRST TABLE.

CHRISTIANS,—HE whose death you have sat down there to commemorate, was your best friend and benefactor. He came, by his instructions to enlighten the understandings that would now have been clouded by superstition and error: He came, by his promises to cheer the hearts that would have been weighed down with fearful apprehensions: He came, by his precepts and example to conduct you out of the mazes of iniquity in which you would have been wandering, and to lead you, by the paths of piety and peace, to the mansions of eternal bliss.

This your heavenly Friend, during his pilgrimage on earth, found his way spread with thorns. He was indeed a traveller through a desert land—through a waste and howling wilderness, in which was found no city of rest;—grief and sorrow were the constant companions of his steps.

Christians,—It was his love to you that made him a man of sorrows;—it was his love to you

that made him become acquainted with grief;—it was his love to you that brought him to prison and to judgment;—it was his love to you that extended him in agony upon a cross; for he came, by his sufferings and his death, to seal your redemption, and give you hope toward God. Well, then, does it become you, with sorrow for his sufferings, and with gratitude for his love, thus to show forth his death, in obedience to his last request.

“THE Lord Jesus, that same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks, as has now been done in his name, he brake it, and gave it unto his disciples,* saying, Take, eat; this is my body which was broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.”

“In like manner also, after supper, he took the cup, and gave it unto his disciples,† saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many; drink ye all of

* At these words, the clergyman breaks the bread, and presents it to the communicants seated nearest him.

† Presenting the cup to those nearest him.

it: For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

COMMUNICANTS,—This solemnity must surely call to your remembrance all that your Saviour hath done and suffered for you. Holding in your hands the symbols of his death, the sad series of his afflictions must at once have been presented to your minds.

Weep not for the sufferings of your Lord. He was once indeed a man of sorrows, but he is now beyond the reach of woe. While on earth, he was despised and rejected—he was reviled and slandered—he was scourged and crucified: But he hath risen in triumph from the grave—he hath ascended up on high—he now dwells amidst the delights of the kingdom of heaven.

While, then, you are showing forth the ignominy of his death, you are likewise celebrating the glory of his resurrection; you are joining in the triumph of this conqueror, who hath vanquished death and the grave.

Communicants,—He hath enabled you also to brave these dreadful enemies to your repose, and

to say with him, “ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” For as he rose in glory from the tomb, so shall his faithful followers rise, in newness of life, from the bed of corruption. This corruptible shall put on incorruption; this mortal shall be clothed in immortality.

“ In my Father’s house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also.” Such was the affectionate language of your heavenly Friend while he dwelt on earth. He is now in heaven, fulfilling the gracious promise. Mourn not, then, the absence of your Lord; for soon shall ye be united to him whom your souls love. Raise your hearts, and your affections, from earth to heaven. Look forward;—contemplate the glories of the prospect beyond the grave. Do you behold nothing there sufficient to wean your affections from the fleeting and unsatisfactory pleasures of sin—from the lying vanities of this world? Here you are only travellers through a waste and howling wilderness, where you may indeed find some spots of verdure by the way—some flowery paths, which seem to lead to valleys of pleasure, where the weary pilgrim may be disposed to rest; but before you

reach the wished-for place, your steps may be involved in midnight darkness, the thunders of heaven may be rolling over your heads, the torrent from the mountain may overwhelm you in its waves. Why, O communicants, would you seek for repose in a scene so changeable? Why would you search for pleasure in the abode of terror, desolation, and death? Why would you wish to tarry in the land of the enemy, and to pitch your tents on this side Jordan? The great Captain of your salvation hath already passed over. Behold him waving the banner of victory in the land of promise! Your fathers, your children, and your friends, are ranged around it.—These were once pilgrims with you; with you they supported the toils of the journey; with you they endured the heat of the day; their presence often gave courage to your drooping hearts. You mourn their departure; but dry up your tears, communicants,—they are not lost in the desert; they are only gone before you to the land of rest; they are crowned with glory; they are calling upon you to follow and partake in their triumph. Arm yourselves then, communicants, for your Christian warfare: like them fight—like them overcome the enemies of your salvation, that like them ye may be crown-

ed with victory and honour. Shrink not from the dangers that oppose you : they will fly as you put on your armour against them. The path toward heaven may at first appear steep and thorny, but it will become smooth and pleasant, as you travel along. And will you scruple to undergo a few hardships for a reward so great and glorious? Will you be afraid to follow your Leader, who hath already vanquished the most formidable of your foes? No, surely ; for you have only a few more dangers to encounter—a few more temptations to overcome—a few more afflictions to suffer with resignation as his followers, when the abode of glory shall open to your enraptured view.

Return, then, to the world, bearing this in your minds, that here you are only travellers through a foreign land—at a distance from your home—exposed to tempests and to storms ;—but that you are journeying to a better country, where no clouds shall obscure your paths, where no briars or thorns shall obstruct your way,—to a land “ whose streams make glad the city of your God ;” where peace, contentment, and happiness, ever dwell.

Go in peace, communicants ; and may the God of all consolation and peace go with you.—Amen.

 PARAPHRASE xxv. 3, 4.

FAIR as a beauteous tender flower
 Amidst the desert grows,
 So, slighted by a rebel race,
 The heavenly Saviour rose.

Rejected and despised of men,
 Behold a man of woe !
 Grief was his close companion still
 Through all his life below.

SECOND TABLE.

MAN was created pure and perfect ; unbound-
 ed happiness was the reward of his unsullied in-
 nocence ;—but being placed in honour, he abode
 not ; his virtue, like the morning cloud, vanished
 away.—Sin entered into the world, and brought
 in its train affliction, and sorrow, and death. Man
 was no longer a fit companion for his Maker ; and
 Paradise, that abode of purity, was no longer a fit
 habitation for him. With our innocence fled the
 delights of the garden of Eden, and to guilt was
 assigned this valley of tears and shadow of death.

But the Lord that made us took compassion on the work of his hands; for while our minds were bewildered in doubt—while our hearts were weighed down with apprehensions—while we were contemplating the grave as the silent mansion of eternal forgetfulness; exclaiming in despair, when our friends were mingled with the dust, “If a man die, shall he live again?—There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will flourish green again; but man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”—Then, my brethren, were the prophets sent to remove the gloom of the afflicted:—penetrating the veil of futurity, they announced immortal life; they sung of a Prince and a Leader who was to give us the victory over death and the grave; they exclaimed with joy, “he shall come and save you!”

While we were wandering in a trackless desert, with no guide to direct our steps aright—anxiously inquiring “who would show us any good:”—then was heard the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord;”—then did a beam shine from the hill of Zion, to give light to them that sat in darkness;—then did the Son of God descend from heaven to earth, to sooth the sorrows of the mourners in Zion, to bring them

the glad tidings of salvation, and lead them in the paths of piety and peace.

This blessed and exalted Messenger,—whom all the prophets had hailed as the Redeemer of Israel,—condescended on your account to become a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; he was cut off for the transgressions of his people; his blood was shed for the healing of the nations!—You have now before you the symbols of his death—of that body which was broken, and that blood which was shed for your sins.

“THE Lord Jesus, that same night in which he was betrayed,” &c.

COMMUNICANTS,—As He, whose death you have been showing forth, was, while on earth, a man of sorrows, he was an example to you who are likewise travellers through a valley of tears. Yes, communicants,—however gay this world may at times appear, experience informs us that it is not an abode in which happiness can calmly dwell. The clouds of adversity are continually hovering

around us; grief and sorrow often mark us for a prey. We have seen the countenance that beamed with joy, in a few days clouded with the gloom of despair; and the heart that fluttered with delight, fainting under its own bitterness.

Many who sit at this table may have been deeply wounded by the arrows of affliction. Some of you, whose days began in plenty, whose every youthful wish was gratified,—may now, when the feebleness of age has come upon you, have to endure the hardships of poverty, the scoffs of pride, and the wounds of cold neglect. Some, who lately shone in all the bloom of health and youthful beauty,—may now, pale and sickly, feel your wasted form fainting under the slightest exertion. Some, whose reason was unclouded and strong,—may now feel the mind wavering and unsteady, elated at it knows not what, and dejected it knows not why. Some were blest with the care and affection of the best of parents;—you may have lately seen them laid in the dust—the hearts that loved you so tenderly, beat no more with affection; and you find your youth and innocence unprotected from an unfeeling world. Some have been blessed with children, who sported around you in all the gaiety of infant innocence; whose childish mirth

soothed your heart when oppressed with care; whose artless undisguised affection made you forget all the treachery and unkindness of a deceitful world;—and now, perhaps, when you enter your home, these no longer welcome you with cries of joy, nor hang around you with delight; the voice of their mirth has ceased, and silence and sadness reign in your dwelling. Some of you, on former occasions of this kind, have returned from the house of God with the friend of your bosom, who heightened every joy, and soothed every care;—all was harmony and happiness in your cheerful abode, while, in the evening of the day, your hearts mutually disclosed the delights you had experienced in communion with your God and your Saviour:—and now, perhaps, you must return alone to your solitary habitation;—there, when the shades of evening descend, you must sit with no companion near to comfort or to sooth you—your tears may fall unheeded—your sighs may burst forth unheard.

But why should I describe sorrows which many may at this moment feel,—which many may be earnestly endeavouring to forget without being able? I would rather speak the words of consolation;—I would rather tell you to look to him,

whose sufferings and death you are commemorating. Many were the afflictions that measured out his days and nights of sorrow; yet, for the joy that was set before him, he endured these ills with patience. He regarded this earthly scene merely as a passage to his throne on high. Do ye also, communicants, consider this valley of tears only as a short pilgrimage to the land of glory, where all your earthly afflictions shall be forgotten. Ye who, preserving your integrity, now endure the hardships of poverty,—the riches of eternity are there in store for you. Ye, who unjustly bear the scorn of the proud, the neglect of the selfish, and the frown of the malignant among men,—angels and archangels shall there honour you with their love. Ye, who feel your health decaying,—ye shall there flourish in immortal youth. Ye, who weep for your children, because to you they are not,—ye shall there see them in the bosom of their Father and their God, pure and spotless as they proceeded from his creating hand. Ye, whose parents have gone down to the grave—ye, who mourn over the ashes of those to whom your hearts were most tenderly united;—here, indeed, you can no longer enjoy their society; no longer do they sooth, and comfort, and delight you: But

have they forgotten for ever the objects of their tenderest affections? Bending from their thrones on high, may they not still take an interest in all your wanderings through this world of care,—behold with joy your steady, unwearied progress in the path of holiness,—view with delight this solemn dedication of yourselves to God,—and anticipate, with heavenly rapture, that hour when, after all the trials of mortality are over, they shall again receive you to their bosoms, to part no more for ever!

With the cheering prospect of this better country before you, let your hearts rise superior to all the vicissitudes of this earthly scene. Let not its trifling joys intoxicate—let not its passing sorrows overcome you. Taking piety and virtue as your guides, bend your steps toward the tabernacles of eternity; and, amidst all the trials and dangers of the way, securely place your confidence on the Rock of Ages. Go in peace; and may the God of love and of peace go with you.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE XXV. 5, 6.

YET all the griefs he felt were ours,
Ours were the woes he bore;
Pangs, not his own, his spotless soul
With bitter anguish tore.

We held him as condemn'd by Heaven,
An outcast from his God,
While for our sins he groan'd, he bled,
Beneath his Father's rod.

THIRD TABLE.

IF the appalling darkness, and thunders, and lightnings, amidst which the divine law was given from Mount Sinai, made the stoutest hearts in the camp of Israel to tremble; assuredly, no less terrific was that law itself, to frail and erring mortals, continually coming short of its conditions. Convincing their consciences of guilt, and affording no place for repentance, it would have left them only to hopeless despair, to a fearful looking-for of judgment, had not the God of infinite mercy, by whom

it was imposed, spoken also, by his prophets, of a “Fountain” that was to be opened in Zion for sin and pollution—of a “glorious Messenger,” who was to heal the diseases of his people—of the “Mediator of a better covenant,” the blessed effects of which, reaching back to preceding ages, mitigated the rigour of the law, and gave hope toward God, to all those who believed in his gracious promise.

This promise, which gladdened the hearts of the patriarchs and prophets of old—which removed the despair of the sincere penitent under the law, hath unto you been fulfilled in the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Delightful, indeed, to the ears of his countrymen, must have been the words of the prophet Jeremiah: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. They shall all know me; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” But how much more delightful the words of the angel, who, surrounded by the glory of God, and attended by the hosts of heaven, descended upon the plain of Bethlehem by night! “Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy,

which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men.” These were the most joyful accents ever heard upon this earth. This was the message of salvation, which many wise men and prophets of old desired to hear; and in the anticipation of which, they rejoiced afar off. This was the plain revelation of that mystery into which the angels of heaven desired to look,—even the mercy and loving-kindness of their God, in sending his own well-beloved Son to a lost and rebellious world, not arrayed in the terrors of divinity, to take vengeance upon his enemies, but clothed in flesh and blood, that he might suffer and die for the sinful children of men.

The overwhelming terrors of the law were from that hour abolished; for then was the blessed assurance given, that, through the merits of him whose birth was thus announced from on high, sincere repentance would render the sinner acceptable to the righteous Judge of all the earth. Then was the tender mercy of God unveiled to men, and universal was the call to partake of it. “Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be

saved.”—“ Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”—“ Henceforth there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

You are not left, Christians, to mourn as those who have no hope. Having broken off your sins by repentance; having embraced Jesus as he is freely offered to you in the gospel; being assured by him of pardon for the past, and heavenly aid for the future, you may indeed hold on your course rejoicing, serving your Maker with that perfect love which casteth out fear.

With what delightful feelings may you approach the throne of your heavenly Father, saying with St Paul, “ We are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

No wonder, Christians, that, with love and with gratitude, you commemorate those sufferings, and that death, by which your heavenly Benefactor purchased all your happiness in time, and through eternity.

“ THE Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks,” &c.

COMMUNICANTS,—Hath he, whose death you thus commemorate, abolished the terrors of the law, unveiled the mercy of God, and placed life and immortality before you in the gospel? And do you, amidst all the cares, and concerns, and vicissitudes of the world, consider that gospel as the only “ pearl of great price,”—as “ the one thing needful?” Then, surely, you will allow its precepts to sink deep into your hearts; you will allow its spirit to direct all your thoughts, and to manifest itself in all your words and actions. Your hearts will become as temples dedicated to God, in which no evil can dwell; where every ruder passion will be hushed, and every unhal- lowed desire overcome; where innocence and purity will fix their abode, and inspire that peace, which the world cannot give, nor take away. Meditating upon the holiness of God, his image will become more and more deeply impressed

upon you. Walking in the footsteps of the blessed Jesus, you will be daily approaching nearer to that model of all perfection.

Do you consider the gospel of Christ as the “one thing needful?” Then, surely, that sincerity and truth enjoined in every page of it, will be the rule of your conduct toward God and man. The prayer of the hypocrite will never ascend from your lips, nor will you ever have “a form of godliness without the power thereof;” but you will “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” In your intercourse with your brethren, all your words and actions will gain their confidence; no advantage will be able to allure you into the hidden paths of deceit, no torments will be able to awe you into duplicity—into the concealment of what truth and justice require you to make known. Your integrity, in every situation, you will hold fast, and will not let it go; you will not allow your hearts to reproach you so long as you live.

Do you consider the gospel of Christ as the “one thing needful?” Then that benevolence and charity which it breathes, and which your Saviour so beautifully illustrated in his life, and in his death, will shine forth in all your dealings with mankind. In you, the injured and oppressed will

find a protector, calumniated innocence a defender. The poor will look up to you as their friend, and the blessing of those that were ready to perish will come upon you. The orphan will behold in you a father, and the widow, a stay and a comforter. And though sickness departs not at your approach, its pains will be mitigated by your tender sympathy. It will be your delight to visit and to sooth the sons and daughters of affliction, and the language of all your actions to them will be, "Mourn not, for I am with thee." But your love will not be confined to your family, to your friends, or to your countrymen; it will flow for all mankind: Animated by the genuine, the noble spirit of Christianity, you will extend it even to your bitterest enemies; you will pardon and forgive, you will "bless them that curse you." If your cruel oppressor be brought low, you will acknowledge him as a brother; if he be in want, you will assist him; if sick and afflicted, you will comfort him. It will be your delight, upon every occasion, to overcome evil with good.

This life is a checkered scene of joy and grief. It is called a valley of tears, and there are few indeed who do not, more or less, feel it to be so.—Fleeting and transitory is every earthly pleasure

and enjoyment. You cannot depend upon uncertain riches, and the gratifications derived from them; for frequent and sudden are the transitions from affluence to want, and you may soon experience all the hardships of such a vicissitude. You see many of your brethren sinking under disease, emaciated with pain and sickness, having wearisome days and nights appointed them,—and surely you cannot hope that health shall always glow upon your countenance, and that the bed of sickness shall never be prepared for you! You have seen many parents weeping over the graves of their children,—and you cannot rest assured that you shall grow old in the bosom of that family which you love. At present, your children may sport around you, and gladden your heart; yet in old age you may sit alone and desolate. Should any, or all of these evils come upon you, yet, blessed with the gospel of Christ, which you consider as the “one thing needful,” you will not sink under them. Fortified by that resignation which your Saviour there enjoins—that resignation which he exemplified, when he hung in agony upon the cross—you will kiss the rod that smites you: Even in the furnace of affliction, you will adore the goodness of your heavenly Father; you will

patiently and resolutely press forward, to join that assembly of saints, who have passed through much tribulation, and are now rewarded with the delights of the kingdom of heaven.

Do you consider the gospel of Christ as the “one thing needful?” Then humility, that characteristic mark of his disciples, will adorn all your other graces and virtues. The possession of talents, or learning, or rank, or riches, will not tempt you to think more highly of yourselves than you ought to think, or to look down with scorn on those who are less fortunate around you;—nor will a consciousness of high attainments in virtue and holiness, ever lead you to say to your brethren, “Come not near, for we are holier than you:” But you will consider how poor all your attainments are, when measured by the word of God, and weighed in the balance of his sanctuary;—you will reflect, for how short a period any earthly distinction can exist betwixt the frail sons of a day:—contemplating their equality in the grave, you will feel that pride was not made for man. You will take the yoke of your Saviour upon you, and learn humility of him who was meek and lowly in heart, that you may find rest to your souls, and experience in time, and through eternity, the love and the

favour of your God, who “giveth his grace to the humble.”

It is the gospel of Christ, communicants, that hath placed before you the delights and the glories of heaven; it is his gospel alone that can conduct you thither. You will surely then, with joy and with gratitude, allow yourselves in every situation, —under every circumstance of the life, and every feeling of the heart,—to be guided and directed by its pure and holy precepts: you will be led by it to live on earth as citizens of that better country, where he hath prepared a place for you, that you may reign with him for ever and ever. Go in peace, and may the God of peace and of love go with you.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xxv. 7.

HIS sacred blood hath washed our souls
 From sin's polluted stain:
 His stripes have heal'd us, and his death
 Reviv'd our souls again.

We all, like sheep, had gone astray
 In ruin's fatal road:
 On him were our transgressions laid;
 He bore the mighty load.

FOURTH TABLE.

WHEN the aged Simeon beheld the infant Jesus in the temple, he took the child in his arms, and blessed God, and said, “ Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Do ye, Christians, like the just and devout Simeon of old, feel your hearts burning with the desire of beholding the salvation of your God? Do ye regret that you lived not in an age when you might have thus witnessed, and hailed, the arrival of that blessed and exalted Messenger, whom all the prophets had predicted,—in whom all the patriarchs had believed,—in whom, through many ages, all the saints on earth had rejoiced by anticipation,—and whose descent upon an errand of infinite mercy, all the hosts of heaven viewed with wonder and delight?

Do you earnestly wish, that, with Simeon, you could have pressed the heavenly infant to your bosom? That, with Lazarus and his sisters, you could have welcomed to your home that perse-

cuted outcast from a world that he came to save? That, with his disciples, you had been permitted daily to listen with rapture to his heavenly instructions, and to behold with delight his divine power exerted in deeds of mercy? That, with them, you had been his companions in affliction, and sharers in all his sorrows? That, with them, you had been permitted to testify your affection by your tears at the foot of his cross? and that, with them also, you had been permitted to witness the triumph of his resurrection and the glory of his ascension?

If such are your feelings, Christians, how delightful is it for you to be here!—thus to hold communion with your heavenly Friend! He is no longer, indeed, visible to mortal eyes: Ages have rolled on, since he “finished the work that was given him to do,” and ascended to the regions of bliss, “to his Father and to your Father;” but he hath promised that he would not leave you comfortless: “Let not your hearts be troubled,” said he to his disciples, afflicted by the prospect of a separation, “Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me.” Believe that I will never abandon, to grief and to despair, those who have been my faithful

followers through this valley of tears: that, though I leave you in body, yet that my Spirit shall be ever with you—to guide you through every difficulty, shield you from every danger, and sooth you under every sorrow.

What he then said to his disciples, he is now saying unto you, “ Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Rest assured, communicants, that while you are thus drawing near to him, he is also drawing near to you;—that while you are thus showing forth the sorrows and the death of this your Elder Brother, he is bending over you with infinitely more than a brother’s love—even with that love which he testified by his agonies upon Mount Calvary.

“ THE Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks,” &c.

AWFUL, indeed, was the hour in which this feast of love was instituted! It was on that night on which your Saviour was “ doomed to feel the rage of every foe.”

The city of Jerusalem was then all in uproar against *him* who had descended to be the glory of its temple, whose miracles of mercy had been performed in the midst of it, and who had drawn near, for the last time—affectionately weeping over it.

Animated with the most deadly hatred, the rulers had taken counsel together, and were lying in wait, thirsting for his blood; while the people were crying out, “Crucify him! crucify him!”

In that dark and awful hour—with a perfect foreknowledge of all the horrors of the agonizing scenes that were to follow—the victim of this remorseless cruelty did not, in the midst of his own sorrows, forget the sorrow of those who had been his faithful and affectionate followers through his earthly pilgrimage. It was then that he retired to eat the passover with them, for the last time; to fortify their minds against the painful separation that was to take place, and the trials they were to encounter for his sake; and to pour consolation into their afflicted hearts by the promise of the aid of his Holy Spirit—the assurance of his never-dying love. But, as if to add to the poignancy of his grief, even this parting scene was to be embittered by the wounds of deep ingratitude.

One of those who had been chosen as a disciple, who had been honoured with his fellowship, who had witnessed his mighty works, and marked the virtues of his spotless life—one who was now, for the last time, seated with him at the same table, who ate of the same bread, and partook of the same cup—yet heard his affectionate final blessing with a heart unmoved from its relentless purpose, and only waited his time for delivering him to the armed band of his infuriate murderers.

Surely, communicants, the commemoration of this scene is calculated deeply to impress upon your minds the sad series of those afflictions, like unto no other, wherewith your Lord was afflicted; and which he willingly endured for your sake. No wonder that, inflamed with love and gratitude toward him, your hearts bear a share in his sorrows—that you indeed suffer with your Lord! Raise your dejected spirits, for he is no longer a man of woe. The cruel mockings and scourgings, the agony of Gethsemane, the torments of the cross, the bitterness of death, are past; and now, “rejoicing, he beholds the purchase of his pain.”

If your love, communicants, hath led you to follow your Saviour through his varied scenes of woe, let it lead your imaginations after him still.

Mark the striking contrast betwixt his present and his former condition. Behold the helpless infant, who was meanly laid in a manger at Bethlehem—now seated for ever upon a throne of glory. Behold him, who was despised and rejected of men—now ministered unto by all the hosts of heaven; angels and archangels waiting to fulfil his pleasure. Behold him, who was condemned before an earthly tribunal to be scourged and crucified—now placed upon that awful tribunal, before which, the day is coming, when all kindreds, and tongues and nations, shall fall trembling to receive their eternal doom.

On that day of terror, his faithful followers shall rejoice. Your love to him, communicants, shall not pass unrewarded: for when the glorious morning of the resurrection shall have dawned upon the new heavens and the new earth, then ye, who weep over his sorrows, shall share in his joys unspeakable; ye, who feel for his wrongs and oppressions, shall celebrate his victory in songs of triumph; ye, who sit at this table, with hearts becoming his followers, to show forth his sufferings and his death, shall sit down at his table in the temple of God above, to shew forth his resurrection, his ascension, and his glory—to sing the praises of him that liveth for ever and ever.

Ever cherish in your hearts, then, that love for your Redeemer, and those hopes in him, which this ordinance is fitted to inspire; and, in your journey through life, let your conduct bear witness to the strength of your love, and the sincerity of your trust.

You must retire from this table, and return again to the world:—O let not your present impressions be worn away, nor your present resolutions be forgotten, in your intercourse with it! Watch and pray; for there your virtue and piety will be assailed by many temptations;—there you will receive seducing advice, against which you must close your ears, and alluring example, against which you must guard your hearts,—there you may feel both attachments and aversions, which you must overcome,—there you may receive praise, which you must hear with humility, and wrongs and oppressions, which you must bear with meekness,—there you will meet with treachery and ingratitude, which you must forgive, and with heart-rending bereavements, which you must endure with resignation.

It is indeed a natural exclamation, “Who is sufficient for these things?” But remember, communicants, that you are not sent upon your Chris-

tian warfare on your own charges: “Behold,” said our Saviour, “I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”—“His grace shall be sufficient for you: His strength shall be perfect in your weakness.”

“Deny yourselves, therefore, and take up your cross and follow him.”—“Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you, and run with patience the race that is set before you; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”—“Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Go in peace; and may the God of peace go with you.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xxv. 9.

WRONG'D and oppress'd, how meekly he
 In patient silence stood!
 Mute, as the peaceful harmless lamb,
 When brought to shed its blood.

Who can his generation tell?
From prison see him led!
With impious shew of law condemn'd,
And number'd with the dead.

FIFTH TABLE.

Who was this, of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks as being “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?”—as “bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows,”—as “oppressed and afflicted, yet opening not his mouth,”—as “brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opening not his mouth,”—as “cut off from the land of the living,”—as “stricken for the transgressions of his people, though he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth?”—“who shall declare his generation?” It was he who was described by the same prophet, as “coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength,”—even Jesus your Redeemer, “speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.”

Communicants, there were some circumstances in your Saviour's earthly history, that seemed

calculated only to degrade him in the eyes of men. Was he born of royal or distinguished parents? No: his supposed father was an obscure carpenter in Galilee. Was he ushered into being amidst the accommodations of elegant life? No: he was born in a stable and laid in a manger. When he publicly entered upon the high career for which he was destined, and stood forth the Saviour of the world, was he encircled with a pomp and splendour suited to such lofty pretensions? No: he was still the carpenter's son in appearance, in manner, in society, and more than the carpenter's son in the contempt that attended his steps;—he was an outcast from men: “The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.” By the splendour of his exit, did he compensate for the meanness of his birth and the contempt of his life? No: on the cross, betwixt two malefactors, he hung a spectacle of woe to heaven and earth. Yet, communicants, your Saviour's character sinks not in your estimation; for, amidst those clouds that obscured it, there burst forth a splendour that marked him an inhabitant of heaven, descending for a time on a visit to this earth. Behold prophecy, for thousands of years, pointing with eager eye to the

period of his approach, and celebrating, in all the majesty of eastern language, the glory of his reign! Behold his star conducting the wisdom of the east, with anxious steps, to the place of his nativity! Behold, on the plain of Bethlehem, angelic hosts descended from on high, celebrating his advent in sweetest strains of celestial harmony! Behold the pale and languid forms of disease, which despaired of remedy from human skill—at his approach rising from their weary couches in renovated vigour! Behold, at his command, even the lifeless body that had been laid in the grave, coming forth from that bed of corruption, to restore joy to the mourners! —When he expired upon the cross, behold nature suffering a solemn pause, as if sympathizing with his sufferings,—the veil of the temple rent in twain,—the dead raised from their graves,—the earth shaken to its centre,—the sun covering his face, and veiling the horrid scene in darkness. Behold the ignominy of the cross succeeded by the triumph of the resurrection—by the glory of the ascension. From all this you learn, that Jesus of Nazareth was, indeed, the promised Messiah, —that he, who was born in Bethlehem, dwelt in the bosom of the Father before the beginning of time,—that to him was given all power in heaven

and on earth,—that the son of Mary was the Son of God!

Did he condescend to be born in human form? It was only embodying his heavenly nature, that it might become perceptible to human eyes. Did he die? It was only deserting, for a while, that corporeal frame through which his heavenly nature had shone. Did he heal the sick? It was only closing the wound which his own hand had inflicted. Did he miraculously feed the wandering multitudes in the desert? It was only an exertion of that power which expands the little seed into the lofty tree of the forest—which, from nothing, produced a universe.

Compared with this Redeemer of Israel, all other messengers from heaven shrink into insignificance.

Wonder, then, O heavens! Be astonished, O earth! for this glorious Redeemer suffered and died for the sinful children of men! Well does it become you, communicants, thus to manifest your gratitude for such amazing condescension and unbounded love.

“THE Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks,” &c.

“Do this,” said our Saviour, “in remembrance of me.”—And shall we ever cease to remember him, who was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities?

The kindness of our earthly friends may sometimes be overlooked during their lives; but when they leave us mourners behind them in this valley of tears, it is then brought to our remembrance; it is then that we reflect upon all the marks of their affection—upon all that they have done, and all that they have suffered for us. And can we forget that love which made our Saviour, for our sake, become a man of sorrows—which brought him to prison and to judgment—which extended him in agony upon a cross—that love which was stronger than death, and firmer than the grave!

His disciples treasured up that love in their hearts, when all their hopes, and all their joy, lay interred, with their blessed Master, in the tomb

of Joseph. "He is not here, but risen," said the angel to the women, who were led by their affection to visit that spot on the morning of the third day: "He is not here, but risen: Come and see the place where the Lord lay."

The grave is dark and unlovely; but it is the place appointed for all living; and there we must, ere long, lie down in forgetfulness. It has already, perhaps, O communicant, been closed over your dearest earthly joy—over the lovely infant, whose smiles were to you more delightful than all that the flattery, or even the well-merited approbation, of this world could bestow—over the youth, upon whom you leaned, as the support of your feeble age, and an honour to your grey hairs—over the parents, who ceased not, while they lived, to love you as their own souls—over the brothers and sisters, with whom you sported in infancy, and took sweet counsel in riper years—over the wife, or the husband, who was the partner of every joy, and the soother of every care. But despair not; the grave was also closed over the Son of God; and it became the scene of his triumph. He then gained a victory over death, and, by his own glorious resurrection, proved and illustrated man's immortality.

Mourn not, then, communicants, over the ashes of those you loved;—mourn not as those who have no hope;—refuse not to be comforted, for “the morning shall yet dawn on the long night of the grave.” He, who ignominiously suffered on Mount Calvary—he, who was laid low in the tomb of Joseph—shall again appear in the glory of his Father; and all those who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him. Then shall those, whose absence you mourn, be restored, to leave you no more.

What tongue can describe, what imagination can conceive, the heavenly rapture of that hour, when every breach shall be healed—every overwhelming affliction forgotten—every heart-rending separation compensated, by a blessed, an eternal union!—when the mourners shall return together to Zion with songs, even with this song of triumph and of praise, “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!”

And shall not such a prospect, communicants, animate you to hold on your way rejoicing;—to persevere in that course which you have this day chosen;—to walk in the footsteps of him, whom

you have now solemnly sworn to follow, through good report and through bad report?

You are at this moment transported, as it were, to the world of spirits, and holding converse with the illustrious dead; your hearts are joining in sweet fellowship with your blessed Redeemer—with those who loved you on earth, and who will ere long welcome you as their associates in heaven; and you may feel a wish that such a blessed intercourse might suffer no interruption,—that you could here pitch your tents, and fix your abode for ever. But, alas! communicants, this, though a delightful, is only a short and fleeting anticipation of the joys that await you in the land of glory. You must arise and go hence;—and, before you reach that blissful abode, many are the hardships, and trials, and dangers, you may yet have to encounter in your pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world. But let the remembrance of that heavenly communion, and foretaste of heavenly bliss, which you now enjoy, raise you, as candidates for immortal glory, above all the vicissitudes of this earthly scene. Let it guard you against every temptation, support you under every trouble, sooth you under every affliction, and be as a beam that shineth to direct your steps toward the man-

sions of eternal day.—Go in peace, and may the God of all consolation and peace go with you.—Amen.

LET us, after the example of Jesus and his disciples, when he instituted this ordinance, conclude the solemn service with a hymn of praise.

PARAPHRASE lxxv. 5.

HARK, how the adoring hosts above
 With songs surround the throne!
 Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
 But all their hearts are one.

Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
 To be exalted thus!
 Worthy the Lamb, let us reply,
 For he was slain for us!

To him be power divine ascrib'd,
 And endless blessings paid;
 Salvation, glory, joy, remain
 For ever on his head!

Thou hast redeem'd us with thy blood,
 And set the prisoners free;
 Thou madest us kings and priests to God,
 And we shall reign with thee.

To him who sits upon the throne,
The God whom we adore,
And to the Lamb that once was slain,
Be glory evermore !

ADDRESS FROM THE PULPIT AFTER COMMUNION.

By this solemn service, Communicants, you have apparently devoted yourselves to God: you have, before men and angels, professed yourselves the disciples of Christ Jesus. It is our earnest wish, and our hope, that none of you may have done so in order to preserve an appearance of religion, while you feel not its influence upon your hearts;—that none of you may have drawn near to God with your lips, while your hearts are far from him—while you are enemies to him through wicked works—while you are without God, and without hope, in the world;—that none of you may have thus professed to be the followers of Jesus, while, instead of taking up your cross and following him, you every day rise only to crucify him afresh by your iniquities! But are any of you conscious to yourselves, that you have thus profaned this holy ordinance? Then, not in anger, but in pity,

would we earnestly exhort you to reflect upon the enormity of your transgression.

Amongst the few that sat at meat with your Saviour, when this ordinance was instituted, there was one, whose traitorous and deceitful heart had no share in the feelings, which it was calculated to inspire;—one who, along with the other disciples, and with no less *seeming* affection for his Lord than they, received from him the cup of blessing, while he held in his possession the price of the innocent blood of him, by whom that cup was administered and blessed! If, like him, you have betrayed your Lord, O let not your repentance, like his, come too late! but, thankful that sentence against your sacrilege has not been executed speedily, and your blood mingled with your sacrifice,—thankful, that a moment's time has been allowed you for reflection,—return to the Lord that he may have mercy upon you! Through the merits of your Saviour, mercy and pardon may yet be obtained, if, listening to his voice, you forsake the evil of your way, and learn of him to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. O let not the sun go down upon your iniquity, lest this very night your soul should

be required of you, and the portion of the liar and the hypocrite be for ever assigned you !

Ye, whose professions have been sincere ; whose homage this day has been that of the heart and the affections ; who, while calling Jesus your Lord, feel an earnest desire to be his disciples indeed ; —ye, who have at his table resolved that iniquity shall no longer have dominion over you, that you will henceforth fly from temptation, shun even the appearance of evil, and strenuously endeavour to hold the faith with a good conscience.—O let not these resolutions pass away with this passing solemnity ! Let not your piety languish, nor your vows be broken, upon your departure from this holy place ; but, returning to the world, hold on your Christian course without wavering. Let your conduct there bear witness, that you have this day been with Jesus ; and that the love you have this day manifested toward him, includes a love for his pure and holy laws—a love for virtue, for piety to God, for justice and benevolence to men. As ye have received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in him. He came, not only to declare the will of God to man, but to show by his life how it should be obeyed ;—he came, not only to give himself a sacrifice for sin, but to lead us by his example in

the paths of new obedience;—and, communicants, he came, not arrayed in the splendour, or in the terrors of heaven, but was found amongst us in fashion as a man, that we might be able to walk in his steps. Be not partial imitators, then, of him who was a model of all that can be esteemed, and admired, and loved in human nature; but, directed by his word, and aided by his Spirit, let your characters be marked with all those graces and virtues that adorned his—let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Ye young communicants, who have, for the first time, thus solemnly devoted yourselves to the service of God, we trust you have done so after serious reflection and self-examination. Ye have now chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from you, so long as you walk in the path of integrity.

You were permitted to join in this holy ordinance after due examination, and giving satisfaction as to your knowledge of the principles of your religion. But rest not satisfied, my young friends, with a knowledge of its principles, without obeying its precepts. Remember the words of your Saviour, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

You may find it difficult to tread the path of youth with innocence. It is a season when the passions are strong, when temptations are alluring, when evil communication is most apt to corrupt good manners. Watch, therefore, and pray. Keep a strict guard over your conduct. Let your conscience—let the holy word, and the Holy Spirit of God, be your guides. Take the yoke of your Saviour upon you. His yoke is easy, his burden is light. His religion requires not that your countenance should always be covered with gloom—that mirth should be a perpetual stranger to your youthful hearts. No: Rejoice in your youth, and let your hearts cheer you in the days of your youth;—but ever bear in mind, that you have to give an account before the tribunal of God; and beware lest your youthful amusements and pleasures should be found inconsistent with that pure morality inculcated in the gospel of Christ. Choose religion as your constant companion and friend through the whole of your earthly pilgrimage: She will be your protector in every danger,—your counsellor in every difficulty,—your comforter under every vicissitude of life,—and, when feeble with age, and tottering on the brink of the grave, she will not

forsake you. “ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Ye aged, you have again witnessed a good confession. Ye have done well, in sitting down at the table of the Lord, and there holding communion with the world of spirits: for this world is passing away from you—the days have come, in which you are forced to say that you have no pleasure. Let this ordinance bring you nearer to your heavenly home; and let the foretaste it has given you of heavenly joys, lighten to you the days of darkness, and cheer and support you through the remainder of your pilgrimage.

But surely I need not remind you, my brethren, that it is not to the aged alone, that this solemn, this delightful service, may never return! From what we have experienced, in the years that have passed away, we cannot form the hope that we shall all thus meet again to celebrate this ordinance. But let not our hearts be troubled: let our only anxiety be to meet again in heaven: for all the delight we can feel, in celebrating this ordinance here, bears only a faint resemblance to the joys that await us there—in the blessed society of those, who are led by the Lamb to fountains of living water, and from whom God hath wiped away every tear.

PRAYER.

WE would again draw near unto thee, O Lord, with the voice of praise and of thanksgiving.

We would bless thee for our existence, and for the rational nature thou hast conferred upon us. We would bless thee for all our comforts in time, and for the glorious hopes set before us, when time shall be no more. We would bless and adore thy goodness displayed in our redemption. When we had degraded ourselves by iniquity, and defaced the divine image which thou hadst stamped upon us;—when there was nothing within us, or around us, that could speak peace to the troubled conscience, or inspire hope in the midst of a fearful looking-for of judgment;—thou sentest thine own well-beloved Son, to proclaim peace and pardon to the penitent; to humble himself, by taking our nature upon him,—that he might be a merciful High Priest, touched with a feeling of our infirmities,—and that, amidst sorrows, and sufferings, and ignominy, and death, he might accomplish our deliverance from despair, deprive death of all its terrors, give us hope toward thee our heavenly

Father, and place before us the prospect of a blessed and eternal inheritance beyond the grave.

With grateful hearts we thank thee for the opportunity that has now been afforded us, of commemorating this wondrous love, and of testifying our gratitude to him who loved us, and died for us that we might live. Follow, we beseech thee, the celebration of this solemn ordinance with thy rich and effectual blessing;—may it not be to us as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again! O, let not the pious wishes, and virtuous resolutions, this day formed at the table of a crucified Redeemer, vanish away like the morning cloud, when we withdraw from this holy place to mix again with the world; but may it appear, by our lives and conversations, many days hence, that we have this day been with Jesus. May the love, which we have thus solemnly professed for him, continue to dwell in our hearts;—may it root out from thence every inordinate passion, every impure affection, every vain imagination;—may it lead us to copy that pure and spotless example he hath set before us;—may it lead us to take up our cross and follow him, through good report, and through bad report;—may it enable us confidently to say, with the holy apostle

of old, “ Lord, we are ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death !”

Pardon, we beseech thee, O Lord, the presumption of any, who may have this day made an unwarrantable approach unto thee,—being clothed in the garb of hypocrisy instead of the marriage garment. Convince them of the heinousness of their transgression, and enable them to turn from the evil of their way and live. May they deeply repent them of the heartless homage they have this day rendered unto thee ;—may the devotion of their hearts yet be added to the language of love that has flown from their lips : And grant them, O Lord, time and opportunity yet to keep this feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Graciously receive, O Lord, the offering which thy young servants have this day made of themselves unto thee. Watch over them to do them good. Be thou the hope of their youth, and forsake them not in their old age. Having put their hand to the plough, O may they never turn back, allured by the temptations of a seducing world, to crucify their Lord afresh by their iniquities ; but, guided by thy holy word and Spirit, may they, through the various scenes of life, experience the

ways of heavenly wisdom to be ways of pleasantness and peace.

May the aged feel that it was good for them thus to draw near unto thee, and to hold communion with the world of spirits. May they have this day had a nearer view of that land of promise to which they are hastening; and may the prospect of its eternal delights, and unfading glories, support them under the pains and infirmities of age, when their flesh and heart begin to faint and fail, and earthly prospects can charm no more.

May the mourners in Zion—those who, by affliction, are broken in their hearts, and grieved in their minds, have found much consolation in thus remembering the sufferings and death of him who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;—may they more steadfastly rely upon him, whom they have this day found to be as a covert from the storm, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Raising their thoughts from his death to his victory over the grave, may they have a sure prospect of their own victory over all the trials and afflictions of life; and may they henceforth, through faith and hope in him, be enabled to wait without repining for the hour of their deliverance.

Be thou the hope and the confidence of all thy

true worshipping servants. May our once crucified, but now gloriously exalted Redeemer, have this day been made known to many in the breaking of bread: May they have found his banner over them to be love, and had a foretaste of the eternal joys prepared for them, in that blessed land where he himself shall feed them, and lead them to fountains of living water,—where thou shalt dwell in the midst of them, and where they shall serve thee day and night in thy temple.

While we ourselves rejoice in the hopes and comforts of the gospel of Christ Jesus, we would humbly and earnestly entreat, that the light of that glorious gospel may be shed abroad over the face of the whole earth; and that thou wouldst bless and prosper all human means employed for that end, in as far as they may be agreeable to thy will, consistent with thy glory, and calculated to promote the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind. In every land may a voice be heard saying, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord;” that the people who dwell in the dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of cruelty, may walk in thy light, rejoice in a Saviour, surround thy altars with praise, and experience the peace, and harmony, and heavenly joy of communion

sabbaths;—that the solitary place may be glad, and that the desert may rejoice and blossom as the rose.

May pure and undefiled religion flourish and prevail in those lands where the gospel is known: May intolerance, hatred, and wrath, for ever cease to degrade the Christian name; and may the disciples of Jesus, of all denominations, forbearing and forgiving one another, learn to dwell together in love,—in obedience to the commandment of their Lord.

Bless and protect our national church. Be as a wall of fire around our Zion, and the glory in the midst of her: May she be guarded, by thy kind providence, from the attacks of infidelity, the inroads of superstition, and every weapon that may be formed against her; and may her institutions, established by the blood of our fathers, descend in peace and in purity to our latest offspring. Bless the lands of our nativity, Great Britain and Ireland, with all their colonies and dependencies. Bless and prosper thy servant, our gracious Sovereign, King George: May his throne be established in righteousness; and may the wise, the upright, and the faithful of the land stand around it: May he long be spared to reign over a free, a virtuous, and happy people; and may he at last ex-

change an earthly for a heavenly crown. Bless all the members of the Royal Family: May they adorn their exalted rank by their exemplary conduct; and, deeply sensible of the fleeting nature of all earthly distinctions, may they seek after, and obtain, honours that are eternal, and glory that shall never fade away. Endow all rulers, judges, and magistrates, with the right spirit of their stations, that, in this our land, judgment may run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Bless this corner of thy vineyard—this parish and congregation. Set up thy fear in every heart, and establish thy worship in every family. Bless us, O Lord, in all our temporal concerns, but, above all, bless us in our spiritual and eternal interests. May those who are clothed with civil authority amongst us, be upright and exemplary;—may they be a terror to evil doers, and a praise and protection to such as do well. May the elders of this congregation be counted worthy of honour; and may their labour of love be rewarded by the blessing of the poor, the approbation of their own hearts, and the favour of thee their God. Bless thy ministering servants who have granted us their countenance and aid upon this solemn occasion;—may it be well with them, and

with their flocks. Enable all of us, O Lord, who are called to minister at thy altars, to be faithful in the discharge of the sacred duties assigned to us; and may the consciousness of having constantly laboured for the spiritual welfare of our people,—and the hope that we have not laboured in vain,—be the sweetest consolation to us in the evening of our days. Do thou befriend our friends; reward our benefactors; forgive our enemies, and enable us, from the heart, to forgive them. Do thou mercifully heal the sick; relieve the distressed; comfort the aged; prepare the dying for their great and last change; and teach all of us so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto heavenly and divine wisdom.

We thank thee, O Lord, for thy goodness to us since we met together. Pardon the imperfection of our sacred services. Enable us to sing thy praise with melody in our hearts. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Be with us through the interval of public worship, and bring us again in peace and safety to thy house of prayer. All that we ask is for Christ's sake.—Amen.

PSALM lxxii. 17—19.

HIS name for ever shall endure ;
Last like the sun it shall :
Men shall be bless'd in him, and bless'd
All nations shall him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel ;
For he alone doth wondrous works,
In glory that excel.

And blessed be his glorious name
To all eternity :
The whole earth let his glory fill !
Amen—so let it be.

BLESSING.

MAY the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for ever.—Amen.

SABBATH—EVENING.

PSALM cii. 16.—*Second Version.*

GOD in his glory shall appear,
When Sion he builds and repairs :
He shall regard and lend his ear
Unto the needy's humble prayers.
Th' afflicted's prayer he will not scorn :
All times this shall be on record ;
And generations yet unborn
Shall praise and magnify the Lord.

He from his holy place look'd down,
The earth he view'd from heaven on high ;
To hear the prisoner's mourning groan,
And free them that are doom'd to die :
That Sion, and Jerusalem too,
His name and praise may well record,
When people and the kingdoms do
Assemble all to praise the Lord.

PRAYER.

WE would again humble ourselves before thee, O Lord, under a deep sense of our own helplessness, and our entire dependence upon thee. Our days are as a shadow that declineth, and vanisheth away; every thing around us is perishable—this earth itself, and these heavens, shall wax old and decay. But thou art the Lord who changest not—the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning: thy name shall endure for ever, thy memorial throughout all generations; and in thy hand are the times of the children of men. We are clothed in weakness, and are crushed before the moth: But thou art clothed in majesty, and girded about with strength.—Thou rulest for ever over the universe which thou hast made: Thou dost according to thy will, in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of this earth. None can stay thy hand from working—and as thou hast purposed concerning us, so shall it come to pass.

We would also humble ourselves before thee, under a deep sense of our unworthiness to appear

in thy presence;—for thou art holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and we, alas! have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, times and ways without number! Who of the sons of men can say, I have made my heart clean before the Lord? or who, trusting in his own innocency, can look, without fear and trembling, toward the day when thou shalt judge the world in righteousness? Wert thou to lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, alas! who could stand before thee? But, blessed be thy holy name! in the midst of judgment thou rememberest mercy; thou pardonest iniquity, and passest by the transgressions of thine heritage;—thou retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy. Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they should turn from their ways and live. When we were carried away by our transgressions, and had ruined ourselves by our rebellion against thee—even then was our help found in the God of Jacob. Through thy tender mercy, was a fountain opened in Zion, that the pollution of thy people might be washed away;—through thy tender mercy, did the day-spring from on high visit this abode of darkness and shadow of death, that we might walk rejoicing in the light

of the Lord;—through thy tender mercy, was a Messenger of pardon and forgiveness sent to this scene of rebellion and misery—even Jesus, the son of thy love, and the brightness of thy glory—to publish to us glad tidings of great joy,—to proclaim peace on earth, and good-will to the children of men,—to manifest his love to us, by veiling his glory under our nature, enabling us to follow him as an infallible guide, and a pure and spotless example,—to manifest his love to us, by being on our account oppressed and afflicted; by being numbered amongst transgressors, and pouring out his soul unto death for us, that he might bear the sin of many, make intercession for the guilty, and give us hope and confidence toward thee our God. Herein indeed was love! Well doth it become us, with affection and gratitude, to remember his sorrows, and show forth his death, according to his last request: Well doth it become us solemnly to bind ourselves to be for him, and not for another; and openly to testify that we have chosen him for our only portion, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Seal upon our hearts, O Lord, the holy impressions that have this day been made, by the solemn

services in which we have been engaged : May they not be like the early dew, vanishing before the face of day ; but may they remain to refresh, and nourish, and strengthen, and support us, amid all the cares, and toils, and griefs of this our earthly pilgrimage ;—may they remain to guide and restrain us, journeying amidst the deceitful allurements and enticing snares of a world lying in wickedness ;—may they remain to direct and to animate us on our course heavenward, in the midst of those transitory connexions, employments, and pleasures, which would still bind us to this earth. Having this day professed ourselves the disciples of Jesus, may we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and never be moved away from the hope set before us ;—may we henceforth glory in the cross of Christ, and earnestly endeavour to adorn his doctrine by lives and conversations becoming his gospel. Do thou, O Lord, give strength to our weakness ; aid us by thy Holy Spirit ; enable us to keep our hearts with all diligence, to restrain every unhallowed desire, to resist every enticement to evil, and to perform with fidelity all the duties of our high and holy vocation, as the followers of the pure and the spotless Jesus. May we not only look unto him as our Mediator,

and rely upon his intercession for us ; but may we also look unto him as the only example of perfection exhibited in our nature, and may we willingly and gratefully take his yoke upon us, and learn of him. May all those graces and virtues that adorned his character be the leading features in ours : May the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus : May we abide in him and he in us ; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming, but may hear from his lips this best of all applauses,—this most joyful of all invitations,—“ Well done, good and faithful servants ! enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

We thank thee, O Lord, for thy goodness to us through the former part of this day. We again entreat thee to follow with thy rich and effectual blessing the whole of the solemn religious services in which we were then engaged. As we are again assembled in thy house of prayer, be thou in the midst of us, to bless us : Aid us in speaking and in hearing from thy holy word ; and do thou hear and answer our requests, for the sake of Christ Jesus.—Amen.

SERMON.

1 THESSALONIANS, i. 2, 3.—“ *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.*”

THE people to whom these words were addressed were the inhabitants of Thessalonica, a large and flourishing city, the capital of Macedonia.

In the 17th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find an interesting account of St Paul's first communication with the Thessalonians. We are told, that he went into a synagogue of Jews established in their city, and, for three Sabbath days, reasoned with them out of the scriptures; proving, from the writings of their prophets, that it behoved their Messiah to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and showing how, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he preached unto them, all the prophecies were fulfilled.

And although the greater part of his own countrymen who dwelt in Thessalonica, with an obstinacy peculiar to their race, believed not, but, moved with envy and malice, gathered together the most worthless of the people, and having inflamed them by false accusations against the apostle and his companion, raised an uproar, from the effects of which they with difficulty escaped with their lives; yet some, even of the Jews, believed, and befriended Paul and Silas; and of the Greeks, a great multitude received the truth with gladness.

The apostle remembered with delight the intercourse he then had with those who believed in that city; and the tidings brought to him of their steadfastness in the faith, and their increase in every Christian grace and virtue, was a support to his mind under all that he himself was suffering for the cause of Christ in distant lands. Thanking God for their exemplary conduct in all things, he rejoiced over them, even as a father rejoices over his children walking in the path of integrity. He earnestly desired to see them again; but, being prevented from doing so, by his important duty of announcing the gospel to other nations, he could not forbear sending a messenger to comfort them,

and epistles full of praise and consolation,—breathing, from beginning to end, the most sincere and ardent affection.

In the verses which we have read, he mentions three subjects of his praise and thanksgiving;—their work of faith, their labour of love, their patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me, in speaking from these words, particularly direct your attention to these three Christian graces, in which it ought to be our earnest endeavour to imitate the Thessalonians, for whose instruction, and comfort, and assurance, the two epistles before us were originally written.

In the *first* place, The apostle remembered and gave thanks to God, for the Thessalonians' *work of faith*.

Faith is often spoken of in scripture as a work or labour, because, to the first Christians, there were many obstacles to their believing in Jesus, which it was a severe trial to overcome. They had to contend with deep-rooted prejudices, which had been infused into their infant minds—which had grown with their growth, and gathered strength with their years. Were they Jews? Then had they to lay aside those dazzling views

of earthly power, and splendour, and dominion, with which they had anticipated the reign of their Messiah. They had to receive him—not as a prince, leading them to victory over their oppressors, but as a persecuted outcast, who had nowhere to lay his head;—not as a ruler and judge, before whose temporal throne thousands waited in fear to receive their doom; but as a malefactor—condemned before the tribunal of a Roman governor; reviled, and scourged, and crucified.

Were they heathens? Then had they to resign that pompous worship, those splendid temples and idols, which had made such a deep impression upon their youthful fancy, and in which all along they had gloried;—to believe in one, as their only hope and confidence, who required no pompous worship, nor gorgeous temples, nor costly oblations—who had no outward form nor comeliness—who appeared in the meanest possible condition, and suffered as the most ignominious slave. Examine your own hearts, my brethren; consider the strength of the prejudices by which they have been, and perhaps now are governed; and you will be able to form some estimate of the difficulty these first Christians must have had, in bringing themselves to believe in a crucified Saviour.

But this was not all.—By embracing the faith

of Jesus, they exposed themselves to the most cruel and relentless persecution. Were they rich? The ease and comforts of affluence were to be resigned. Were they respected and honoured? They had to exchange respect and honour, for contempt and derision. Did they live in peace and happiness in the bosom of their families? They were to be dragged from these families to imprisonment, and torments, and death;—for all the powers of the earth were in league against the followers of Christ, and had sworn to persecute any one who should confess him. Assuredly, belief in Jesus was not to them an amusing speculation, but an arduous work; it was an opinion requiring to be defended, not by ingenious argument, but by the sacrifice of their lives, or of all that was dear to them in life. Thanks be to God, that we, my brethren, are neither brought up with such prejudices against the truth, nor are exposed to persecution for our adherence to the gospel of Christ. But do circumstances lead us to associate or dwell with those who make a jest of what we hold sacred? and is our faith so wavering and unsteady, as not to be able to support itself against the insinuations of the infidel, and the ridicule of the blasphemers? Then, why should we take to

ourselves the name of the disciples of Jesus? Why have we this day made a solemn show of devoting ourselves to his service? What portion can we have in him? Hath he not declared, “whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father?” It is not thus that he calls upon us to take up our cross and follow him, through good report, and through bad report: It was not thus that the Thessalonians gained the love, and drew forth the thanksgiving, of the holy apostle, for their work of faith.

Let your faith, then, like that of these Thessalonians, be steadfast and immovable: Let it not be built only on the opinions of other men; but let it be a firm conviction, founded upon your candid inquiries concerning what you are called upon to believe—a conviction that will triumph alike over the specious reasoning of the unbeliever, and the senseless laugh of the profane—a conviction that will guide your steps through life, and support your souls in death.

But it is likely that, by the term “work of faith,” the apostle meant to distinguish the faith of the Thessalonians from that of many who professed to believe in Jesus, while by their works they

denied him—having a form of godliness without the power thereof; calling him Lord, Lord, while they did not the things that he commanded. There are in the present day, alas! as there have been in every age of the church, men who are loud in their religious professions, and violent in controversy for the faith,—who value themselves highly upon the purity of that faith,—while, in all their dealings with mankind, they prove that they, like the Pharisees of old, have forgotten the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and truth; and that they have by no means learned to put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, a quality so essential in the followers of Jesus. There are men, who, from their punctual attendance upon all the outward ordinances and rites of religion, consider themselves, or wish to be considered by their brethren, as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and, from their supposed eminence of sanctity, say to all around them, “Stand aside, for we are holier than you;” while their own conduct is at variance with every thing holy and pure. We hesitate not to say, that the faith of such men is dead; that it is only a cloak for iniquity, and will procure them the greater condemnation. These are they of whom our Saviour

spake, when he said, “ Many shall say unto me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then shall I say unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity!” Be not deceived by such dissemblers, but, by the uprightness of your own conduct, be prepared to say to them, “ Show us thy faith without thy works, and we will show you our faith by our works.” Let the whole tenor of your lives be a proof of your sincere belief in Jesus, and of your ardent love for him who said to his disciples, “ If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Such was the conduct of the Thessalonians, whom the apostle held out as an example to all who believed in Macedonia;—and to you also, who, in a distant age and country, have, at the table of your Lord, solemnly professed yourselves to be his followers.

In the *second* place, The apostle remembered and gave thanks for the Thessalonians’ *labour of love*.

The sum and substance of all the divine commandments is given by our Saviour in these words: “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.” Of their love to God, the devoted attachment of the Thessalonians to the cause of Christ bore ample testimony. It was not a feeble nor a feigned regard to their heavenly Father, that led them, in opposition to all their early prejudices, and all their earthly hopes, to believe the record he gave of his own Son—which constrained them, in the face of poverty, persecution, and death, to take up their cross, follow a crucified leader, and share the lot of his afflicted disciples, who were every-where spoken against, and persecuted from city to city. Their love to God was indeed no empty profession, but a heart-felt principle,—no vain dream of the fancy, but a feeling that led to labours of love and obedience.

Of their love to men the apostle repeatedly speaks, with unreserved commendation and delight. “As touching brotherly love,” says he, “ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; and, indeed, ye do so toward all the brethren that are in all Macedonia.” This was but a natural consequence of their love to God, and to Jesus whom he had sent, who, after the convincing proofs he had given of his love to the human race, in all that he had

done and suffered for their sake, left them this new commandment, "Love one another; even as I have loved you, so love ye one another."

Let us, my brethren, be animated with the same love to God and man; let our love to our heavenly Father be the parent of cheerful adoration and willing obedience, rendering his commandments "not grievous." Even if called upon to renounce the dearest earthly blessings, and to encounter the severest afflictions in his service, let our love overcome every hardship, stifle every murmur, dissipate every allurements, and impel us still to labour in his service;—to place our delight in his law—to run in the way of his commandments—and to rejoice in his testimonies. Need I speak, Christians, of your motives for loving and serving your heavenly Father with your whole heart and soul?—Do you feel love and gratitude produced in your bosoms by the kindness of a fellow-mortal? And shall these feelings not be produced, in a more eminent degree, toward that Being from whom you derive existence, and all that can render that existence a blessing here below—a blessing through the endless ages of eternity?—who hath sent his own Son into the world, to deliver you from the slavery of sin and the power of the grave, and to

conduct you to dwell with him in mansions of glory when time shall be no more?

Evince then your love to God, like the Thesalonians, by extending it to your brethren of mankind: "Let him that loveth God, love his brother also." Indeed, sincere love to God and man cannot be separated: "If a man say," observes the apostle, "if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Consider the relation in which we stand to our fellow-mortals: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." "We have one common nature—the same heavenly calling: We are partakers of the same sacraments, heirs of the same promises, followers of the same Jesus, and candidates for the same immortal glory." And ought not we, whom God hath thus united, to love one another? Love to our brethren is a law implanted by nature in our hearts,—a feeling of which few are born destitute; although in some it may be weakened, or altogether extinguished, amid the cares, the pursuits, and the jarring interests of this world. It is the distinguishing mark of the religion of Jesus:

It is that feeling by which he commands us to prove to all men that we are his disciples.

It is impossible to enumerate the cases by which this feeling ought to be called into action, and become “a labour of love;” for numberless, and infinitely varied, are, and have been in every age, the instances affording opportunities for active love and benevolence. How many have there been whose woes have made us weep over the page of history; yet these, alas! form but a small portion of the sons and daughters of affliction. Countless thousands there have been, of whose sorrows the world was ignorant while they lived, and whose griefs, as well as their name and memory, lie forgotten in the dust. The tide of human woe still flows undiminished;—of the generation with whom we live, many are destined to groan beneath a load of sorrows, and call forth the tear of pity, even from the most hardened and unfeeling heart: But the gospel requires more than the sympathetic sigh and the pitying tear; it requires from us the “labour of love;” it commands us to visit, to sooth, and relieve them.

Christians, let our love be without dissimulation. There are some who use the language of love, but whose bosoms have become incapable of

cherishing that feeling—who have the warmest professions of kindness and affection for ever upon their lips, but whose hearts are actuated by no motive but selfishness. From such no “labour of love” is to be expected; no disinterested sacrifice for the good of a fellow-mortal, nor any endeavour to promote the happiness of a human being. Their every thought is centred in self-gratification; and to that, every word and action is devoted. Brethren, I trust we “have not so learned Christ.” “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

Some are possessed of a kind of extravagant and diseased sensibility, which makes them weep at imaginary sorrows, and shrink from scenes of real distress, as too grating to their feelings. Such may imagine themselves possessed of an ardent love for mankind; but it is very different from that active kind of love enjoined in the gospel; where scenes of the deepest distress are to be found—where the lonely mourner weeps in despair, and refuses to be comforted—where age and want dwell together neglected and forgotten—where sickness and pain utter the groan of anguish unheard and unlamented—where the captive, deprived of family and friends, counts the tedious

moments of his existence—where the wretch, abandoned by the world, suffers the torment of remorse, and the terror of death;—to scenes like these let Christian love lead our steps, not to contemplate with idle curiosity the behaviour of a fellow-mortal under the pressure of adversity—not to sooth our own melancholy feelings by the sight of human woe; but to labour in the relief and consolation of the afflicted.

This Christian labour of love is confined to no rank or situation in life—the poorest is not debarred from the delightful duty: for as there are none so rich or powerful as to be able to relieve all the objects of distress which present themselves, so there are none so poor as to be incapable of doing a good office. “Silver and gold we have none,” said the apostles to the lame man, “but of such things as we have, give we unto you.” Every one has the power to imitate their example. Cannot the poor man, if endowed with wisdom, or blest with learning, instruct the ignorant, and reclaim those, who, for want of a friend and counsellor, are wandering in the mazes of vice and of misery? Cannot the poor man speak words of consolation to the mourner, and, by many a nameless attention, give aid to the aged, the sick, and

the helpless? Can he not, by his kindness, minister comfort to a mind diseased? Can he not be a companion to the solitary, bestow his care upon the orphan, and cheer the gloom of the broken spirit, by raising its views to brighter regions, where affliction and sorrow are unknown?

The feeling which impels us, whether rich or poor, to go to the house of mourning—to visit, to sooth, to support the sons and daughters of affliction, according to their need and our own ability,—is that pure, disinterested, active, brotherly love, here commended by the apostle. It is a feeling grateful to the God that made us;—it is enjoined and blessed in every page of the gospel, and exemplified in every action of our Saviour, who, during his abode on earth, went about continually doing good;—it rewards its possessor with the purest happiness that can be enjoyed on this earth, and assures him of joy unbounded when time shall be no more. This will be the sentence passed by the Saviour and Judge of the world, upon those who, in this life, have been actuated by it: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I

was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me ;—for in as much as ye have done these things unto one of the least of your brethren, ye have done them unto me.”

In the *third* place, The apostle remembers with delight, and gives thanks for the Thessalonians' *patience of hope in the Lord Jesus*.

The Thessalonians had, like the rest of the first Christians, to suffer tribulation. No account is handed down to us of their particular trials and afflictions ; but we learn from the words of the apostle, that they were made partakers in that cruel persecution, to which the followers of Jesus in every land were then exposed. “Ye also,” says he, “have suffered like things from your own countrymen, even as the churches of God which are in Judea have done of the Jews ; who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us.” This might have been inferred from the outrageous conduct of some of their countrymen, at the first preaching of the apostles in their city. Indeed, from the whole tenor of these two epistles, they appear evidently to be addressed to people who were labouring

under the sorest oppression; and who endured it with peculiar firmness, suffering without a murmur for the cause of Christ, and resigning every comfort for his cross, animated and supported by the glorious hope set before them in his gospel.

Let us, my brethren, be animated by the same patience of hope in the Lord Jesus. We have not indeed the severe trials and persecutions of the first Christians to undergo; but “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward,” and to many, in every age, the path of life is dark and gloomy. Hope alone can dispel the clouds that hover around the way of our earthly pilgrimage; and it is not only our duty, but our interest and our wisdom, to cling to this anchor of the soul; but it is only *a hope in God, through the Lord Jesus*, that can be a foundation for patience and resignation under the calamities of life. What is the hope, or on what can be founded the patience of the infidel, who believes not in God, or believes not that he sent his Son into the world to reveal his mercy and loving-kindness to the children of men? When the afflictions of life assail him, he views not in these the corrections of a heavenly Father;—when earthly comforts fail, he cannot look forward to a more lasting inheritance, and

possess his soul in patience amidst all the changes of this earthly scene;—when his friends and his children are taken away, he cannot anticipate the time when these shall again be restored to him, and wait with patience for the hour of his departure, when he shall meet them to be separated no more. No: In the day of prosperity, indeed, such a man may fortify himself with a stoical indifference to his fate—he may rejoice, and “say, Let us eat, drink, and be merry;” but the day of adversity comes, and it finds him without patience, without hope, and without consolation. Many a deed of dark despair—many a dreadful deathbed scene, may convince us of the wretchedness of the man who is without God, without a Saviour, and without hope in the world!

How different is the Christian, who hath hope in God through the Lord Jesus! Under every vicissitude, under every affliction, he can rely on the goodness of that heavenly Father, whose love was manifested by his sparing not his own Son, but delivering him up to the death for us. The darkest clouds of sorrow may surround him—the gloomiest prospects may lie before him; but the beams of divine love shine into his heart, and inspire patience and repose. God is, to him, a

pillar of smoke by day, and a pillar of fire by night, to lead him, without dismay, through the dreariest recesses of the waste and howling wilderness. All his worldly prospects may be blasted, and his favourite schemes disconcerted—poverty and ruin may be his earthly portion; yet hope will inspire a resignation, and contentment, which are utterly unknown to the ungodly, in the midst of their prosperity. Walking in the light of God's countenance, he has "more joy than the wicked, when their corn and wine do abound." Are his virtues overlooked? are his best actions and sentiments misrepresented by a crooked, and perverse generation? is he a prey to all the wrongs, and insults, that pride and arrogance are able to heap upon him? a victim to all the oppression and cruelty, which the most deeply rooted malice has the power to inflict? and do the men of the world look with indifference upon his wrongs, or strengthen the hands of his oppressor? He will not sink under the unmerited frowns, and oppressions, and calumnies of the world; for he knows that God loveth the righteous—that his countenance beholdeth the upright; and with patience, and with hope, he looks forward to the time when all characters shall be unveiled, and all justice

shall be done, before his righteous tribunal. He may be doomed to suffer the severest pain, and, through many a tedious day and wearisome night, his body may be wasted by anguish, that no human skill is able to mitigate, and no human sympathy able to sooth:—but he seeks unto God, and finds him a refuge in the day of trouble; he knows that these short afflictions, that last but for a moment, are destined to “work out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory;” and the hope of that glory raises him above the feeling of disease, and enables him, with humble resignation, to say with his Saviour, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” The dearest objects of affection may be removed; the companions and the family that surround him, and delight his heart, may fall by his side, and he may be left alone and desolate;—yet he mourns not as those who have no hope; for he believes that Jesus died and rose again, and that “them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” Though lover and friend are put far from him, patience and resignation dwell in his heart, while hope points to that blessed hour when they shall receive him, to dwell for ever with them in that happy land, the

streams whereof make glad the city of their God—where death and sorrow are unknown.

Let us then, Christians, under all the vicissitudes of this our mortal state, cherish in our bosoms that patience of hope in the Lord Jesus, which alone can cheer us on our journey through life, and support us at that hour, when this world, with all its enjoyments, is passing away. Let us look to him whose sorrows and death we have been commemorating; who, “for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of God.”

Brethren, having this day solemnly professed your belief in Jesus, your love to him, and your resolution of being his followers, let me exhort you to prove to the world, and your own consciences, that you are his disciples,—not by heartless services, and unmeaning ceremonies, but by works of faith, by labours of love, and by patience of hope in the Lord Jesus. Thus shall you gain an assurance that you have been acceptable guests at his table here below; and that, as the holy apostle rejoiced over the Thessalonians, so shall the whole host of heaven rejoice over you, when—relieved from the wants, the cares, the pains, and sorrows

of mortality—ye ascend to join that blessed assembly who surround the throne of God, and who cease not day nor night to celebrate his praise.

May God enable you to persevere in a truly Christian course, that you may at last attain this blessed and glorious distinction.—Amen.

PRAYER.

O LORD, we would again draw near unto thee with humility—adoring thy greatness, confiding in thy mercy, and rejoicing in thy love manifested toward us the children of men. What are we, O God! and what had we merited at thy hand, that thou didst condescend to visit us, and to crown us with loving-kindness and with tender mercies! Thou gavest us dominion over the works of thy hands, and madest us to enjoy the delight of dwelling in thy presence; and, even when by transgression we had forfeited that blessed communion with thee, and had rendered ourselves unworthy of the least of thy mercies, thou didst not cast us off for ever—thou sentest thine own well-beloved Son to seek and save them that were lost; to take our nature upon him,

and to humble himself even unto the death for us, that he might redeem us from destruction, and ransom us from the power of the grave;—that he might renew in us that divine image which had been defaced by our iniquity; and conduct us, by his holy word and spirit, to dwell in those blissful regions, inhabited by the eternally happy and glorious spirits who have never offended, but have continued, in unstained innocence, and purity, to stand before thy throne.

While, with grateful hearts, we thank thee for the light and the truth of the gospel—adoring thine incomprehensible goodness, displayed in all that the blessed Jesus hath suffered and accomplished for us, we earnestly entreat that thou wouldst strengthen and confirm our faith in him: May it be steadfast and immovable; may it ever be manifested by conduct becoming his disciples; may it be a faith that worketh by love—leading us to love thee, the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. May we be kind and tender-hearted; deeply interested in all that may promote the temporal and eternal happiness of those around us; and ready affectionately to participate in all their feelings—to rejoice with them

that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. May the labour of love be our most delightful occupation upon earth, and our preparation for enjoying the harmony of heaven.

May our faith inspire that patience of hope in the Lord Jesus, which will support and sustain us, under all the cares, and afflictions, and bereavements, attendant upon our mortal condition;—which will enable us, under every affliction, to say, with thy servant of old, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;”—which will enable us, from amidst the darkest mazes of the wilderness of this world, to look forward with hope, and confidence, and joy, to the glorious second coming of the Son of Man; and to anticipate the blessedness of those heavenly mansions prepared for us beyond death and the grave. Lord, grant that many of us may this day, in the service of thine earthly sanctuary, have had a foretaste of the delights of eternity! and may we hold on our course rejoicing—knowing in whom we have trusted.

We entreat thy blessing, O Lord, upon the instructions which have now been delivered from thy holy word;—may they be impressed upon our hearts, and manifested in our lives. Enable us to sing thy praises with devotion of heart. Pardon

the imperfection of thy sincere worshippers. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Enable us to devote the evening of this day to thy service: May it be to us a hallowed season—a season of sweet remembrances, of cheering consolations, of joyful hopes, of steadfast resolutions, and of earnest prayer;—a season of deep and grateful meditation, upon the love of him whose sufferings and death we have been shewing forth.

Be with us through the silent watches of the night, and bring us again to thy courts with praise, on the morning of a new day. All that we ask is through the merits of Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom, with thee the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all glory, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xlii.

LET not your hearts with anxious thoughts
 Be troubled or dismayed;
 But trust in providence divine,
 And trust my gracious aid.
 I to my Father's house return;
 There numerous mansions stand,
 And glory manifold abounds
 Through all the happy land.

COMMUNION SERVICE.

I go your entrance to secure,
And your abode prepare ;
Regions unknown are safe to you,
When I, your friend, am there.
Thence shall I come, when ages close,
To take you home with me ;
There we shall meet to part no more,
And still together be.

I am the way, the truth, the life :
No son of human race,
But such as I conduct and guide,
Shall see my Father's face.

BLESSING.

MAY grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you all, now, and for evermore.—Amen.

MONDAY SERVICE.



MONDAY.

PSALM xcviii. 1—4.

O SING a new song to the Lord,
For wonders he hath done ;
His right hand, and his holy arm,
Him victory hath won.
The Lord God his salvation
Hath caused to be known ;
His justice in the heathen's sight
He openly hath shown.

He, mindful of his grace and truth,
To Israel's house hath been ;
And the salvation of our God
All ends of the earth have seen.
Let all the earth unto the Lord
Send forth a joyful noise ;
Lift up your voice aloud to him,
Sing praises, and rejoice.

PRAYER.

WE adore thee, O Lord, as the unchangeable Jehovah, at whose all-powerful word the universe arose into existence. Thou inhabitest eternity, and the praises thereof. Thou stretchest out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadest them out as a tent to dwell in. Thou sittest upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before thee. Thou weighest the mountains in scales, and the nations are counted as the small dust of the balance. Thy path is in the mighty waters; thou ridest upon the wings of the whirlwind; and who can thunder with a voice like thine? The throne of thine omnipotence is veiled by light that is inaccessible and full of glory, unto which no mortal eye can approach; but thou art present over all thy works, and in every place of thy dominions. Whither, O Lord, shall we go from thy Spirit? or whither shall we flee from thy presence? If we ascend into heaven, thou art there; if we make our bed in hell, behold thou art there; if we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there

shall thy hand lead us, thy right hand shall hold us; if we say the darkness shall cover us, even the night shall be light about us,—yea, the darkness hideth not from thee. Thy greatness, O Lord, is incomprehensible;—unsearchable are thy judgments, thy ways are past finding out. Thy name is holy;—justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. But it is as the Lord God merciful and gracious, that we, thy weak and degenerate offspring, are encouraged to lift up our eyes unto thee; to call upon thy great and glorious name, and to pour out our hearts before thee; for thy goodness is over all thy works, and thy delights have been with us the children of men.

Thou art in heaven, and we upon the earth, therefore our words before thee ought to be few: but thou art our God, and we will bless thee; we will bow ourselves, with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, before thy throne;—for thou didst form man out of the dust of the earth; thou didst fashion him after thine own immaculate image; and, in holiness and happiness, madest him to dwell in thy presence.

We will praise and bless thee; for although we had ruined ourselves, and brought a curse upon the earth by our disobedience, yet, for us, thou

blessest the springing thereof: Thou causest thy sun to diffuse joy and gladness over the face of nature, and crownest the year with thy goodness, covering the pastures with flocks, and the vallies with corn, for the use of man.

We will praise and bless thee; for, when our ingratitude and rebellion had brought down upon us the sentence of death, and there was none to deliver us from the darkness of despair, thou didst find out a remedy—thou gavest us refuge in thy grace, and sentest a heavenly Messenger to proclaim pardon, to break asunder the bands of death, and deliver us from the hopeless terrors of the grave.

We will bless and adore thee, for what, in this life, our limited faculties cannot fully comprehend,—even the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth of thy love, manifested toward us in sending into this lower world Jesus, the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person,—that, by his own humiliation, and sufferings, and death, he might rescue us from guilt and from misery, renew us after the image of God, and give us hopes of happiness large as our wishes, and lasting as our eternal natures, when time shall be no more.

We bless thee, that in this isle of the sea, remote from the scene of our Lord's earthly ministry, the glad tidings of the gospel were early made known;—that, through many generations, thou hast here had a people to serve thee;—that thou hast protected and purified the churches established in our land;—that, none being allowed to make us afraid, we can assemble in the house of prayer in which our fathers worshipped; and can place ourselves at that table of the Lord, which has been spread before them in the days of their pilgrimage.

We bless thee for the opportunity yesterday afforded us, of showing forth the death of the Lord Jesus. We again pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst follow that sacred and solemn service with thy divine and effectual blessing. May the feelings which it hath called forth, remain, to direct, and animate, and comfort us through life, and to support and sooth us at the hour of death. May our conduct prove, that we have been with Jesus;—that we are indeed the disciples of him who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. May we manifest in our lives the fruit of the Spirit, in all

goodness, and righteousness, and truth. May we have that faith that worketh by love, and overcometh the world. May we have that repentance which is unto salvation, not to be repented of. May we have that charity which suffereth long and is kind, and covereth a multitude of sins; and may we learn humility of him who was meek and lowly in heart.

May that mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; and, holding on our Christian course rejoicing, may we be able to say with St Paul, "We are persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Having come into thy house of prayer, may worldly thoughts and cares and wishes be banished from our minds, that we may worship thee in spirit and in truth. Be with us in speaking and in hearing; and accept of us for Christ's sake.—
Amen.

FIRST SERMON.

I CORINTHIANS, xv. 22.—*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

WHEN our first parent disobeyed the command of his Maker, death was the punishment assigned to him for his transgression, and mortality was the portion bequeathed by him to his posterity, to latest ages.

Our text leads us, in the *first* place, To contemplate this portion assigned to us;—and, viewed in any other light but that in which it is represented in the gospel of Christ, it is indeed a cheerless inheritance.

Consider its certainty. Every doctrine has been denied, and every fact doubted by the infidel, but this,—that “man is born to die.” Every other portion but this is uncertain. The elevated and the obscure—the powerful and the weak—the oppressor and his victim—the rich and the poor—the robust and the sickly—the gay and the melancholy—often find their situations unexpectedly and suddenly exchanged. We cannot calculate,

from what our situation now is, what it will next day be. A deep veil hangs over all our fortunes. Of this alone we are certain,—that “it is appointed unto all men once to die.” The countless generations who have lived, who have laboured, who have enjoyed, a short existence upon this earth, now quietly repose in its bosom; and with their ashes ours must, ere long, be mingled. This is our unavoidable portion; our lot is this—a lot which no power can avert, which no supplications can mitigate, which even aged virtue, and infant innocence, cannot set aside.

How cheerless a portion is death, when we consider it as putting an end to all the plans and occupations of life! Man is made for action. The most indolent of the human race forms, and endeavours to pursue some aim. Kings form schemes of greatness, for the accomplishment of which the lives of thousands is reckoned but a trifling sacrifice; yet, when every victory is won, and the anticipation of glory and of power fills their hearts with delight—even then, every purpose is broken off by this enemy, before whom they fall, weak and helpless, as the meanest of the thousands whom they had sacrificed to their ambition. Legislators have, with much care, and anxiety, and wisdom,

devised measures, the completion of which would have given peace, security, and happiness, to their native land; but, before that wished-for period, a nation's tears have borne testimony, that "it is vain to trust in man—whose breath is in his nostrils, who dieth and wasteth away, and cannot deliver his own soul from the grave." How much wisdom, and how many arts, hath death veiled in oblivion, by calling upon philosophers, in the midst of their speculations and discoveries, to go down into that dark abode, where "no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, is to be found."

Many and various are the pursuits of man; yet the same termination awaits them all. One labours for riches;—for wealth he will sacrifice every feeling, encounter every danger, and endure every hardship; yet all this labour and toil, in which his soul delighteth, is only vanity and vexation of spirit, for his doom is written, "Naked shalt thou return to the dust." How often have we witnessed, and lamented the fate of the man of honour and integrity, who felt a virtuous delight in labouring for the comfort and independence of an infant family, and who, in the midst of his anxiety for their welfare, received the awful summons to leave them a prey to want and wretchedness! We

have seen the slave of sensuality rioting in pleasure, saying to his soul, "Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for thee!" But he laid in store what another was destined to consume—his soul was required of him, and every sensual gratification ceased. We have seen the slaves of vanity making it the business of their lives to gain admiration,—by an ostentatious display of their rank, and power, and riches, eagerly calling upon the world to do homage to their greatness; and, in the midst of their exultation, we have seen them brought down to the grave, where all greatness is done away. To the proud, alas! how cheerless a portion is death, which completely levels all the trifling distinctions that exist amongst the frail sons of a day!

How cheerless a portion is death, when we consider it as a land of forgetfulness! To some of those around us we feel a particular attachment, and know that we are also blessed with their affection:—To think that by these we shall be forgotten; that no blank will be deplored by them, no regret felt, no interest extended toward the cold and silent bed of our rest! There is horror in the idea!—This, indeed, is scarcely the lot of any: Some kindred soul, with whom we took sweet

counsel—whom we admired, and loved, and cherished, and instructed, may weep, and exclaim in agony, as David did over Jonathan, “ I am distressed for thee, my brother ! very pleasant hast thou been unto me.” Yes : “ when man goeth to his long home, the mourners go about the streets.” Our absence will be felt for a while ; but our station will be occupied by another. Our friends will find other companions ; and other affections will take possession of the hearts that loved us. But should we even continue to live in the remembrance of those to whom we were dear ; should they, to the latest hour of a long life, find their thoughts of us more interesting than any other thoughts ; should their love to us remain unimpaired by all the changes of place, and occupation, and society, to which they may be exposed, after following our remains to the grave ;—yet, how short-lived is even this remembrance ! Another generation succeeds, in which every trace of it is lost. Our name and memory is gone,—our loves and hatreds buried in the dust ! How much have mankind struggled, and struggled in vain, to avoid this fearful oblivion ! Some have, by their stupendous works, and their mighty deeds, succeeded in preserving their names amidst the wreck of

ages; but what doth it profit them? they cannot hear the voice of praise, nor can “flattery sooth the dull cold ear of death.” Death is indeed a land of forgetfulness—an abode of silence, in which “we have no more a portion, for ever, in any thing that is done under the sun.”

Death is a cheerless inheritance:—it breaks asunder the cords that bind us most strongly to this world.

That portion of happiness which you here enjoy, depends upon your connexion, intercourse, and sympathy, with those around you. You have parents, upon whose love your hearts, from earliest infancy, have reposed with unlimited confidence, and never been disappointed: with every recollection of youthful and happy scenes the idea of their tender care and affection is blended;—you remember, with pleasure, the time when their anger was the only evil you dreaded, and their caresses the only riches you had a wish to enjoy. A love so early and so deeply rooted in the breast, is not to be overcome by the occupations or connexions of riper years. The mutual affection of parents and children is the source of much delight in prosperity, and of much consolation in affliction. But death deprives you of a parent’s love; the

objects of your earliest attachment are laid in the silent tomb; your first formed connexion with the world is dissolved; your father's house is desolate, and you feel a desolation in your hearts—you feel yourselves forsaken—you contemplate death as indeed a gloomy and distressing portion.

You have children, in whom you behold your own existence renewed; and sweet and powerful are the cords that bind them to your heart;—in their innocent mirth you find a soothing relief from the business, the anxieties, and animosities of life. How transporting to your heart is their smile of artless affection! what a consolation, after what you may have suffered from the lying flatteries, the unjust reproaches, the cold neglect, the cruel oppressions, of a deceitful and malignant world! From that world you may form a wish to retire, and to dwell with infant innocence. But, alas! in forming such a wish, you forget what is man's inheritance on earth—you forget that ruthless spoiler, who, like the blast of winter, sweeps away the tender flower in the bud, as well as the leaf that is already withered. While you are exulting in the treasure you enjoy, and apprehend no danger near, —your fairest blossom may be laid low; the desire of your eyes may be taken away; the voice that

charmed you may be silent for ever ; the eye that sparkled on you with delight may be closed in death ; and you may experience that bitterness of grief, which wrung from the afflicted king of Israel the heart-rending exclamation, “ O Absalom ! my son Absalom ! would to God I had died for thee !”

But why should I attempt to enumerate and describe the scenes of anguish produced by man’s mortality ? Alas ! how many go all the day sorrowful, and refuse to be comforted, because “ lover and friend death hath put far from them, and their acquaintance into darkness.” Separated from those who were sharers in their joy, and in whose faithful bosoms their hearts could repose in affliction—from the guardians of youth, from the associates of manhood, from the supports of feeble and helpless age—to them this world appears a field of woe, a waste and howling wilderness, in which is heard the voice of lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning—a dreary trackless desert, through which, friendless and forsaken, they are destined for a while to pursue their solitary way, and in which they are at last to lie down in oblivion, and crumble into kindred dust : For “ man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble : he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he

dieth and wasteth away ; he giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?” The voice of nature exclaims in doubt, and in despair, “ If a man die, shall he live again ?”

Surely death, as the light of nature enables us to view it, is a gloomy—a horrible portion ; a fate, the awful certainty of which dwelling upon the mind must chill the stoutest heart, and unnerve the most active arm—veil in darkness the brightest prospects of those who seek for happiness—draw the curtain of despair around him whose life on earth is destined to be a life of sorrow—and extinguish every feeble beam of joy, that may arise to console the helpless wanderers through this valley of tears. Of all the enemies to human repose, death is, beyond comparison, the most appalling ;—an enemy, over whom man, unaided by revelation, could entertain no hope of a triumph—from whom he could form no plan of escape.

But a God of infinite mercy left us not to wander in helpless despair : “ he laid our help upon One mighty to save.” And our text leads us, in the *second* place, To contemplate our happiness in being delivered, through Christ Jesus, from the terrors of our last and dreadful enemy.

With what joy must desponding mortals have listened to the glad tidings of the prophets, who sung of a Prince and a Saviour, who was to triumph over death, and conquer the grave! This Prince, this Saviour, did appear upon the earth; but, born of a woman, he submitted to the common lot of humanity—his *death* you yesterday assembled to commemorate. When his lifeless body was laid in the grave, the hearts of his followers died within them. They fondly trusted that he was to have vanquished the king of terrors; and they beheld him, like other mortals, laid prostrate before him. Powerless lay that arm which they had seen extended to heal the sick, to give eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame! closed was that eye which pierced the inmost recesses of the human heart! silent was that voice which had commanded, and the winds and waves obeyed! cold and lifeless was that heart, which, touched with pity for human suffering, had only to form a wish, and that suffering was removed!—All their joy, and all their hopes, were buried with their Master in the tomb of Joseph, over which his cruel enemies had placed an armed guard to bar all access to his lifeless remains. But that was destined to be the scene of his triumph; for a heavenly

guard, an angel of God, descended;—"his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow;" and the Roman soldiers, whose tried courage no mortal would have dared, trembled before him, and became as dead men!—He rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and your blessed Redeemer rose from the bed of death;—gloriously illustrating, in his own person, that life and immortality beyond the grave, which he had promised to his followers. All the terrors of death were then done away. It was then that Jesus, "through his death, destroyed him who had the power of death; that he might deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."—"In Christ all shall be made alive."

Christians, we can no longer be struck with dismay, when we consider the *certainty* of death: For it is not more certain that our bodies shall descend to the grave, and moulder into kindred dust, than that the scattered ashes shall again be collected, and reorganized by the Almighty hand that formed them. This is a truth which human reason would have laboured in vain to discover—which to human reason appeared impossible; but we cannot doubt what the Son of God declared to

be true; we cannot doubt what, in condescension to human weakness, he exemplified in his own person—for us submitting to death, that, by his resurrection, he might prove to us the possibility, and certainty of our immortality. This assurance is able to bear up the heart of the Christian under every disease and accident that may threaten his feeble frame—under the feebleness of age, when every thing bears proof of his approaching dissolution; when the certainty of death is written, in legible characters, on every feature of his countenance, and every member of his body.

The Christian can no longer view death with horror, as putting an end to the occupations and pursuits of life.—All these occupations and pursuits have the same end in view: Happiness, in one shape or other, is the aim of all the children of men; and, on this earth, all are more or less miserably disappointed. One thirsts for power;—and, after a weary struggle in the thorny paths of ambition, retires fatigued, and helpless, and insignificant. Another pursues fame;—a phantom that for a while dazzles his fancy, but eludes his grasp; and when, after much labour and toil, he reckons the prize within his reach, the bright vision in a moment disappears, and leaves him shrouded in

obscurity—a prey to contempt and derision! Another labours for wealth, and considers himself blest in his accumulating treasures;—but he unexpectedly descends into the vale of poverty, and is compelled to eat the bitter bread of dependance. Another devotes himself to sensual enjoyment, and restrains not his heart from any desire;—but want dries up the source of enjoyment; or sickness emaciates his frame, and confines him to a bed of languishing, where every luxury loses its charm. Another surrounds himself with friends, in whose society he thinks he may bid defiance to care and to sorrow:—they smile upon him in the hour of prosperity and joy; but the day of adversity comes, and he then finds them, perhaps, like the friends of Job, all “miserable comforters.” Many such reverses and disappointments have been witnessed: They prove the vanity of all earthly pursuits and hopes; and to this, the hearts of those also, who seem happy in the attainment of all their earthly wishes, bear equal testimony. Ask the most fortunate of the sons of men, if his success is attended with no circumstances that impair his comfort? Ask the rich, if the wealth they have acquired comes attended with no cares? Ask the noble, if rank has no mortifications?

Ask those who pursue and enjoy pleasure, if pleasure has no hours of disgust—if, in the midst of laughter, the heart is not often sorrowful? Alas! if they speak the truth, they will answer you in the words of the wise man; “ I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit!” Then surely he, to whom the promise of life and immortality is given in the gospel, cannot sit down in sadness and despair, when he contemplates the unavoidable termination of plans and pursuits—of works and labours so uncertain, so unprofitable, and so unsatisfactory! He will not confine his desires, his pursuits, and his hopes, to this terrestrial habitation; he will not seek for repose in a scene so changeable, nor for pleasure in an abode in which it cannot securely, and permanently dwell. He entertains hopes, and forms plans, which he knows shall be fulfilled and perfected in a land of rest. He welcomes death as the guide that conducts him to that happier land: He is delighted to find himself transported to the banks of Jordan, leaving the wilderness of this world behind: He looks back without regret upon all the perplexing labyrinths through which he has wandered: He

rejoices that he has left them for ever; and he looks forward with rapture to that land of bliss, the glories of which are now disclosed to his view!

The Christian can no longer contemplate death with horror, as a land of forgetfulness.—His body must indeed be committed to the dust;—no memorial may tell where his ashes repose, and his name may be forgotten by his fellow-travellers through this earthly pilgrimage;—but, through Jesus, he knows that he shall again meet and abide with all those, in whose remembrance he can form a wish to live. The remembrance of his virtues may be lost amongst succeeding generations on earth; but he knows that they are recorded in the Lamb's book of life,—that angels and archangels will testify their approbation, and honour him with their love. He will cease to associate with men, and to bear a share in the trifling transactions of this lower world; but he knows that he shall bear a share in the nobler occupations of heaven, in the blest society of the illustrious dead,—with the church of the first-born,—with patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs,—with all the faithful, in every age and country,—and with Jesus, the author and finisher

of his faith, who returned, through the gate of mortality, into that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

The Christian can no longer view death with horror, as breaking asunder the cords that bind us most strongly to this world.—You had parents, and children, and friends, to whom your hearts were most tenderly united. You lamented in bitterness when they were taken away:—Deprived of their society, the remaining years of your pilgrimage appear long and wearisome; your joy is interred in the narrow house of their rest; and you have often sighed, because the grave could not restore them to your sight. But through Jesus you are assured that they shall yet be restored to you, for in him “all shall be made alive.” He hath converted the dark valley of the shadow of death into a pathway enlightened by the sunbeams of eternity—leading to the mansions of bliss and of glory, inhabited by those whose absence on earth you deplore.

In the visions of the night, have you beheld the long lost objects of your affection? Have their loved forms again been placed before you, and afforded a few fleeting moments of imaginary rapture? Have you awoke to mourn that it was only

a dream, serving to nourish your grief?—Then endeavour, if possible, to conceive the unbounded joy that awaits you, when you shall awake from the sleep of death, to be welcomed by these to the everlasting abodes, that you may be for ever united—where neither fear, nor grief, nor anxiety can mingle with your love.

Such a blessed prospect affords you consolation and joy, under a separation from those whom you deservedly held dear. You find all the horrors of death removed, and all your fears overcome; you view him no longer as the relentless enemy of man—the cruel avenger of a broken law; you behold in him, only a messenger of peace—a harbinger of joy; you welcome his approach, and feel a desire for the hour of your departure, that you may again dwell with those who were your delightful companions on earth, and who now, freed from all the evils and imperfections of their mortal state, surround the throne of their Father and their God.

No wonder, Christians, that you have been led to the table of your crucified Redeemer, to testify your love and your gratitude to him, who subjected himself to sorrows, and ignominy, and death, that he might deliver you from the terrors

of the grave ! But bear in mind, that such solemn professions of gratitude are not the only services he requires of you, nor the terms upon which he hath promised you an entrance into heaven. He hath indeed announced *immortality* to all the children of Adam ; but he will bestow *eternal bliss* only upon those who earnestly endeavour to obey his laws,—who allow themselves to be guided by his word and by his spirit,—who are Christians in heart as well as in profession. “ Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Good and evil are placed before you, beyond the grave ;—be entreated, as immortal beings, to lay hold on an eternity of happiness. Your treasure is in heaven—there let your hearts be also ; for this world, and the fashion thereof, is passing away. However sweet and powerful the cords of affection may be, by which many of you in this assembly are linked together, these shall soon be broken asunder. Death will gradually detach you from one another ; and in a few years there shall not be one of you remaining. This place shall know you no more. Another generation shall assemble in this temple of God—another genera-

tion shall here encompass the table of the Lord;—but there is a temple on high, from which the happy worshippers shall never depart—there is a table of the Lord that shall never be drawn—there is a blessed union that shall never be dissolved.

Give all diligence, then, to make your calling and election sure; that you may again meet in the paradise of God, and together reign with him whose death you have been showing forth—even the Lamb who was slain, but is now “alive for evermore, holding the keys of hell and of death.”

PARAPHRASE lxi. 1—3.

BLESS'D be the everlasting God,
 The Father of our Lord;
 Be his abounding mercy prais'd,
 His majesty ador'd.
 When from the dead he rais'd his Son,
 And call'd him to the sky,
 He gave our souls a lively hope
 That they should never die.

To an inheritance divine
 He taught our hearts to rise;
 'Tis uncorrupted, undefil'd,
 Unfading in the skies.

Saints by the power of God are kept
Till the salvation come :
We walk by faith as strangers here,
But Christ shall call us home.

PRAYER.

“ OUR Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. —Amen.”

SECOND SERMON.*

PHILIPPIANS, iii. 20.—*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

IN the beginning of this chapter, the apostle counsels the Christians at Philippi, to beware of those who inculcated a reliance for salvation upon speculative opinions, and vain and empty ceremonies, more than upon the practice of those virtues enjoined in the gospel of Christ: He bids them “beware of evil workers,”—those who, with purity of doctrine for ever on their lips, allowed their hearts and their actions to be at variance with every thing holy and pure. These are they of whom he speaks in the 18th verse, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame; who mind earthly things.” He bids them also

* This sermon has already appeared before the Public, having been contributed to a collection of sermons, published in 1823 by Mr Macredie, Edinburgh, under the title of “The Scottish Pulpit.” As it was originally written by the author for a sacramental occasion, he takes the liberty of reprinting it in this volume.

“beware of the concision;” that is, of Judaizing teachers, of whom there were many who, though professing Christianity, were so little acquainted with the spirit of that pure, and simple, and unostentatious religion, as to imagine that it would be improved and dignified by the addition of the rites and ceremonies of their ancient law.

We learn, from other passages in the sacred volume, that the minds of many sincere believers had been harassed by those, who insisted upon the necessity of the followers of Jesus being circumcised after the manner of Moses, and conforming in all things to the ordinances of his law. To satisfy the minds of the disciples with regard to this question, the apostle testifies, in the fullest manner, his own belief, that the *ceremonial* law was,—by the full revelation of that spiritual religion, for which it was intended only to serve as a type and preparation,—rendered of no more value in the sight of God. And, as a proof of the sincerity of this belief, he refers them to his conduct. “If any one,” said he, “has reason to glory in being a Jew, and to trust in the law of Moses, certainly I had as much, or even more; for in nothing that could give a claim to distinction, as a Jew, was I deficient: Circumcised the eighth day, ac-

ording to the commandment; not descended from ancestors who were only *adopted* into the family of Abraham, I am of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, I belonged to the sect most punctual in the observance of its rites—I was a Pharisee; concerning zeal for the faith of my forefathers, mine was so ardent as to make me a persecutor of the church of Christ; touching the righteousness which is in the law, that righteousness which consisted in obeying its ordinances, I was blameless. Assuredly, if being of the commonwealth of Israel, and walking in the statutes of our fathers, could now confer any distinction in the sight of God, or inspire any confidence in his love, I had reason to trust and to glory;—but, instructed in the new and better dispensation, I became conscious that my privileges, and my religious observances, as a Jew and a Pharisee, could be no longer of any avail: I counted them loss for Christ; for the excellency of the knowledge of whose gospel I count all things but loss, and for my adherence to which, I have suffered the loss of all things. My whole ambition now is, to win Christ, and to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, (which con-

sisted in a scrupulous pharisaical attention to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law), but that which is through the faith of Christ; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,—the glorious and blessed resurrection of those who die in Jesus.”

With all the humility becoming a follower of Christ, the venerable apostle confessed himself conscious, that he had not yet attained to that degree of holiness and purity, to which the gospel ought to lead,—that he did not consider himself as already perfect: But he earnestly strove to become so;—every thought, every action of his life, was directed to the attainment of Christian perfection on earth, and its glorious reward in heaven: “He pressed toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” And so sincere and ardent were his desires, so unremitting his exertions, so great his progress in the heavenly race, that he could, with much reason, propose himself as an example to his disciples. “Brethren, be followers of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an example; for our conversation is

in heaven." To that happy land, where our treasure is, every action of our lives bears a reference,—to it, every desire of our hearts is directed. Considering ourselves as already the citizens of that blessed country, we sincerely endeavour to imitate its manners, and are governed by its laws.

Well were the disciples acquainted with all the virtues and graces which St Paul and his fellow-labourers had exemplified, in what they had done and suffered amongst men, as the faithful servants of Jesus, and ambassadors from heaven. Well did it become them, to follow the example thus placed before them: And well does it become us also, who,—through their labours, their sufferings, their unshaken zeal and devotion to the cause of heaven,—enjoy the light and truth of the gospel. Let, then, our conversation, like theirs, be in heaven; let all our thoughts and affections be directed thither; and let our conduct be a preparation for enjoying that celestial abode.

First, Let all our thoughts and affections be directed toward heaven.

The traveller, who leaves his native land to view the manners of different nations, or explore the works of nature in various climes, undergoes many

a vicissitude, and beholds many a wonderful scene. But can all his vicissitudes,—can new and ever-varying scenes, obliterate the thoughts of that home to which he hopes to return? No:—He may meet with kindness from strangers; and it only makes him think more wistfully of the anxious, heart-felt attentions, of those who shall welcome his return. He may meet with insult and abuse,—he may be an outcast and a slave among a barbarous people; but his imagination transports him to his native land; and his heart is supported by the anticipation of the time, when he shall there repeat the tale of his miseries to ears that will eagerly listen, and to hearts that will keenly sympathize. He may see the abodes of luxury and splendour, and his eyes may for a moment be dazzled with the view; but imagination places before him a scene far more interesting—the abode in which his parents, or his family, dwell; and, however lowly it may be, all splendour in a foreign land suffers in comparison with it. In the magnificence with which he is surrounded, his heart finds nothing whereon to rest;—it longs for the habitation in which every bosom beats with kindred feelings, and where his ears shall again be greeted by the accents of affection, and by the endearing

appellations of son, and father, and husband. He may be amazed and delighted by the wonders of nature,—the awful sublimity of towering mountains and roaring cataracts, or the indescribable beauty of winding rivers, and peaceful lakes, and cultivated vallies; but still there is a scene clothed with infinitely greater attractions—it is the land of his birth, the scenery of his home. He wishes again to breathe its air, and converse with its inhabitants,—to repose in its shades in the feebleness of age—to make it the last landscape that shall fade from his sight—and to mingle his ashes with its dust.

Few of us have had occasion to experience the feelings of a traveller, or to know what it is to have the heart of a stranger; but all of us can form some idea of it; we all feel,—though not, perhaps, with that keenness as if actually placed in the situation,—we feel that, among all the lands we could visit, and all the scenes we could behold, there is one land that would be uppermost in our thoughts, one scene upon which our hearts would repose—*home*, with its attractions and endearments.

Christians, you are all strangers; you are all travellers: this earth is only the land of your pilgrimage; heaven is your home. And is it possible you can feel a reluctance to follow the advice,

and the example of the apostle, to let your conversation—to let your thoughts and affections—be there? In every situation, let our desires be devoted to that blessed land, by drawing a comparison betwixt it and this passing scene.

Are you here caressed and flattered?—O think how insincere the caresses and flatteries of this world commonly are;—how often they are withheld from the good, and lavished upon the worthless. Many a saint, of whom this world was not worthy, has passed through it uncheered by the tribute of praise; and many, who have dishonoured human nature by their vices, have, by the adventitious qualities of rank and power, or by the detestable arts of hypocrisy, gained its applause. And yet, forgetful of your eternal abode, will you still be intoxicated by the flatteries of this world, and prefer its empty applause to that best of all applauses, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord?” The applause of the world can give no security that we enjoy its esteem, however much we may deserve it: But “God is truth;” “he marketh the upright;” and his approbation, “his love, is better than life.” The applause of men can give no peace to a wounded conscience; the voice of unmerited praise only

deepens the gloom of the self-accusing heart. But if that heart returns to its God, with a firm purpose of being renewed by repentance, the anticipation of the applause of Heaven will dissipate the gloom of despair; and a foretaste of the delight inspired by the love of its blessed inhabitants, will efface the painful recollection of crime, and heal the bitterest of all wounds—the wounds of self-reproach.

Do you enjoy pleasure in this world? Does affluence hold out the flattering prospect of enabling you to gratify every wish of your heart?—Delusive is that hope. Solomon, the wisest of the sons of men, had every thing that this earth could afford to gratify human desire; and he said to his heart, “I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure.” Every earthly delight was at his command; “and whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept not from them: he withheld not his heart from any joy.” The experiment was made under the guidance of consummate wisdom, and for the express purpose of ascertaining how far earthly enjoyment was calculated to give satisfaction to the heart; and he thus tells the result: “When I looked upon all my works, and my labours,—behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit.” And

such must be the language of every votary of earthly pleasure. Such pleasure is incapable of satisfying the desires of an immortal spirit, not created for inhabiting this earth as a permanent abode, but destined for a better country, even an heavenly, where its enjoyments shall be pure, unmixed, and eternal. Amid the honours of this world, then, is it not natural to look forward to that “glory that shineth forth as the sun, and as the stars for ever and ever?”—amid the riches of this world, to aspire to those treasures which shall never waste; which neither fraud nor violence shall sweep away?—and amid the pleasures of this world, to sigh after “that fulness of joy which is at the right hand of God?”

Do you enjoy, on earth, pleasure more suited to your rational nature? Do you delight yourself with wisdom? Does your soul find its sweetest exercise in tracing the works and ways of the Almighty?—Sensible, then, of the narrow bounds that are set to your understanding here below, is it not natural for you to meditate with delight upon your heavenly country, “where you shall know, even as you are known;” where all mysteries shall be made plain, and God himself shall be fully revealed?

Do you place your happiness upon the company and conversation of the virtuous amongst your brethren?—Alas! they have not already attained,—they are only, like you, on the way to perfection: in them, as well as in yourself, you will often have to lament the faults and frailties incident to your present state. But let your soul meditate on the delight of being introduced to “the company of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven;” “the just made perfect;” the glorious inhabitants of your eternal abode.

Is love and benevolence to your brethren, the foundation of your earthly happiness?—Alas! how often will that love be wounded by ingratitude, or blasted by the worthlessness of its objects? Let your affections, then, be raised to heaven, where your love shall never be misplaced, and the delight bestowed by it upon your own heart, shall never decay.

Is your progress through this world marked with care and with sorrow? Is it a scene of which you see others enjoying the sweets, while you are doomed to taste only its bitterness? Be grateful, then, that it is no more than a pilgrimage; and let your heart continually be fixed on that home, to which you are fast approaching.

If here you suffer the hardships of poverty, waste not your days in vain regrets, in anxious struggles after the riches of this world:—These are vain and unsatisfactory; they can never bestow contentment upon the possessor; they suddenly pass away, or, if they remain, they cannot follow you to the grave, to which naked you must return. Aspire after the riches of heaven, which alone are permanent, and leave nothing for the heart to desire. If for a moment the cares of the world have been banished from your mind, and allowed you to experience contentment; how much must you long for the invariable, the eternal enjoyment of that blissful feeling, which the riches of heaven, and they alone, can inspire.

Are you here placed in obscurity—your virtues unknown, your merits neglected, your feelings disregarded?—Reflect that you are only in a foreign land; and that, sometimes, to be unknown and disregarded, is the lot of a stranger: but let your thoughts dwell upon that blessed land, that home to which you are travelling; where all your virtues shall be remembered, all your merits rewarded, and every righteous feeling and desire of your heart most amply gratified.

Are you doomed to endure pain; to languish

on a sick-bed, where human aid can give no relief, and anxious friends weep for you in vain?— And will you not raise your thoughts and desires toward that better country, where pain and sickness are unknown; where your body shall be conscious of no decay, but shall flourish in immortal youth?

You have been blessed with companions on this your pilgrimage: And have those who entered upon it along with you, full of hope and expectation; whose sympathy soothed every care, whose affection supported your heart under every vicissitude—have these, long before you, been recalled by their heavenly Father? and, deprived of their presence, their counsel, and their affection, do your remaining days, and remaining duties, afford a sickening prospect? and does the world appear a waste and dreary wilderness spread before you, through which you must travel friendless and comfortless?—And will your thoughts never stretch, beyond it, to that land where you shall again be united, to separate no more; where there is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying?

Your abode may be prolonged on earth, after all the friends of your youth have failed, and the companions of your riper years have fallen by

your side. You may remain feeble and helpless, in the midst of another generation;—alone, as it were, in a land of strangers, in whose pursuits you will feel no interest, and in whose joys you can have no share. And if this should be your fate, what will be able to support your heart, when those days come in which you shall say you have no pleasure? What can support your heart, except the prospect beyond the grave? Accustom yourself, then, to meditate upon its delights. Let your soul gradually detach itself from this world, that when the days of darkness draw on, you may not be found, without hope, still clinging to a scene which can afford no delight; but may, like St Paul, have a wish “to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;”—to be with him, where those that have gone before you are assembled around him,—where they “are led by him to fountains of living waters, and where God himself shall wipe away every tear.”

Were it not for the devoted attachment, which thousands manifest to the fleeting vanities of this world, it might indeed be deemed superfluous to counsel rational beings, of whatever condition in this life, to raise their thoughts and affections to heaven, and to lay up treasures there;—to coun-

sel them to prefer to the joys of this world, which are so unsatisfactory and perishable, the joys of heaven, which are eternal in their duration, and more exquisite in their nature, than any thing that the eye of man hath seen, or his ear heard, or hath entered into his heart to conceive.

Secondly, Let your conversation be in heaven;—let your conduct be a preparation for enjoying that celestial abode.

This will be a natural consequence of your thoughts and affections being there. The traveller, who, amid all the varieties of situation in foreign lands, has his heart fixed upon home, will not adopt customs and manners that may render him unfit for living in the society, and relishing the pleasures of his native land. Neither, surely, will ye—who look forward to heaven as your eternal dwelling-place—cherish sentiments, and form habits here below, that would render you unfit for entering, and incapable of enjoying it. And “nothing shall enter therein that defileth.” As “flesh and blood,”—a mortal perishable body, “cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven,” so neither can an immortal spirit, if corrupted and enslaved by the sensual delights of this world. Yet, in order

to prepare yourself for heaven, it is not necessary to renounce all connexion with this world; to shun the face and conversation of your brethren; and bury yourself in retirement and solitude. This would be resigning the task assigned you in this life, which is, to “use the world, without abusing it.” The world has many praise-worthy—many necessary occupations for you, and many innocent, though imperfect enjoyments. And as the traveller may occupy his mind with the wants, the accommodations, even the pleasures on his way, without losing sight of that home toward which his wishes and efforts are principally and constantly directed;—so may you, in any situation, in any scene of this life, attend to its concerns, and taste its passing enjoyments, while you keep a constant eye upon your heavenly abode. For to that abode every action will have a reference; and your constant care to gain an entrance into life eternal, will sanctify all your pursuits and pleasures here below. “Whatsoever thou takest in hand,” said the wise son of Sirach, “remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss.”

But though it is not necessary to shun the world, in order to prepare yourself for heaven, yet care and circumspection are necessary in your

pilgrimage through it. For there are in that world occupations, and there are pleasures,—falsely so called,—which are utterly inconsistent with a desire for heaven, and the hope of obtaining an entrance,—the occupations and pleasures of those who “have not the fear of God before their eyes, but who have their hearts fully set in them to do evil.” “These may think it strange,” says the apostle, “that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot;” but, with the pure and holy delights of heaven in your view, the language of your heart will certainly be, “O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!” Theirs is that corruption “that is in the world through lust,” which it will be your business to escape, in order to be partakers of the divine nature, and inheritors of the great and precious promises of the gospel. To the world, as exhibited in *their* characters, *their* pursuits and pleasures, you will have no wish to be conformed; and if, at any time, you have had fellowship with it, deeply sensible how opposite all its ways and its maxims are to a heavenly conversation, it will be your determination, through the divine assistance, to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind;

that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;" in whose presence it is your eager wish to dwell, and whose favour can be enjoyed only by those who study to "purify themselves, as their Father in heaven is pure." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life; and may enter in, through the gates, into the city."

To conclude.—How much are we encouraged to have our conversation in heaven,—to have all our thoughts, and desires, and efforts, directed thither, by the consideration that it is from thence, also, that "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ!" Assuredly, our hopes are not placed upon a land unknown, uninteresting, and peopled with strangers. The dearest objects of affection are there. It is the abode of parents, and companions, and children, who have gone before us. It is the abode of our best friend and benefactor, "who loved us, and died for us, that we might live." "In my Father's house," said he, "are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I

will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

The love of Jesus made him already descend to this earth, assume our nature, appear in the form of a servant, and submit to every species of wretchedness and woe,—to poverty, and contempt, and persecution, and death, even the cursed death of the cross,—that ignominious death which you yesterday assembled to show forth. But when he shall come again, it shall be in glory, attended by angels of light: and all who sleep in death shall hear his voice. And he shall gather together his elect,—those who, while on earth, have had their conversation in heaven;—and he shall lead them to the holy city, the new Jerusalem, that they may dwell together with him in heavenly places, where they shall not be strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

This blessed scene, indeed, surpasses imagination. Who can describe the meeting of those whose separation caused such regret and misery in this vale of tears?—their blissful meeting in that place where all tears shall be wiped away, and death and sorrow shall be no more?—where every pain shall cease, and every doubt be remov-

ed?—where sin shall no more grieve us, nor fear alarm us?—where we shall enter upon that happiness which no change can impair, and no time destroy?

Such will be our blessed reward beyond the grave, if we here have our conversation in heaven. While we remain on this earthly pilgrimage, the delightful prospect of it will strengthen us under every temptation, and support us under every affliction; and when the last dreadful messenger approaches, it will disarm him of every terror—it will enable us to receive him as an angel of peace, a messenger of glad tidings, and to say, with the aged Simeon, “ Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation !”

That you may, here below, have your conversation in heaven, and experience its blessed effects in life, in death, and through eternity, may God of his infinite mercy grant; and to his name be praise.

PRAYER.

WE would again bless thee, O Lord, for thy great mercy and loving-kindness manifested toward us!—Thou hast called us into being, and hast prepared for our habitation a world stored with every thing necessary for our existence. But thou hast not only given us an existence in this world, which, though fair, is perishable—thou hast likewise, through the mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, made us heirs of immortality, and candidates for immortal glory. Blessed be he who came in the name of the Lord to save us—to abolish the terrors of death, and to give us hopes of happiness beyond the grave!

May we continually bear in mind, that here we have no continuing city—that this earth is not the land of our rest. May we look upon it merely as the place of our sojourning, and upon all its transient gratifications merely as refreshments, on the way of our pilgrimage to our Father's house. Let our thoughts never be so far engrossed by the passing cares, and deceitful pleasures of this world, as to render us slothful in preparing for that eter-

nity toward which we are hastening ; but may we be occupied by those things that are seen and are temporal, only in such a manner as to rivet our attention more and more upon those things that are not seen, but are eternal. May our conversation be in heaven, and may all our desires and energies be directed thither.

Knowing that the time is short, and the fashion of all things passing away, may we follow the advice of the holy apostle,—to weep as if we wept not,—to rejoice as if we rejoiced not,—to buy as if we possessed not,—and to use the world as not abusing it. May we use it for that gracious purpose for which it was designed, as a place of preparation for never-ending bliss. Enable us to enjoy prosperity, so as to lay up treasures in heaven. Enable us to endure adversity, in such a manner that our present afflictions, that last but for a moment, may work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory. Enable us to resign ourselves to the loss of family and friends, with a firm hope of beholding them in brighter regions, where the bonds of love shall never be broken : and, when the hour of our own dissolution approaches, may we, after a life of faith and holiness, be able to welcome it with joy, exclaim-

ing, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

We again pray, that thou wouldst graciously continue to us the temporal blessings and privileges we now enjoy,—that thou wouldst watch over the interests of our country,—that thou wouldst preserve and bless our gracious sovereign,—that thou wouldst counsel his counsellors, and teach his senators wisdom,—that thou wouldst bless and protect the church planted amongst us,—and that thou wouldst hasten the happy period, when the people of every land shall hear the glad tidings of salvation, and rejoice in the hope set before them in the gospel.

We again entreat thee, O Lord, to dwell in this portion of thy vineyard;—to bless all ranks and conditions of people amongst us, in our basket and in our store—in the house and in the field—upon the land and upon the water. May all our steps be ordered and directed by thee. Enable us to fulfil all the duties incumbent upon us in our various stations and relations in this life, and to forbear and love one another as fellow-travellers to a better country, even an heavenly. Visit in

mercy our brethren, who, by affliction of body or of mind, have been prevented from joining in the service of thy sanctuary; and reclaim those who mock at thy Sabbaths, and count thy service a weariness. Bless and protect our friends, wherever they are; reward our benefactors; and, if we have enemies, do thou forgive them. May the young be trained up in thy fear; may the aged be supported by thy strength; and may the dying be prepared to die the death of the righteous, that their last end may be like his. Be with us in singing thy praises; dismiss us with thy blessing; and enable us to carry forth with us, into the world, those sentiments and feelings impressed upon us by this sacred season. All our confidence is in thee—our hope is in thy word; and all that we ask is for Christ's sake.—Amen.

PARAPHRASE xxiii. 12.

LO! former scenes, predicted once,
Conspicuous rise to view;
And future scenes, predicted now,
Shall be accomplish'd too.
Sing to the Lord in joyful strains!
Let earth his praise resound;
Ye who upon the ocean dwell,
And fill the isles around!

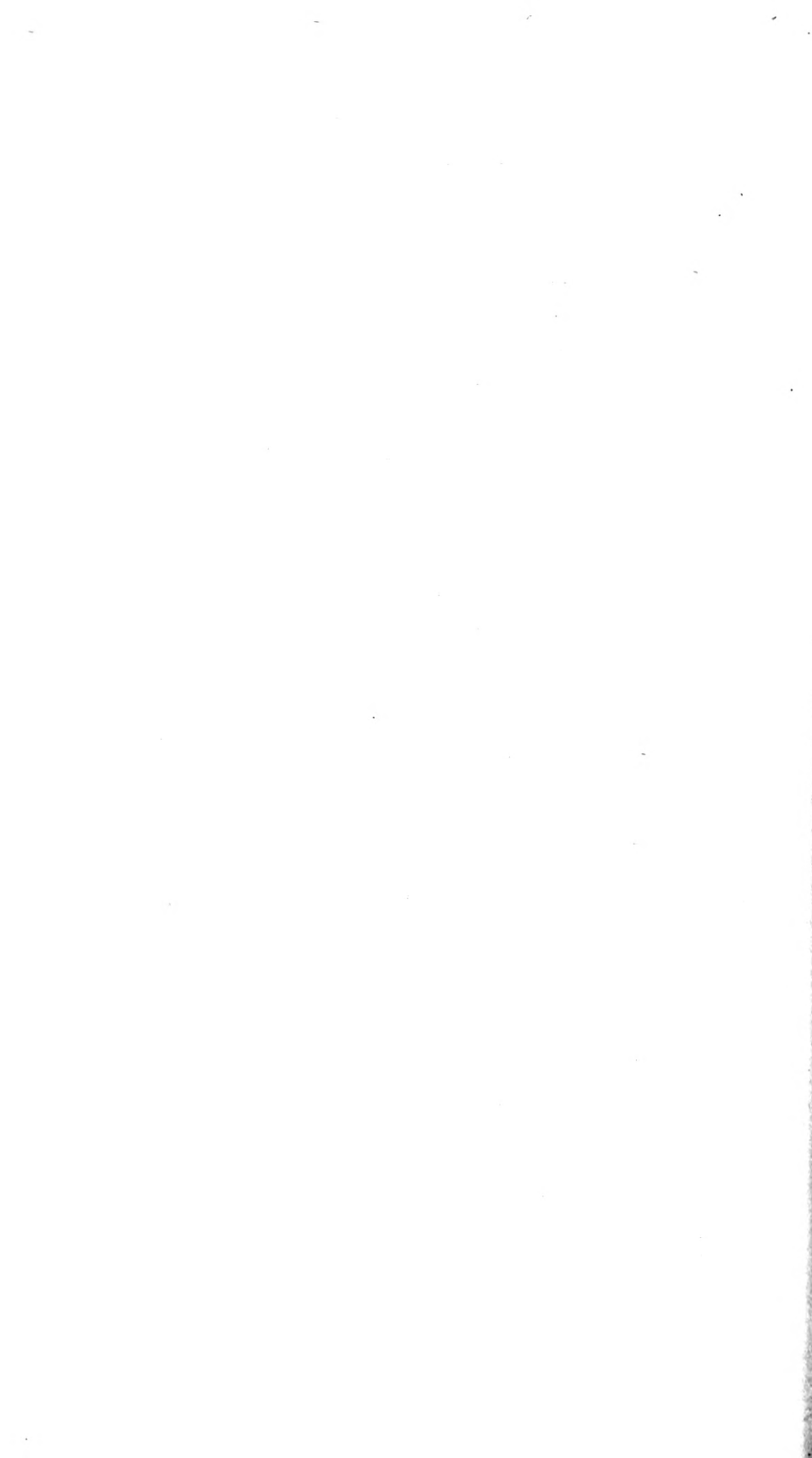
O city of the Lord ! begin
The universal song ;
And let the scatter'd villages
The cheerful notes prolong.
Let Kedar's wilderness afar
Lift up its lonely voice ;
And let the tenants of the rock
With accents rude rejoice ;

Till, 'midst the streams of distant lands,
The islands sound his praise ;
And all combin'd, with one accord,
JEHOVAH's glories raise.

BLESSING.

MAY the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, remain with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for ever.—Amen.

THE END.



October 1829.

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